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Katja Tukiainen named curator of the 2027 Mänttä Art Festival

Katja Tukiainen, an award-winning visual artist, painter, comic artist, and Doctor of Fine Arts with an extensive international career, has been appointed curator of the 2027 Mänttä Art Festival. Known as a rebel in the art world, she has fearlessly placed girlhood and cuteness at the heart of her artistic practice.

Tukiainen has a long-standing and close relationship with the Mänttä Art Festival. She has exhibited at the Festival twice, for the first time in 2001.

“For me, the Mänttä Art Festival served as a true art academy experience. There I got to see how such an enormous exhibition programme is born. I also got to personally experience the respect the Festival has for artists and our work. When I received a call a year ago inviting me to curate the Festival, I accepted immediately. The invitation is a tremendous honour. I’m really excited about the role, and I also feel a great sense of responsibility,” says Tukiainen.

“What inspires me about art is its freedom. When I make art, I feel no fear: within its framework, I can do whatever I want, including questioning established hierarchies. I’ve worked hard to make words like ‘cuteness’ and ‘sweetness’ more widely accepted in visual art. I’ve never been afraid of humour or wildness, either. A work can be intelligent and witty while also being beautiful and thought-provoking. I have good manners myself, but the characters in my work don’t necessarily share them,” Tukiainen says with a laugh.

“I always correct people when they try to pigeonhole me as either a comic artist or a painter. In my work, the two fields happily overlap. When I create comics, I question the conventions of the medium; when I paint, I challenge painting traditions. When I was a first grader, my teacher told my mum that I was bound to become an artist because I was always saying, ‘I do things my own way’,” Tukiainen recalls.

Roughly half of the artists for next summer’s Mänttä Art Festival have now been selected, with approximately 30 artists set to take part.

“I’ve invited artists whose work fills me with a sense of wonder. I can lose myself in and become enchanted by their work. What unites them all is the courage to follow their own path. The line-up includes artists of all ages, from students to established masters, and the programme will offer both wild aesthetics and serene, contemplative spaces. I hope next summer’s exhibition will enchant visitors and allow them to lose themselves for a moment in the world it creates,” says Tukiainen.

The artists and theme of the 31st Mänttä Art Festival will be announced in February 2027.

For more information

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