

GALERIE MARIAN GOODMAN

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ELIJA-LIISA AHTILA

14 September 2019 – 26 October, 2002

Opening reception: Thursday 7 November, 5 – 9 pm

We are pleased to present the first exhibition of Finnish artist Eija-Liisa Ahtila at the gallery that will open to the public on Saturday, 7th September and will run through Saturday, 26th October. A special screening of Eija-Liisa Ahtila's film *Love is a Treasure* will be shown at the Centre George Pompidou on Friday, 6th September at 8 pm.

This exhibition, featuring film will take place on the gallery's two floors with two major installations *The Present* and *The Wind*.

In *The Present* – (*Lahja*), 2001, upstairs, five monitors will feature five independent fictional stories (from 1 min 12 sec to 2 min) based on Eija-Liisa Ahtila's interviews of young women who have developed psychoses. Each episode depicts a particular event in the life of each woman. The overall theme of the work is forgiveness, which is emphasised at the end of each story and displayed on blankets on the gallery walls with the text: "Give yourself a present, forgive yourself".

The installation is usually shown with a series of five 30 second TV-spots made at the same time as the installation material. The spots are like adverts and are intended to be shown repeatedly in advertising slots.

In *The Wind* – (*Tuuli*), 2002, (14 min 20 sec) Eija-Liisa Ahtila will present an installation using three imposing screens in a room painted red offering a theatrical setting for the story of another human drama. On three simultaneously projected images, we witness a woman suffering from psychotic attacks. Unable to shout and express her anxiety she bites her hands until they bleed. "From the open window a violent wind enters and together they start to work on things. The woman disarranges everything in her room, giving a new purpose and order to things, until she controls every detail in her empire of the reason." (Exhibition catalogue Eija-Liisa Ahtila KIASMA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Tate Modern, Crystal Eye, Helsinki 2002, p. 144.)

Eija-Liisa Ahtila constantly seems to investigate the borders of the Self. Her video work has the quiet subversion of disturbing dreams. It mutates into unexpected territory, all the while remaining strangely familiar. Distinguished by their wilful female characters, Eija-Liisa Ahtila's narratives provide enough tension to push her characters from neutrality to absurdity, at times bordering on rage.

Eija-Liisa Ahtila studied at the University of California, Los Angeles, the London College of Printing and Helsinki University. Her work was featured in numerous international exhibitions, most recently at KIASMA (2002), Tate Modern (2002) and the Kunsthalle Zürich (2002) including *Organising Freedom* at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2000), *Cinema Cinema* at the Stedelijk van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (1999) and the Nordic Pavilion at Venice Biennale (*Consolation Service*) (1999). In September 2000, Eija-Liisa Ahtila was announced as the first winner of *The Vincent*, the first biennial award for contemporary art in Europe, at the Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht. The artist was also awarded the *Coutts*

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Contemporary Art Foundation Award. At Documenta XI, Kassel she is showing The House until 15th September 2002 the third part of the trilogy completing the two installations shown at the gallery.

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