



Mari Keski-Korsu

Toni Lehtola

Teemu Lehmusruusu

Lotta Mattila

Minna Herrala

Mia Makela

Kati Roover

Elina Ruohonen

26.8.2020-9.1.2021

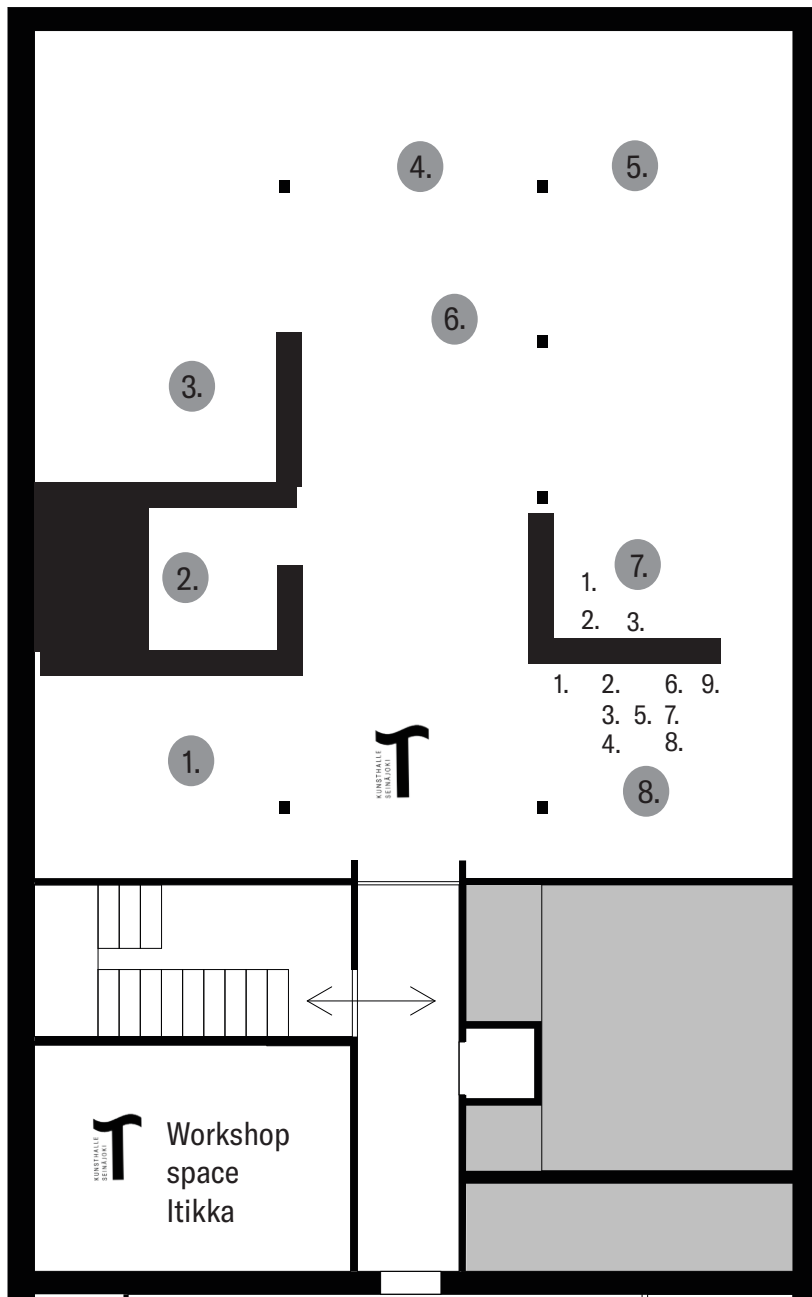
Millaista on olla eläin?

KUNSTHALLE SEINÄJOKI

Collaboration with
Helena Telkänranta

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#millaistaonollaelain

#seinajoentaidehalli

More information: taidehalli@seinajoki.fi

Millaista on olla eläin?

What's it like to be an animal? is a group exhibition of eight Finnish contemporary artists based on the book of the same name by Helena Telkänranta, an evolutionary biologist, scientist and science writer.

The idea for the exhibition emerged when the program team of the Kunsthalle Seinäjoki decided to set up an exhibition based on dialogue with text or research information. The new program guidelines of the Kunsthalle draw strongly upon the countryside and the urban-rural framework, from which the animal theme of the exhibition also springs. Besides, the idea was to have an exhibition that would be educational already in production. So, when the team was reflecting on all this, the non-fiction book *Millaista on olla eläin?* (What's it like to be an animal?) came into focus.

Helena Telkänranta specialises in animal behaviour, emotions and cognition. She has carried out research at the University of Bristol and University of Helsinki. She is currently working on measuring animal welfare and detecting states of pain in veterinary medicine and is developing innovative ways of communicating zoology to the audiences and schoolchildren visually and experientially. Telkänranta became interested in collaboration and so planning started.

The Kunsthalle team mapped the artists whose previous works included a strong presence of animals or beings. The topicality of the exhibition idea is indicated by the fact that invited each artist said instantly yes, and some of them already had the book on their own bookshelf. Each artist was given one chapter from the book to use as a springboard for their work. Telkänranta acts as a co-thinker of the artists in the process of setting up the exhibition. The Kunsthalle is responsible for curating and production. The program team, which consists of the Kunsthalle staff, is responsible for the program of Kunsthalle Seinäjoki. The team includes exhibition coordinator Sanna Karimäki-Nuutinen, art producer Pii Anttila, art educator Elina Teitti and technician Miika Vainionkulma.

The exhibition highlights the important topic experientially as well as visually. It takes a peek into the world of animal experience through artistic thinking and converses with the themes of the book.

The artists of the exhibition 'Millaista on olla eläin?' (What's it like to be an animal?) are Mari Keski-Korsu, Toni Lehtola, Teemu Lehmusruusu, Lotta Mattila, Minna Herrala, Mia Makela, Kati Roover and Elina Ruohonen.

HELENA TELKÄNRANTA

Helena Telkänranta is a scientist and science writer specializing in animal cognition and behaviour. She has more than three decades of experience on communicating these and other biological sciences to the general public in her native Finland via books, magazine articles, TV documentaries and other media. One of her best-known books is "Millaista on olla eläin" (the Finnish-language title means "What's it like to be an animal?"), a national bestseller that has won several awards. As a scientist, she has carried out research on animal behaviour and emotions at the University of Helsinki, Finland and at the University of Bristol, UK. Her academic degrees include an MSc in evolutionary biology and a PhD in animal behaviour.

Currently she works as the CEO of two companies she has recently founded. The research company Arador Innovations develops new, animal-friendly technologies to objectively measure animal emotions, and the science communication company Animal Mind Productions, which develops new digital, visual and interactive media for making animal cognition science easily accessible to the general public.

Chapter 1. From UV vision to magnetic sense: secret "senses" of animals

KATI ROOVER

Salt of My Eyes

Video 14.02 min

2019

"The biggest whales are able to produce, in addition to the loudest sounds, also the lowest sounds. The lower the sound, the farther it travels. This is because the longer the wave length of the sound, the lower is the sound perceived. The sound that travels in long, low-pitched waves penetrates deep into the environment where it travels, such as the water or air, while the sound that creates a tangle of short waves uses up its energy must faster. Some of the communication sounds of big whales are so low that they cannot be heard by human ear. This is why they are called infrasounds." (Excerpt from the book, page 21-22)

Salt of My Eyes is a poetic video essay, in which the artist observes the culturally complex and multi-layer human and whale relationship. As the target of observation the artist chose humpbacks in particular. Roover reflects on communication between whales and how it would feel to live as a whale in a dark-blue sea or talk to them about their life and changes in their environment. The artist is concerned with how much the environment and its changes affect the development of senses of various species.

The focus of the piece is the experience of a personal meeting with a whale, where hopes, reality, dreams and mythology are combined. The work also considers broader issues: the origin and evolution of life and the possibility of the end of life in the warming seas that are polluted with microplastic and full of noise pollutants. Is it still possible for the whales to live in peace, have an independent and free life in the depth of the oceans, undisturbed by human actions, in the contemporary world?

Kati Roover (b. 1982) works with moving image, sound, photography, text and installations. Her works often focus on environmental and climate changes and combine artistic and scientific views.

Script, director, video edit, postproduction: Kati Roover

Audio design, sound production: Johannes Vartola

Translations in Finnish: Marja Viitahuhta

Stock footage, underwater videos: Rick Rosenthal, Lee Tepley

Thanks: Marianne Rasmussen, Husavik Research Centre,

University of Iceland, Husavik Whale Museum,

Jessica Auer and Schweiz / Ströndin Studio Skaftfell,

Helena Telkänranta, Visa Kurki, Kristian Mainz, Sarah Pulitzer,

Satu Herrala, Johannes Vartola, Kaisa Roover, Pii Anttila

Funded by: Avek Kopiosto, Kunsthalle Seinäjoki,

The Arts Promotion Centre

Chapter 2. Do animals have awareness and how can we know that?

MARI KESKI-KORSU

Com Scire

Video installation

2020

"Reflection of the rock in the water mirror surface created a spiritual portal to a higher, transcendent world, which presented itself "upturned" also in the belief world of some other natural cultures. A shaman, a witch, when going into a trance, could move unobstructed in this three-layer world safeguarded by their animal-shaped familiar or in its form."

Timo Miettinen & Heikki Willamo: Sacred images on the rock

Self-awareness is often measured with the help of the mirror test developed by Gordon Gallup. A colour spot is placed on the face of an animal that is the test subject, or on any other area of the body the animal cannot normally see. Then the behaviour of the animal in front of the mirror is observed; whether it tries to remove the spot or touches it, which would indicate that the animal perceives the reflected image as itself. Many so-called intelligent species pass this test. Over fifty percent of human children generally pass this test at approximately 2 years of age.

The Com Scire piece is based on the mirror test and self-awareness proven or unproven by it. Horses are not qualified to take the mirror test because being a quarry they are not considered to be intelligent enough to pass it, although some of them might indeed perceive their reflection in the mirror. The video makes an attempt to introduce the common mirror experience into the cultural and spiritual narrative, where the mirror is thought to be representing the parallel reality and spiritual portal. What would you see in this parallel reality when looking at it together with a horse and imagining what it is experiencing? Awareness? Peace? Balance? Deep breathing?

The video was shot at green care farm Toiska, at Koskenkorva, Ilmajoki, Finland

Mari Keski-Korsu (b. 1976) is a transdisciplinary visual artist. Her interests include social and ecological changes and changes caused by the environment particularly in people's everyday life. Her art works often have a powerful social dimension and they are made together with other species and beings in a collaboration process.

Warmest thanks for love and staff help and making the art work possible: Leo, Jussi, Vormu, Harri, Fiira and Roleksi, Keijo Viertoma, Teea Ekola, Tiina Tuominen, Jouko Rissanen and Toiska staff, Lyyti Keski-Korsu, Juhani and Aulikki Keski-Korsu, Ada and Laura Beloff, Erich Berger, Ritva Räsänen, Shachindra Dass, Helena Telkänranta, Pii Anttila, Sanna Karimäki-Nuutinen, Miika Vainionkulma and Kunsthalle Seinäjoki staff

Funded by: Kunsthalle Seinäjoki, The Arts Promotion Centre, green care farm Toiska

Chapter 3. Learning, insights and birth of cultures

MIA MAKELA

Looking for Mr. Blue
Video installation
2020

“Every spring and autumn Tibetan geese fly over the Himalayas on their migration trip. Their passage is an act of real athleticism because, due to their physical build, the geese are unable to save energy by gliding and circling in updrafts. The geese have to flap their wings constantly in order to stay aloft. Nevertheless, Tibetan geese hold the record of the world’s highest-flying birds.” (Excerpt from the book, page 122))

In her works, Mia Makela studies the cultural history of the geese, which manifests itself in their historical, millions years old migration routes across the globe. The geese are among the oldest birds in the world. In the video installation, a lesser white-fronted goose by the name of Mr. Blue, born in Norway, is monitored with the help of a GPS/GSM band. Mr. Blue usually arrives at Siikajoki in Oulu in May. No one knows how long lesser white-fronted geese have flown along their route. The geese had to adjust to a number of major changes: ice age, man-made changes such as agriculture, cities, wars, airplanes, nuclear plants.

What is the life of lesser white-fronted geese like? The artist reflects on how it might feel to be floating in downwind at a speed of 70 km per hour towards the coast line of the Gulf of Finland, flapping your wings up and down. What does it feel like when pure oxygen flows through the lungs, in and out, and no carbon dioxide? How does the earth look like as seen through the eyes of the geese that in addition to the UV light can also see the sun arch and sense magnetic fields? How to describe the colours that you have never seen? What does Mr. Blue remember from the previous years, which landmarks does it recognise, which smells does it sense during its travel towards the north? In her installation, Makela ponders over the essence of another species and awakens to the thought how marginal human experience is compared to thousands of beings.

Mia Makela (b. 1971) is a media artist and cultural historian, whose work explores intersections between art, technology, science, and ecology.

Script, director, animation, video edit, postproduction: Mia Makela, Audio design: Mia Makela, Rodrigo Morris Claramunt
Music: Rodrigo Morris Claramunt
Sound postproduction: Rodrigo Morris Claramunt
Voice-over: Kristiina Vahvaselkä, JP Salo, Mia Makela
Studio recording: JP Salo / Chicken House Productions
Stock footage: Soundsnap, Xenocanto, Motion Array, Stock Footage, Google maps, Europe 3D Lite, Wikipedia
Translations: Mia Makela, Leigh Ann Lindholm
Thanks: Esa Hohtola, University of Oulu, Risto Karvonen / WWF, Helena Telkänranta, University of Helsinki, Piskulka.net - The Fennoscandian Lesser White-fronted, Goose project (BirdLife Norway, WWF Finland), Kirsi-Marie Liimatainen, The Åland Archipelago Guest Artist Residence, Kökar, Vanha Paukku Artist Residency, Lapua, Kunsthalle Seinäjoki staff.
Funded by: Finnish Cultural Foundation, Kunsthalle Seinäjoki

Chapter 4. Ingenious ravens and other intellectuals of the animal world.

TEEMU LEHMUSRUUSU

Sleepwalkers (of the Latent Land)
Installation
2020

Do earthworms feel pain? How do they sense? Contact and smell. What about magnetic sense? Did you know that in order to be an animal you do not need to have a brain? You have to be eukaryotic, multicellular, need food, motile, sentient, reproduce sexually and breathe oxygen. You are one animal. However, soil beneath our feet hosts one quarter of our planet’s biodiversity, which is essential to the survival of life above ground on our planet as a whole.

We know very little about experiences of invertebrates, and this is because the research of soil animals is at a very early stage. What is it like to be an animal, who does not have a brain and therefore maybe no world of experiences, or feelings? Is it sleepwalking, or is it subconscious intellect? Do invertebrates process information similarly to the computer we use, which tries to invent and visualise the unknown soil animals? Soil animals play a key role in the dynamics of the soil and thus also in the dynamics of the ecosystems above ground. They contain our past, the forming of organic layer on our rocky planet, and our future. Only living soil is able to produce nutrients and together with plants and trees maintain a breathing, favourable climate.

Helena Telkänranta’s book and discussions held with her have steered Lehmusrusu towards the concept of animals as well as to the intersections between being an animal and our current knowledge about that. The piece looks at the practically unknown spectrum of soil animals using artificial intelligence created by man. The visual material of the installation is produced with the help of the generative-competitive neural network, to which hundreds of photos taken from the soil animals already found are fed. The piece is also part of Teemu Lehmusrusu’s multiannual work with the soil within the framework of the Trophic Verses. Teemu Lehmusrusu is working on the artistic dissertation on the same topic at Aalto University.

Teemu Lehmusrusu (born in 1981) is a media and installation artist. His work often combines environmental and bioart elements. Lehmusrusu’s works deal with the biological life’s material prerequisites, sameness of the living and lifeless entities, that cannot be observed with unaided human senses.

Sounds: Felicity Mangan & Christina Ertl-Shirley
Pictures of soil creatures: Veikko Huhta, Riikka Elo, Varpu Vahtera, Mika Vahtera, Veikko Rinne, University of Helsinki, University of Turku, University of Jyväskylä
Technician: Stephen Stamper
Thanks: BSAG / Carbon Action, Jussi Heinonsalo, Juha Mikola, Heikki Setälä, Roberto Fusco, Pekko Vasantola, Helena Telkänranta, Kunstventures.
Funded by: Koneen Säätiö, Kunsthalle Seinäjoki

Chapter 5. How does the pain of a fish or fear of a bird feel?

ELINA RUOHONEN

Yesterday's Sudden Departure
Oil on plexiglass 180 x 150
2020

Carrying Capacity
Oil on plexiglass 150 x 130 cm
2020

Fast Food Race
Oil on plexiglass 150 x 130 cm
2020

In her pieces, Ruohonen studies fear experienced by animals. The artist reflected on the topic of the chapter during her morning jogs in the woods. She stopped to watch the reactions of squirrels and birds when she came closer to them with her dog. She watched how their flight paths changed, listened to nuances of the sounds they made. She pondered over how animals might feel fear, when they forget it, how fear may haunt them. The book by Telkänranta changed the way Ruohonen used to observe her surroundings.

In the two-part piece Ruohonen is dealing with fear experienced by birds but also how bird is portrait respectively with its own essence and as a being that is living its own life. Yesterday's Sudden Departure describes the feeling of fear, its nature and change of its level, its grouping, and reflects on the challenges people face trying to understand and perceive the experience of fear by animals.

Fear changes its form, fast, in a flash, slowly, by twisting, in cycles, in turns. Adrenalin, sympathetic nervous system and communication – and life goes on again.

Carrying Capacity piece Ruohonen has set a seagull, her own power bird, by side with fear experience. It poses as a brave and powerful bird on the portrait painting. The seagull on the painting does not show any fear, but it emanates its personality, existence and energy.

The main technique of Elina Ruohonen (b. 1970) is painting. She creates oil paintings on transparent plastic plates. Lately, she has expanded her way of expression to sound art.

Thanks: Helena Telkänranta
Funded by: Finnish Cultural Foundation, The Arts Promotion Centre, Kunsthalle Seinäjoki

Chapter 6. Laughing rats and other playing animals.

LOTTA MATTILA

Life Unseen
Sculpture
Ceramics
2020

Rats make many people shiver with disgust. A mere thought about the creatures crawling in trash cans and sewers would send shudders down their spine. This thought is so deep-rooted that it even extends to fancy rats that have lived all their life with people as pets.

But what if you look at the life of rats from another angle? What if you see a rat as a creature living in a big family, who needs to be close to its fellow species? What if we could understand rats' intelligence and ability to learn? What if we could see how rats play and heard their laugh?

Chapter 6 of the book considers animal play, its meaning and purpose. The Chapter also tells us about games rats play with each other and about their ultrasonic giggles that the human ear cannot hear. We can learn to read feelings of animals from their expressive behaviour, such as excitement when a dog is wagging its tail or fear when the dog's ears are set back. Some expressive behaviour is so common compared to some other species that we can interpret it correctly, as if for free. We have such a long shared history with some animal species that our ability to read their behaviour stems from there. However, animal species also have some properties, which a human being is even physically unable to detect using his or her senses. Some pattern might seem so familiar that we think we understand it, but actually we interpret it in an entirely wrong way. The book has inspired Mattila to reflect on how little we actually know and what mistakes we can make by just assuming. Research plays a significant role in understanding animals.

The fact that we cannot see or hear something does not mean that it does not exist.

Lotta Mattila (b. 1986) is a sculptor and visual artist. Her main technique is ceramics, and her sculptures often represent animal figures and shapes.

Thanks: Helena Telkänranta
Funded by: Kunsthalle Seinäjoki

Chapter 7: Desires, passions and caring:
life-sustaining feelings.

MINNA HERRALA
Work collection: Cat Pleasure

Sunny Hunting
Night Hunting
Snacks
What cat would order
Jungle
Toy
Night Bird Singing
Mouse Hole
Cat Paradise

Photography, silisec lambda
Music, composed by Jimi Savola
2020

Minna Herrala became interested in one topic that summarised Chapter 7 of the book: animal welfare. Welfare is a life-sustaining feeling. For her research, Herrala chose cats as she has lived with cats for over 30 years and provided the animal protection organisation with a foster home for cats for ten years. Over these years, she had been observing the behaviour of tens of cats.

A cat became a partner for a human being when in addition to hunting and picking berries and mushrooms people started growing crops. Cats were needed to keep rodents away from granaries. Since then, the cat has been visually portrayed, depending on different periods of time, as worshipped, hated, feared or loved and, in general, particularly as an object. In this collection of works, cats are subjects, doers. Herrala pictures things and situations that please cats. Her works are created in the symbolist style. Desiring, enjoying, sociability and playfulness bring pleasure to cats.

In the background of the work collection, a sound production focusing on cats is playing. The music has been composed by Jimi Savola based on the artist's instructions. The piece is created following the needs of cats. For example, it plays at a softer volume as cats have a considerably better hearing than human beings. Research material for the song has been used Charles Snowdon's research; Cats Prefer Species - Appropriate Music and music for cats made by David Teien. The song has been test played for 18 cats.

Minna Herrala (b. 1964) is a painter and photographer. Her main focus in her creation has in particular been on animal ethics, climate changes and human behaviour and inequality.

Music: Morning in the Cat Paradise, composed by Jimi Savola
Thanks: Helena Telkänranta, Jimi Savola
Funded by: Finnish Cultural Foundation,
Alfred Kordelinin Foundation, Kunsthalle Seinäjoki

Chapter 8. Generous elephant and saving gorilla:
some forms of sociability

TONI LEHTOLA
Test Test
Installation
2020

The work by Toni Lehtola is based on the tests carried out on animals to measure their sociability. It seems that some animals understand and are able to estimate the situation of another living being, and they are also willing to help others. Lehtola's work is not based on a single research result or experimental setup, but the closest reference is found in a rat test, where, with the help of treats as lure, the choices of rats were measured on the sociability – selfishness axis. Let it be noted that empathy won.

Lehtola's piece is a certain representation of behavioural experiment, in which exhibition visitors can participate as test subjects. Participants will be set in a situation where they will be asked to compare their own attitude to a certain action and that of another person.

Toni Lehtola (b. 1981) works mainly with electromechanic sculpture and music installations, but he does not limit his creation to a single technique. His pieces often combine elements that remind living beings or animals.

Thanks: Helena Telkänranta
Funded by: Kunsthalle Seinäjoki

EVENTS

More information::

<https://www.seinajoentaidehalli.fi/en/program/#oheisohjelma>

MUU-MAU'S EXHIBITION GUIDE FOR CHILDREN

The barn cat Muu-Mau has hidden stickers with QR codes to the exhibition space. Will you find them all? Read the QR-code on your phone and you'll get more information about the art works and animals.

CONVERSATION GUIDE PRESENT IN THE EXHIBITIONS

Fri 4.9. at 11am till noon

Fri 2.10. at 11am till noon & 1-2 pm

Fri 6.11. at 11am till noon & 1-2 pm

Fri 4.12. at 11am till noon & 1-2 pm

SEINÄJOKI ARTIST ASSOCIATION'S ART FAIR

Organized by art rental boutique Parvi

28.-29.11.2020 at 11am to 3pm

Kunsthalle Seinäjoki, Vintti

Buy art from the local artists in the 2-days long pop-up art exhibition at Vintti.

AEON LUX'S PERFORMANCE CLUB

Troijan hevonen

23.9.2020 at 7pm to 10pm.

Kunsthalle Seinäjoki | Kalevan Navetta

Performances from Kainulainen & Latva, Karoliina Korvuo and Arttu Isotalo. Video art from Aro Mielonen, Jukka Silokunnas, Sanni Vanttaja ja Riina Vilén.

Free entrance | [seinajoentaidehalli.fi](https://www.seinajoentaidehalli.fi)

KALLIOISTA - PERFORMANCE

Hanna Korhonen, Niina Hannula and Venla Korja

13.11.2020 Valoton Art Event

Kunsthalle Seinäjoki at Vintti

Showtime 1. 5.30pm | Showtime 2. at 7 pm

Performance combines live music, sound art, contemporary dance and texts. It deals with the power of human's nature relationships and experience.

KUNSTHALLE SEINÄJOKI

Mon-Fri at 11am-7pm

Sat at 11am-3pm

Once a month Sun at 11am-3pm:

Fall 2020

27.9., 18.10., 29.11., 13.12.

Customer service is open on opening times.

Tel. 050 514 3407

taidehalli@seinajoki.fi

Art and Culture Centre Kalevan Navetta

Nyykoolinkatu 25, 60100 Seinäjoki

Tickets:

Adults 6 €

Students, pensioners

conscripts, unemployed 4 €

Free admission for children under 18 years.

Free admission to assistants of persons with

sensory and physical disabilities during the visit.

Free admission for everyone on the first Friday of the month.

Free admission with Museum Card.

Tickets for the Kunsthalle Seinäjoki can be purchased from the Taito Shop Seinäjoki located on the first floor of the Kalevan Navetta during the opening hours.

[seinajoentaidehalli.fi](https://www.seinajoentaidehalli.fi)



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