

Jyrki Parantainen always seeks to further his conceptual approaches and working methods. His artistic practice combines the photographic medium with other genres of art, engendering crossover formats that include both two- and three-dimensional elements. When producing new works, the phase of conception and preparation is a fundamental part of the creative process, which Parantainen likens to that of writing a script for a film. However, chance plays a large role in his artistic process as well. The main themes of Parantainen's work deal with the basics of being human: life and death, flesh and blood, love and hate, all with an undertone of absurdist humor.

Jyrki Parantainen (*1962 in Tampere, Finland) lives and works in Helsinki. He graduated from the University of Art and

Design, Helsinki (now Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture) in 1992, where he used to be a Professor of Photographic Art. Among his numerous exhibitions are the notable solo shows *Dreams and Disappointments* at Anderson Art Museum, Helsinki (2006), *Fire* at The Finnish National Gallery Ateneum, Helsinki (1998), and the group show *Magnetic North*, The New Art Gallery, Walsall (2001). Other exhibitions include the solo show *Between Heaven and Earth*, at Gallery Heino, Helsinki (2012), and the group shows *Helsinki School*, at Christophe Guye Galerie, Zurich (2011), and *Tru(E)motion: The Helsinki School* at the Daegu Photo Biennale (2010). Parantainen was awarded the Fotofinlandia Prize in 1989 and the National Arts Council Suomi Prize in 1998.



POETRY OF CIRCULATION

In his *Poetry of Circulation* series, Parantainen uses anonymous graphic art from the 18th and 19th century, which he has been collecting for more than 30 years, combining them with words and concepts drawn from art history, music titles, and other cultural references. Connecting these words to various parts of the image through the use of pins and taut brass wires, he maps the visual space, creating tension throughout the work.

His fascination with cables and strings traces back to his teenage years, when he developed a passion for building scale models of large ships. He was captivated by the intricate rigging and masts—elements that were not merely decorative but functional. In his own work, the wires become an essential visual component, emphasizing tension, function, and minute details. The pins not only serve as anchor points for the

wires, but also introduce a visceral quality to the surface of the works, evoking sensations of stinging or stabbing.

Parantainen reinterprets the original illustrations with dark humor, satire, and irony. His work engages deeply with cultural and art history, touching on political and social themes, and reflects a strong interest in everything that lies beyond the everyday. His references range widely, from cinema to biblical imagery.





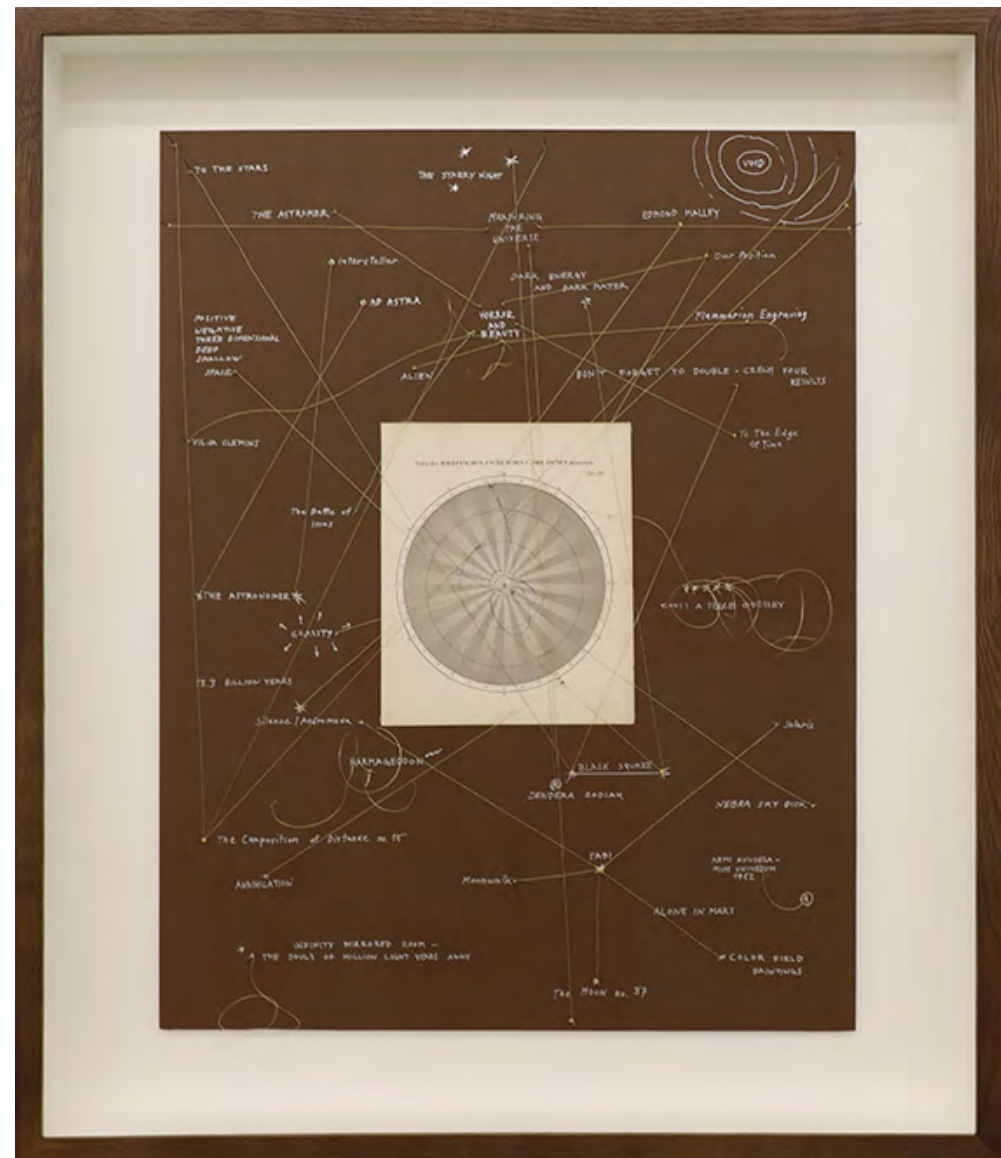
The Magic Circle, 2025, insect pins, brass wire, 61 x 47 cm



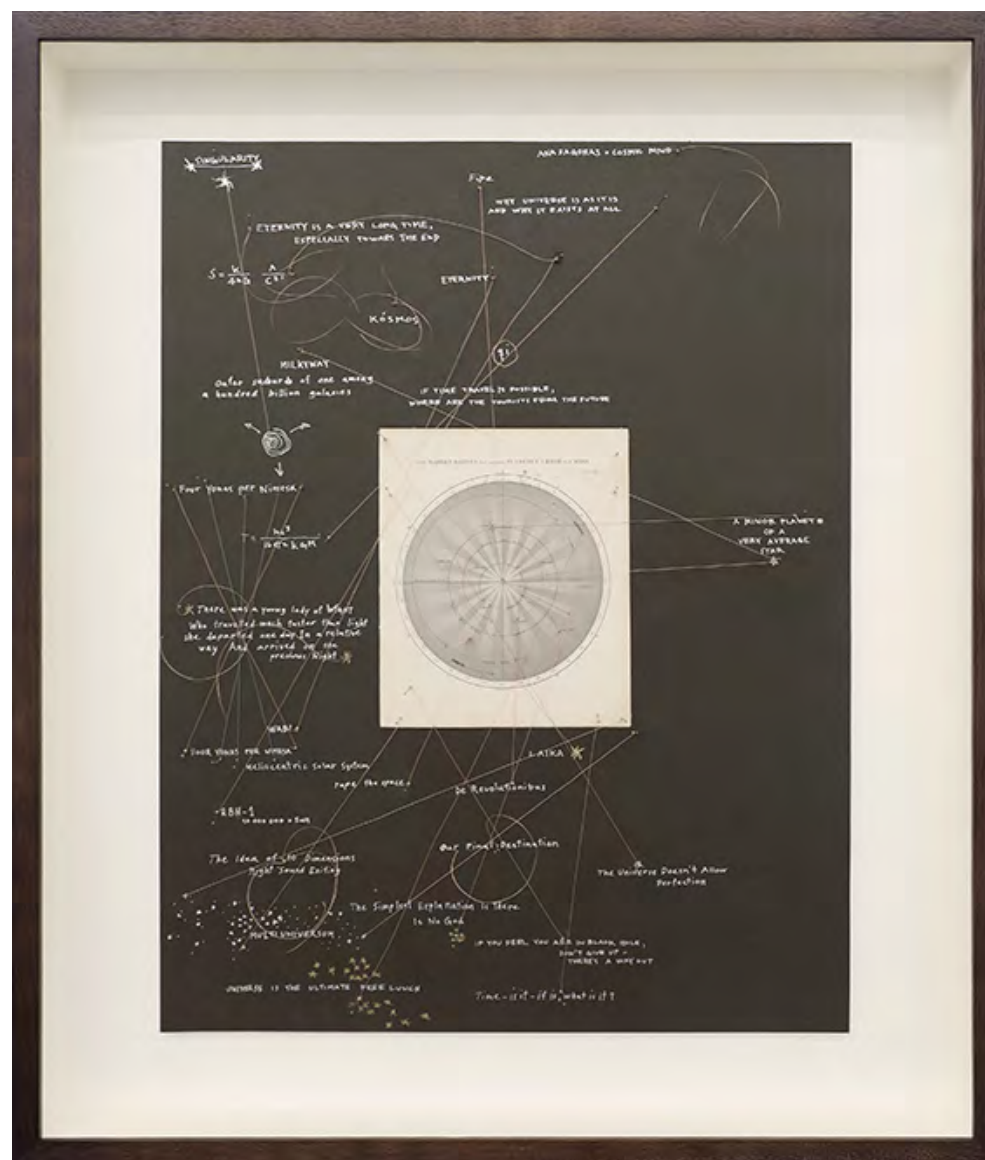
Mehr Licht, 2025, unknown vintage graphic art print, insect pins, brass wire, 57 x 72 cm



Jyrki Parantainen, CHART, 2025, with Persons Projects, Copenhagen



SABI, 2026, unknown vintage graphic art print, insect pins, brass wire, 80 x 65 cm



WABI, 2026, unknown vintage graphic art print, insect pins, brass wire, 80 x 65 cm



ARS LONGA VITA BREVIS, 2026, daguerreotype, brass wire, needles, golden text, 69 x 59 cm



For Whom The Bell Tolls, 2026, original vintage graphic art print, insect pins, brass wire, 71 x 89 x 8 cm



DIMENSIONAL DREAMS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

In his works Parantainen fuses photography with three-dimensional elements like pins and metal wires, linking words and images to emotional “pressure points.” These visual connections evoke forces beyond our control and suggest tensions beneath everyday life. His work explores core human themes—love, death, vulnerability—with a touch of dark humor and absurdity. This collection of works carries on his fascination with developing conceptual approaches and working methods by combining and weaving various philosophical and historical themes into his art pieces.

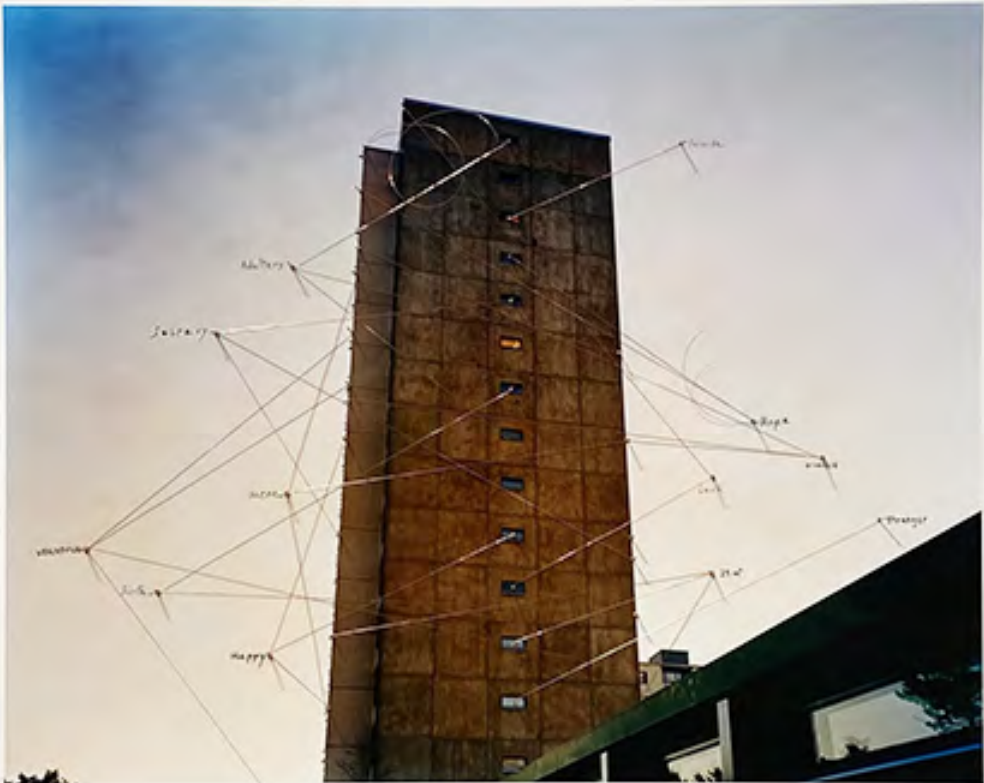




Map of Expectations, 2005/2025, print, insect pins, brass wire, 68 x 80 x 8 cm



Alphabet of Possibilities, 2004/2025, print, insect pins, brass wire, 68 x 80 x 8 cm



Dreams and Disappointments, 2006/2025, print, insect pins, brass wire, 68 x 80 x 8 cm



Letter to Mona, 2006/2025, print, insect pins, brass wire, 68 x 80 x 8 cm

BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

Parantainen's sculptures address spiritual and immaterial themes that are examined through delicate, small-scale objects, transparent materials. A laboratory glass turned upside down, covered with gold flakes on the top, protects a small globe, which stood on the artist's shelf for over 30 years *Biggest Unknown Curved Over*. A doll's head covered with gold leaf, feathers around, held up by a putto (baby angel), a type of guardian spirit trapped in a laboratory glass, is observed through the telescope of a French soldier in uniform from the Napoleonic wars. A strange composition of different elements, a messy and very open story – in other words: *Golden Dew of Sleep*. Every Steampunk-style sculpture carries an ultimate secret, a message tucked inside, written by the artist. These sculptures become por-

tals to transport the viewer through the artist's imagined world of myths and emotions that could be found on Jules Verne's submarine that floats in a sea of Fluxus surrealism.



Constellations of Thoughts, 2026, Persons Projects, Berlin



III, 2012, copper, brass, feather, oak, electronics, 160 x 85 x 40 cm



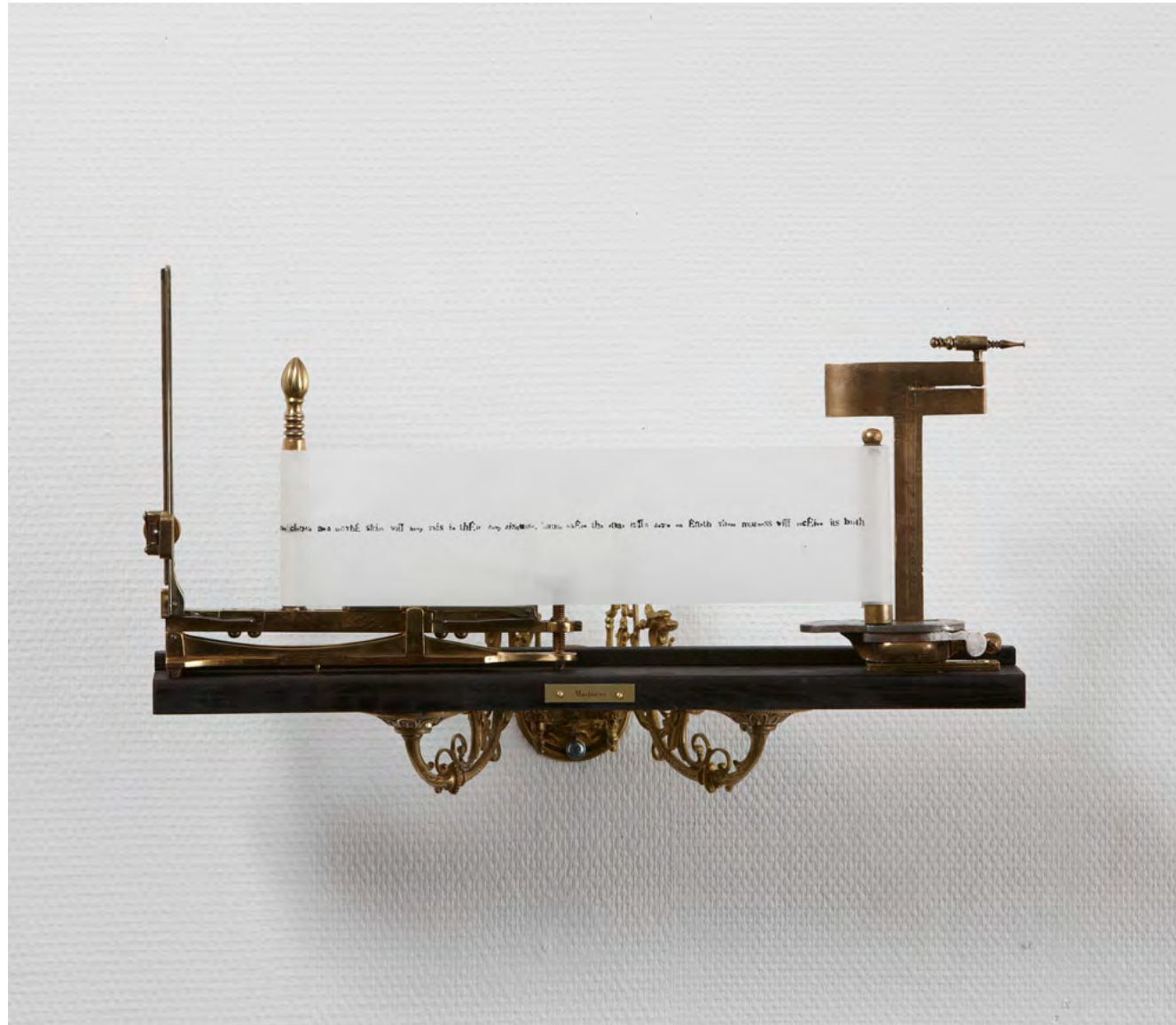
Biggest Unknown Curved Over, 2011, glass, gold leaf, brass, oak, 167 x 40 x 40 cm



Constellations of Thoughts, 2026, Persons Projects, Berlin



Raw Alchemy, 2011, brass, feather, oak, 26 x 32 x 15 cm

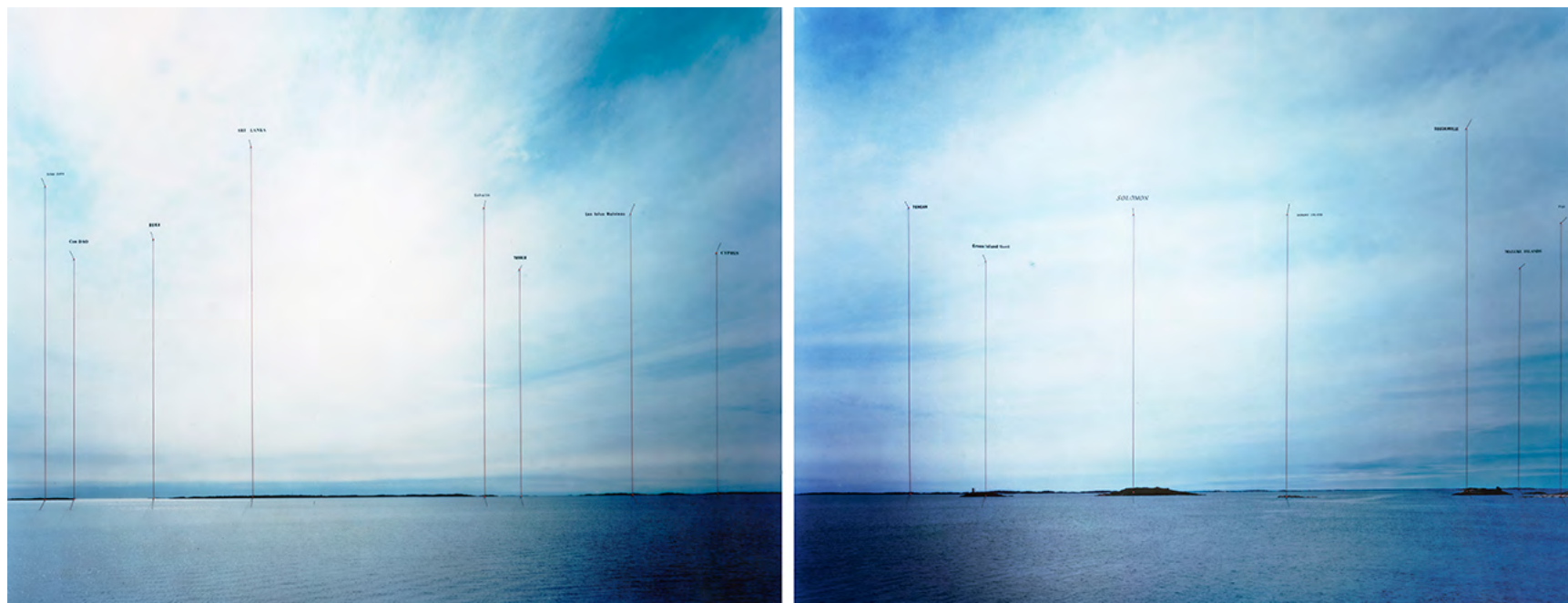


Madness, 2011, steel, oak, brass, paper, 26 x 50 x 20 cm

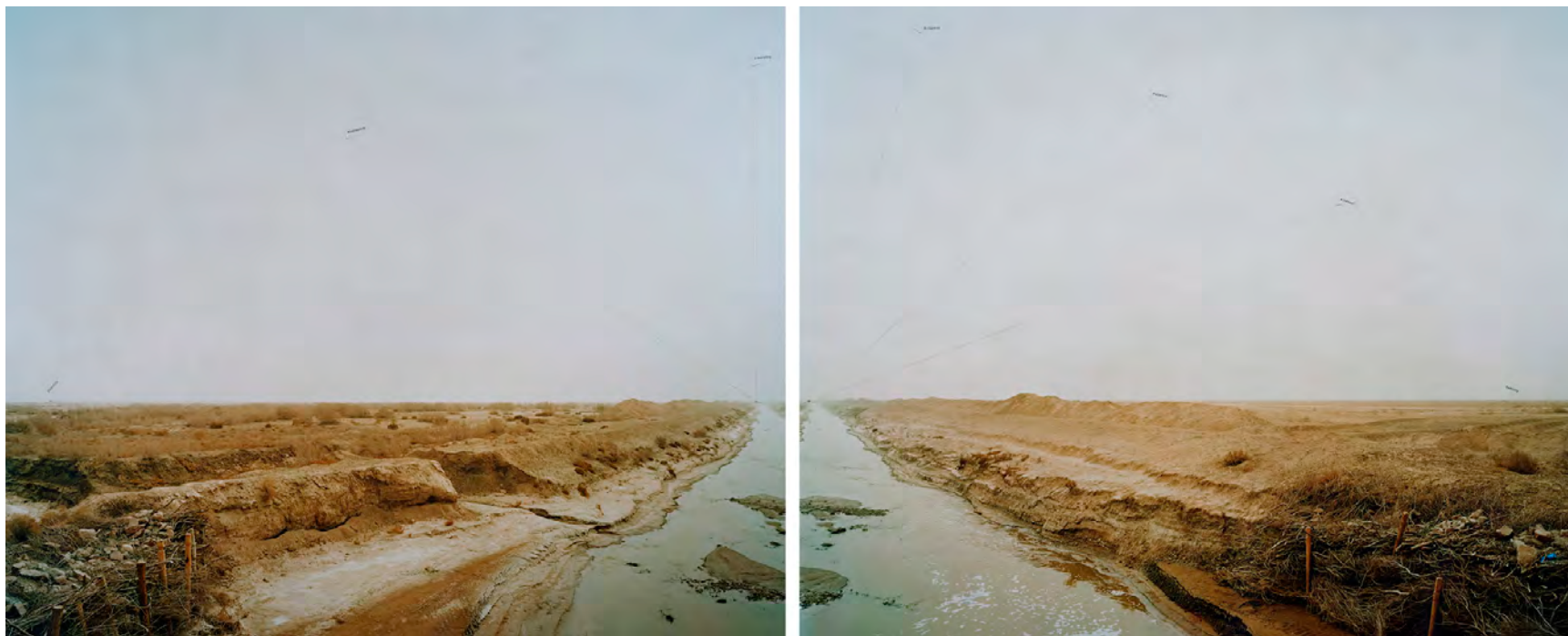
HORIZONS

In his *Horizons* series, Paratainen utilizes words and images to create a more conceptual understanding of a landscape. For Paratainen, a landscape is much more than a sum of shapes, colors, and light – it is grief, dreams, beauty, world politics, environmental disasters, and violence. The landscape is also concerned with time – the past, the present, the future. The horizon, then, can lend itself to an intense human experience of longing for a better life, for a space with infinite realities. The words and sentences on Paratainen's works in this series either poeticize or politicize the otherwise blank canvas that is the typical landscape photo. His choice of backdrop ranges globally, allowing his words to forge a new identity for these landscapes as he experiences them.

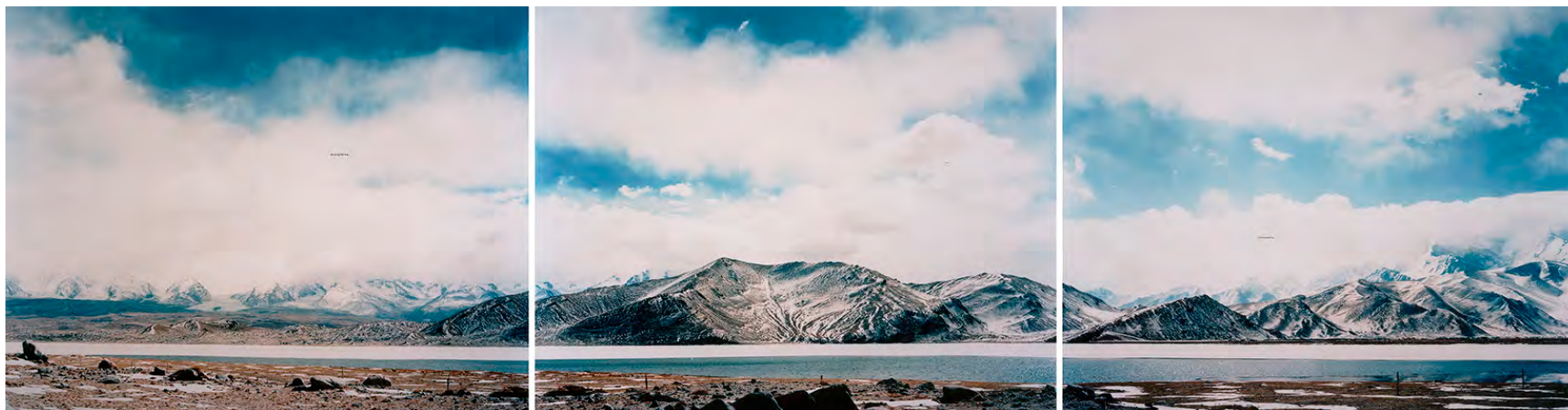




Two Horizons, 2007, Archival pigment print, 100 x 240 cm, diptych



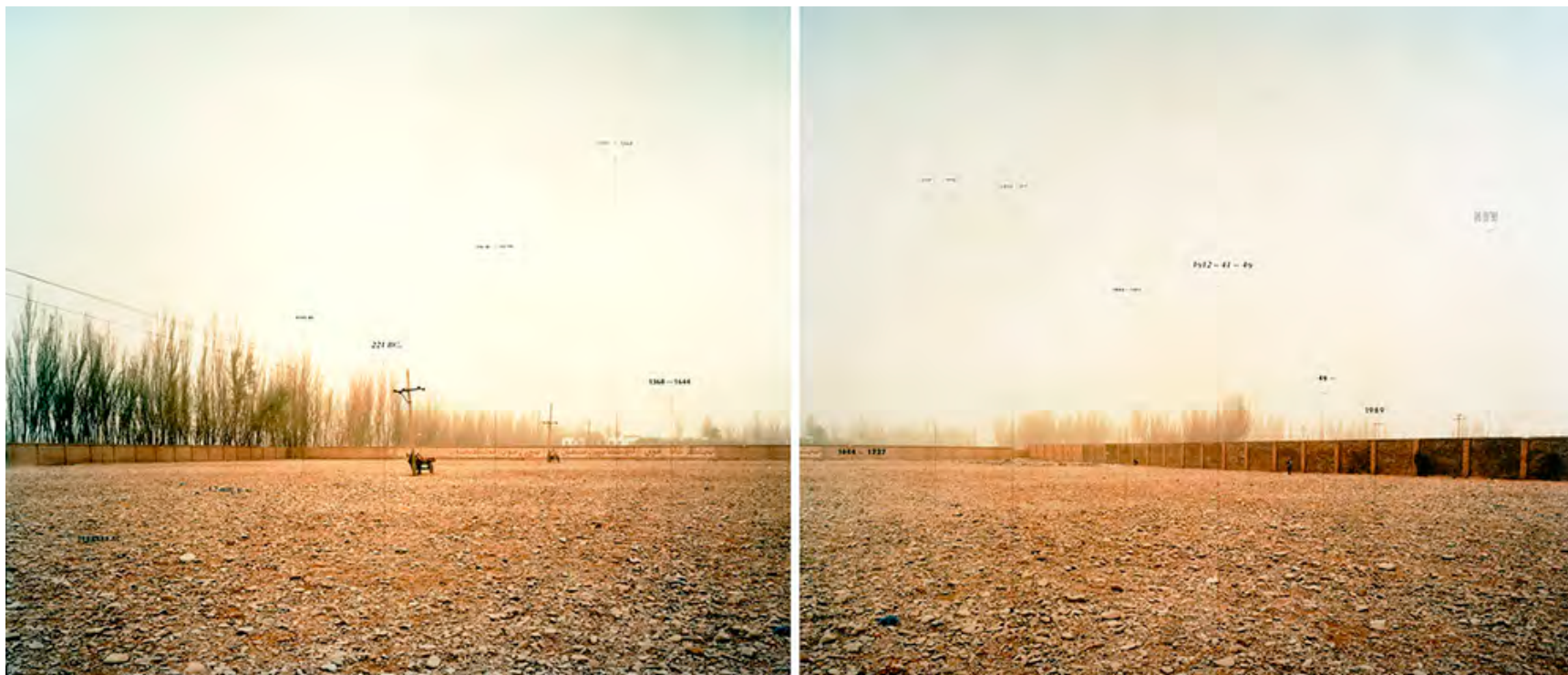
Virtues, 2008, Archival pigment print, 125 x 316 cm, diptych



Under China Clouds, 2008, Archival pigment print, 125 x 400 cm, triptych



Horizons, 2008, Heino Gallery, Helsinki



3 Million Years, 2008, Archival pigment print, 125 x 280 cm, diptych



Dead Centre, 2008, Archival pigment print, 107 x 300 cm, diptych



Horizons, 2008, Heino Gallery, Helsinki

DREAMS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

Jyrki Parantaine's series *Dreams and Disappointments* explores humans' physical and psychological vulnerability. Representations of the human body are marked with pushpins and strings that are attached to their perceived points of vulnerability. The strings that are pulled tight to a point outside the frame of the image are alluding to the presence of an unknown and dominant force. The events in the images are describing the individuals' relationship to themselves and other people. The events are social situations that often repeat themselves in human life. In these cinematic set ups, the individuals are represented in the moment when they are facing their history, future, dreams, and fears. Some of the photos have text: Singular words such as 'death', 'passion', or 'time' can be seen, and at times Parantainen pairs

an image with a longer poem. These texts, a motif across Parantainen's wider body of work, add tension to the photos in *Dreams and Disappointments*, referring to those crucial moments the subjects of his photos are experiencing.



Poetic Realities, 2020, Persons Projects, Berlin





Coordination of Past, 2005, Archival pigment print, 100 x 130 cm



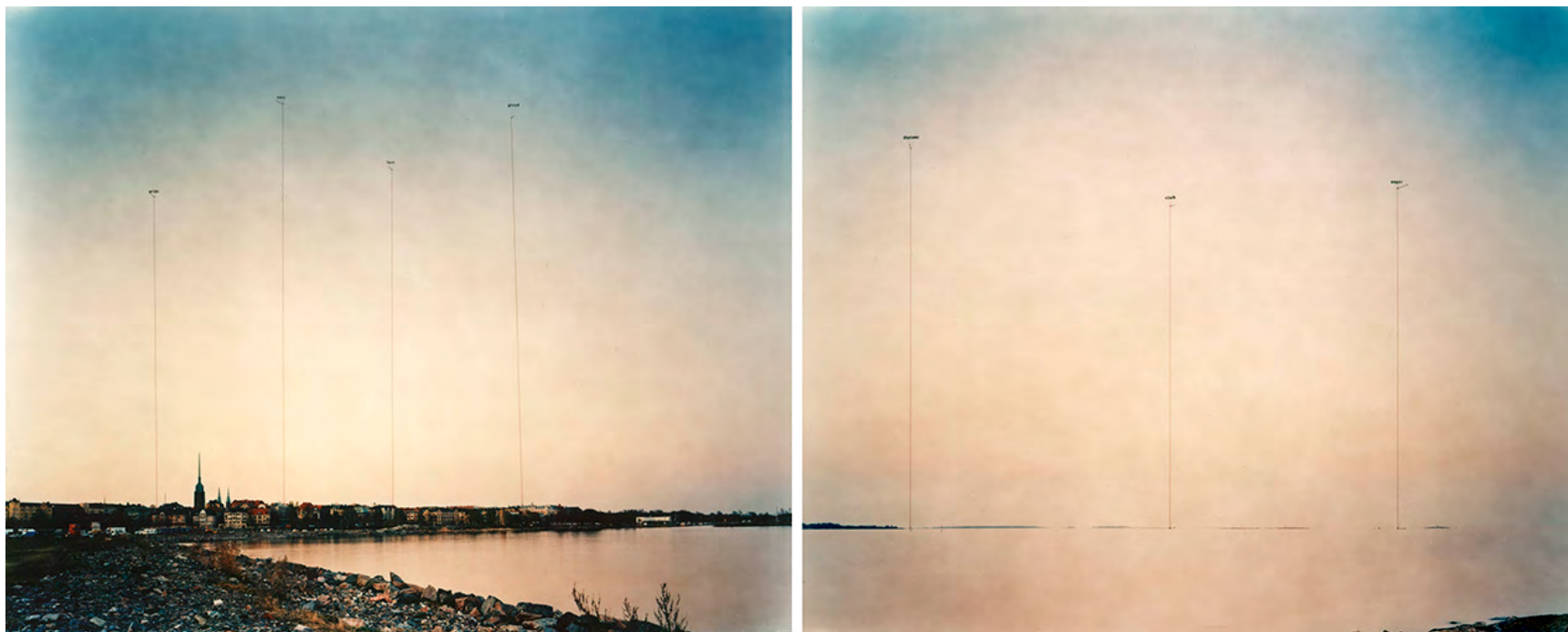
57 *Optional Spots to Crack the Bone*, 2004, C-print mounted on aluminum, 63 x 80 cm



Poetic Realities, 2020, Persons Projects, Berlin



Alphabet of Broken Dreams , 2004, Archival pigment print, 100 x 130 cm



Horizon, 2006, C-print mounted on aluminum, 120 x 300 cm



100 Perfect Hits towards Bosnian Parliament House, 2004, Archival pigment print, 58 x 80 cm

FIRE

Jyrki Parantainen always seeks to further his conceptual approaches and working methods. His practice combines the photographic medium with other genres of art. The phase of conception and preparation is a fundamental part of the creative process, which he likens to that of writing a script for a film. This acute sense for detail was most evident in Parantainen's *Fire* series. It's his most notable body work, taking over five years to complete and still today challenges the borders of how far we can push the photographic experience in terms of preparation, application and realization. These photographs explore the nature of our fears and what's important through the sheer force of their reality, as all the fire scenes captured on film are in real time. Parantainen was responsible in all aspects of the totality

of the project from the set designs to igniting and extinguishing the actual fires. Inspired by the films of Andrei Tarkovsky, Parantainen uses his Fire series as a reminder in how vulnerable we all are in the balance between the sublime and disaster.



HALLEN 06, 2025, Wilhelm Hallen, Berlin



Fire No 02. (23.6.1994, Outokumpu, Finland), 1994, Archival pigment print, 128 x 160 cm



Fire No 04. (27.6.1996, Haapsalu, Estonia), 1996, Archival pigment print, 128 x 160 cm





Fire No 17. (28.6.1996, Haapsalu, Estonia), 1996, Archival pigment print, 160 x 128 cm



Fire No 19. (23.2.1997, Helsinki, Finland), 1997, Archival pigment print, 160 x 128 cm



Jari Paavola
 1960-
 The Fire in the Room
 2011
 Digital print
 100 x 150 cm

NEW PERSPECTIVES
 THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY
 HELSINKI SCHOOL

The Helsinki School of Photography is a unique and internationally recognized institution for contemporary photography. It was founded in 1988 by Jari Paavola and Jukka-Pekka Kallio. The school's mission is to provide a high-quality education in photography, focusing on both technical skills and creative expression. The curriculum is designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of individual students, allowing them to explore their own interests and develop their own artistic voice. The school's faculty consists of experienced photographers and educators, many of whom are active in the Finnish and international art scenes. The Helsinki School of Photography has a strong reputation for its graduates, who have gone on to work in a variety of fields, including journalism, advertising, and fine art. The school's facilities are state-of-the-art, with a large studio space, a darkroom, and a computer lab. The school also has a well-stocked library and a collection of photographic equipment. The Helsinki School of Photography is a place where students can learn from the best and develop their skills and creativity. It is a place where they can find their own voice and make their own mark on the world of photography.



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JUKKA-PEKKA KALLIO
 1960-
 The Fire in the Room
 2011
 Digital print
 100 x 150 cm

JARI PAAVOLA
 1960-
 The Fire in the Room
 2011
 Digital print
 100 x 150 cm

New Perspectives Through Photography – 25 Years of the Helsinki School, 2021, Taidehalli Helsinki



Fire No 03. (16.6.1994, Outokumpu, Finland), 1994, Archival pigment print, 160 x 128 cm



Fire No 23. (20.7.1997, Helsinki, Finland), 1997, Archival pigment print, 128 x 160 cm



Fire No 27. (24.5.1998, Helsinki, Finland), 1997, Archival pigment print, 128 x 320 cm, Diptych



Fire Installation, 1998, Art Museum Ateneum, Helsinki



Fire Installation, 1998, Art Museum Ateneum, Helsinki

Persons Projects

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