

JYRKI PARANTAINEN

Persons
Projects

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. Inspired by the Land Art tradition, his monumental Earth series of 1991 demonstrates the experimental use of the camera as not merely a documentary but rather a creational tool. In order to stage his landscape events set within nature as well as abandoned in-

dustrial facilities, he made use of different materials and textures ranging from light and fire to crushed chalkstone and milk, capturing the nighttime scenes through long exposures.

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 Gal-

lery, 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.

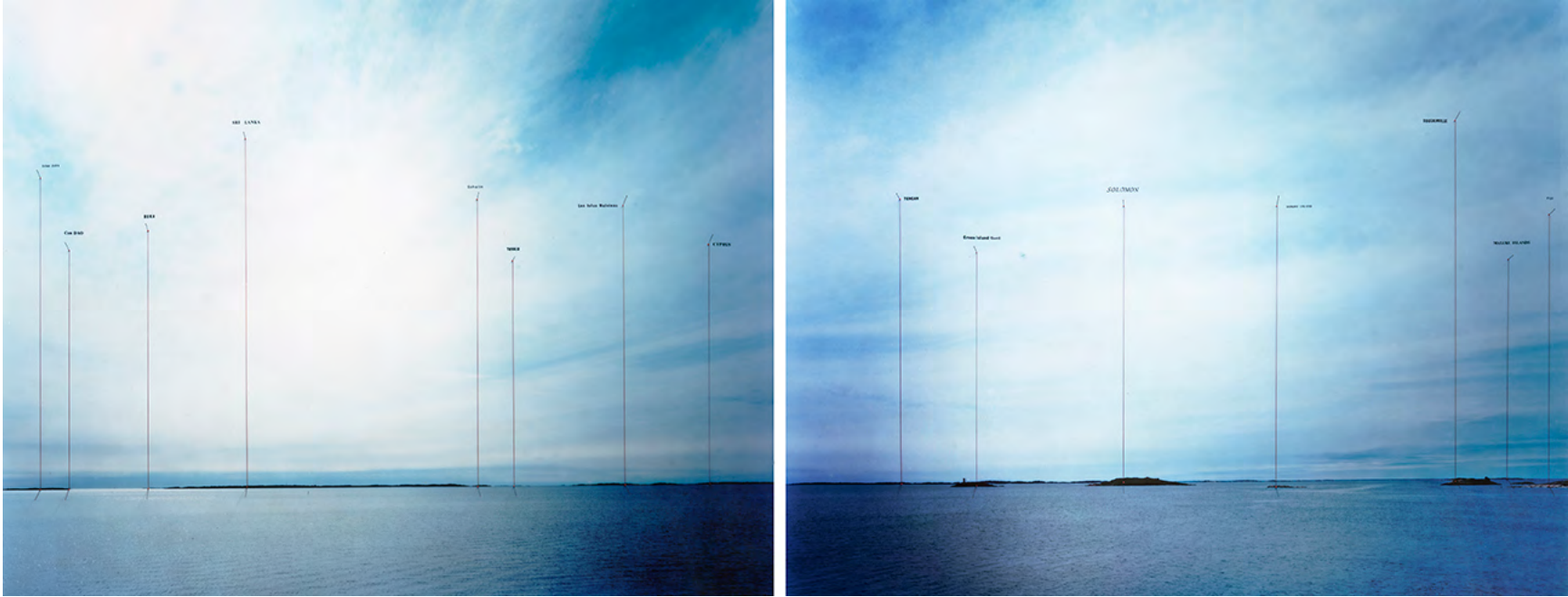


HORIZONS

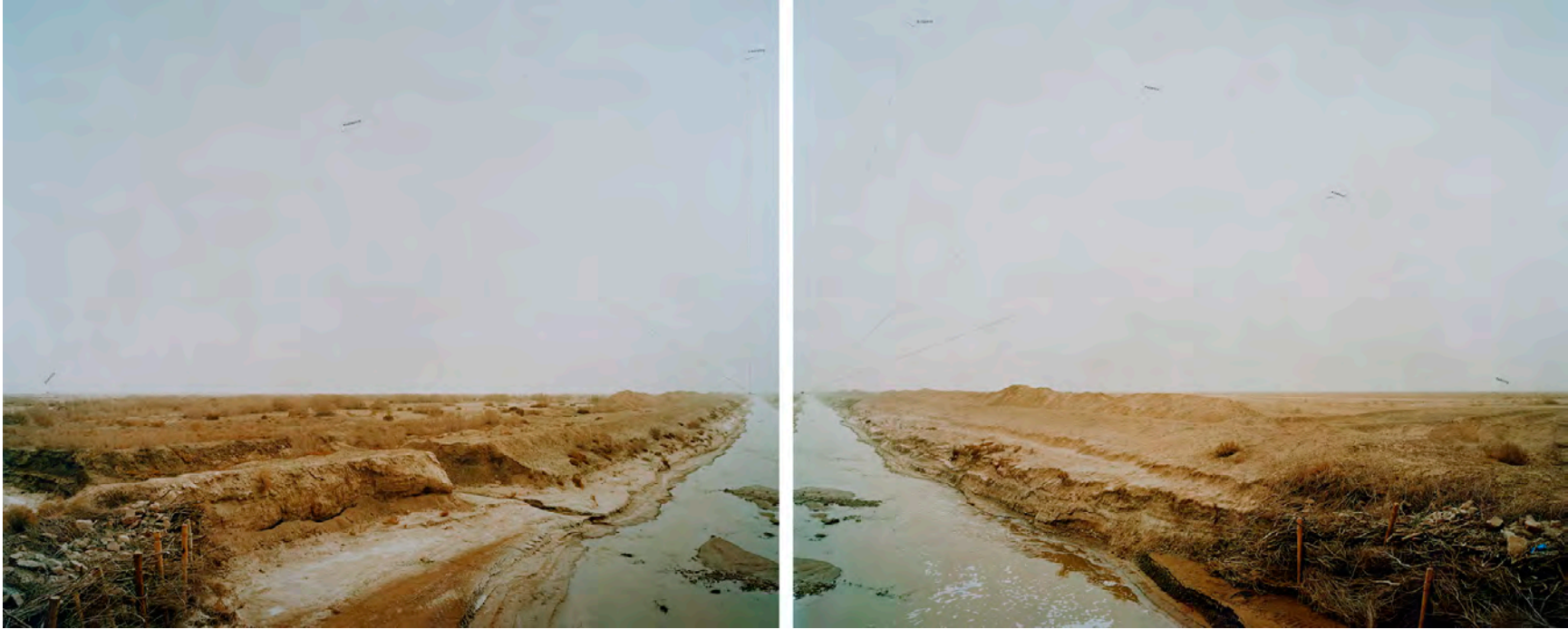
In his “Horizons” (2008) series, Paratainen utilizes words and images to create a more conceptual understanding of a landscape. For Paratainen, a landscape is much more than a sum of shapes, colors, and light – it is grief, dreams, beauty, world politics, environmental disasters, and violence. The landscape 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.



Horizons, exhibition view at Heino Gallery, Helsinki, 2010



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



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



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



Horizons, exhibition view at Heino Gallery, Helsinki, 2010

DREAMS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

His 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, exhibition view at Persons Projects, Berlin, 2020



Personal Museum, 2006, C-Print, Diasec, 100 x 260 cm, diptych



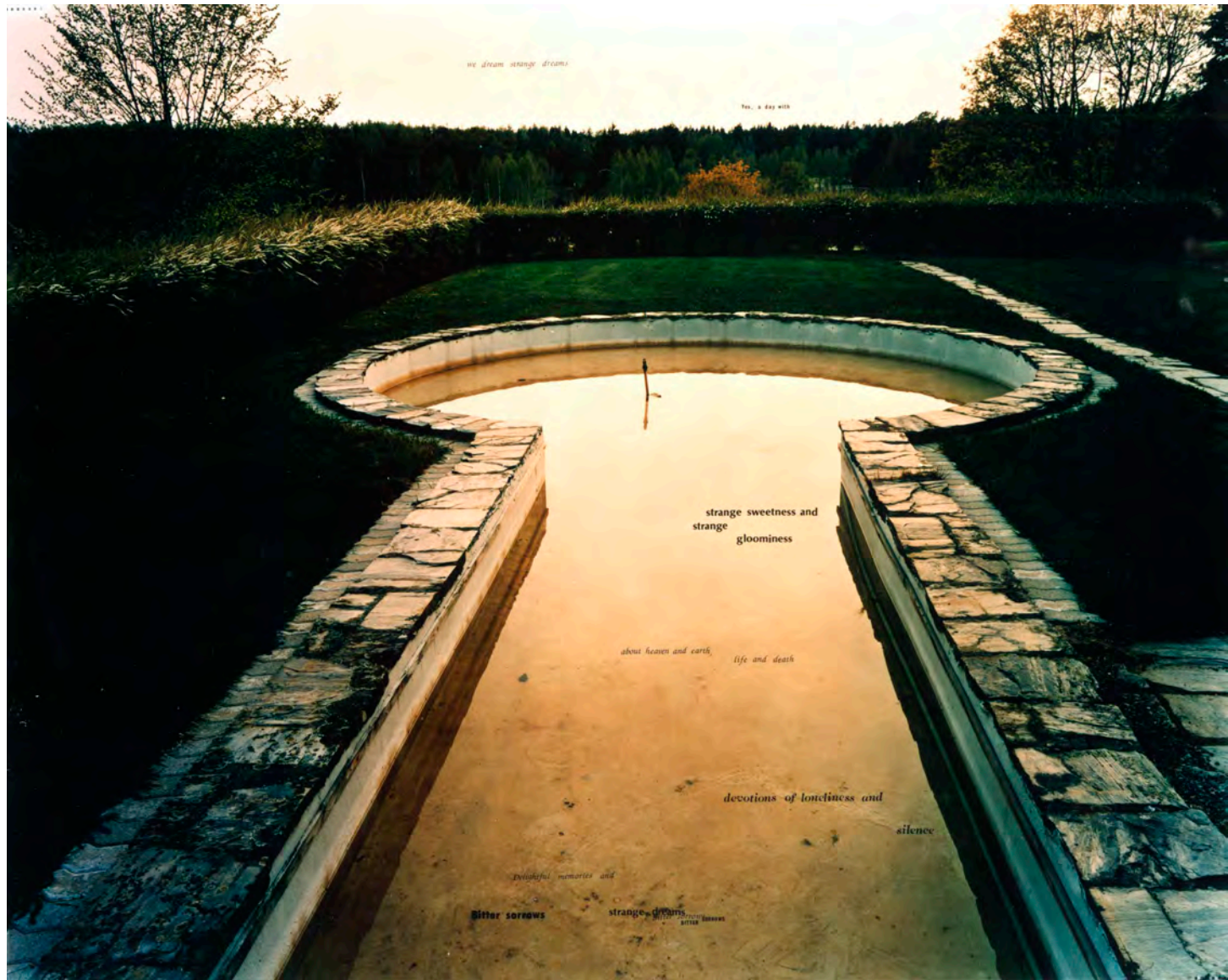
Coordination of Past, 2005, Archival pigment print, 100 x 130 cm



Map of Expectations, 2005, C-print mounted on aluminum, 100 x 130 cm



Alphabet of Possibilities, 2004, Archival pigment print, 100 x 130 cm



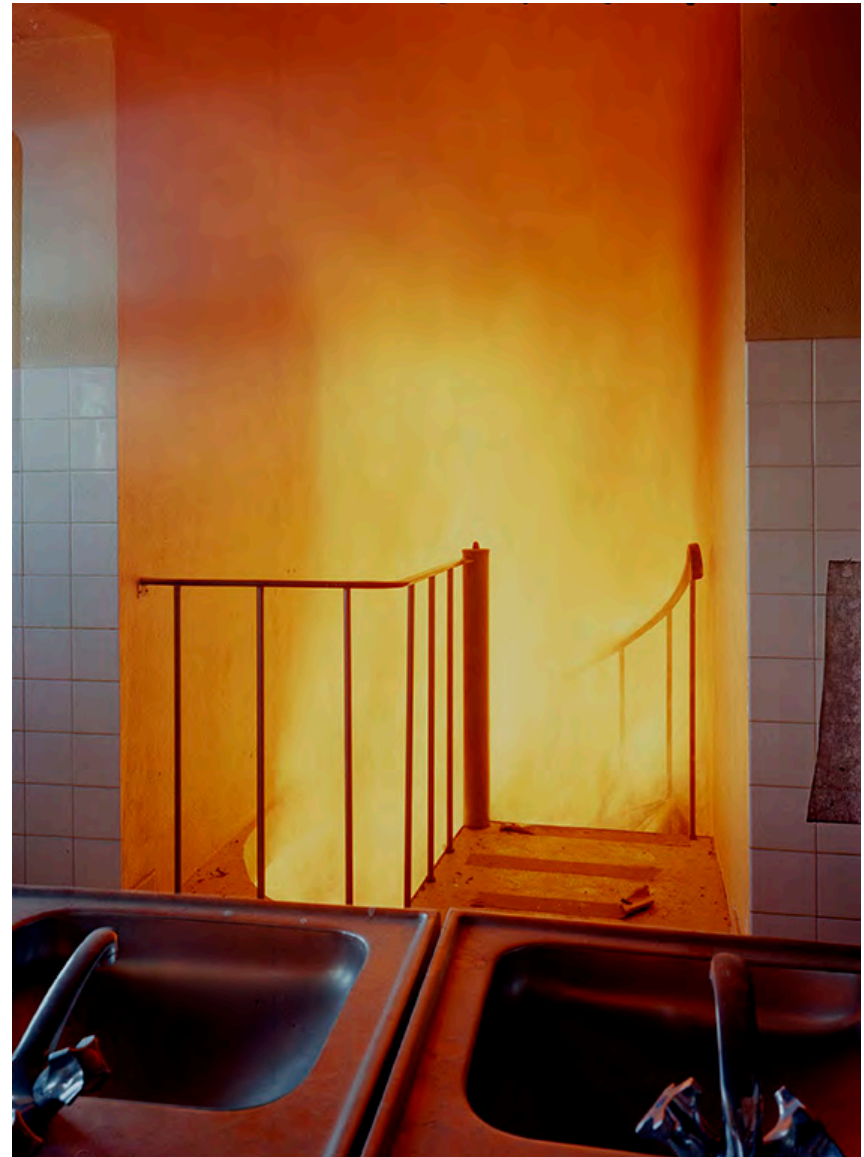
Letter to Mona, 2006, C-Print, Diasec, 128 x 160 cm

FIRE

Parantainen's acute sense for detail and preparation for his photography is notably seen in his "Fire" series. These photographs explore the nature of our fears and what's important through the sheer force of their reality, as all the fire scenes were captured on film in real time. Parantainen was responsible, in all aspects, for the totality of the project: From the set designs to igniting and extinguishing the actual fires. The control the artist had in such a dangerous project brings a haunting calm to the series. While light is normally associated with "goodness", the "Fire" series depicts the light of the flame as (what author Craig Burnett would call) "a ravaging beauty and horror." 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.



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



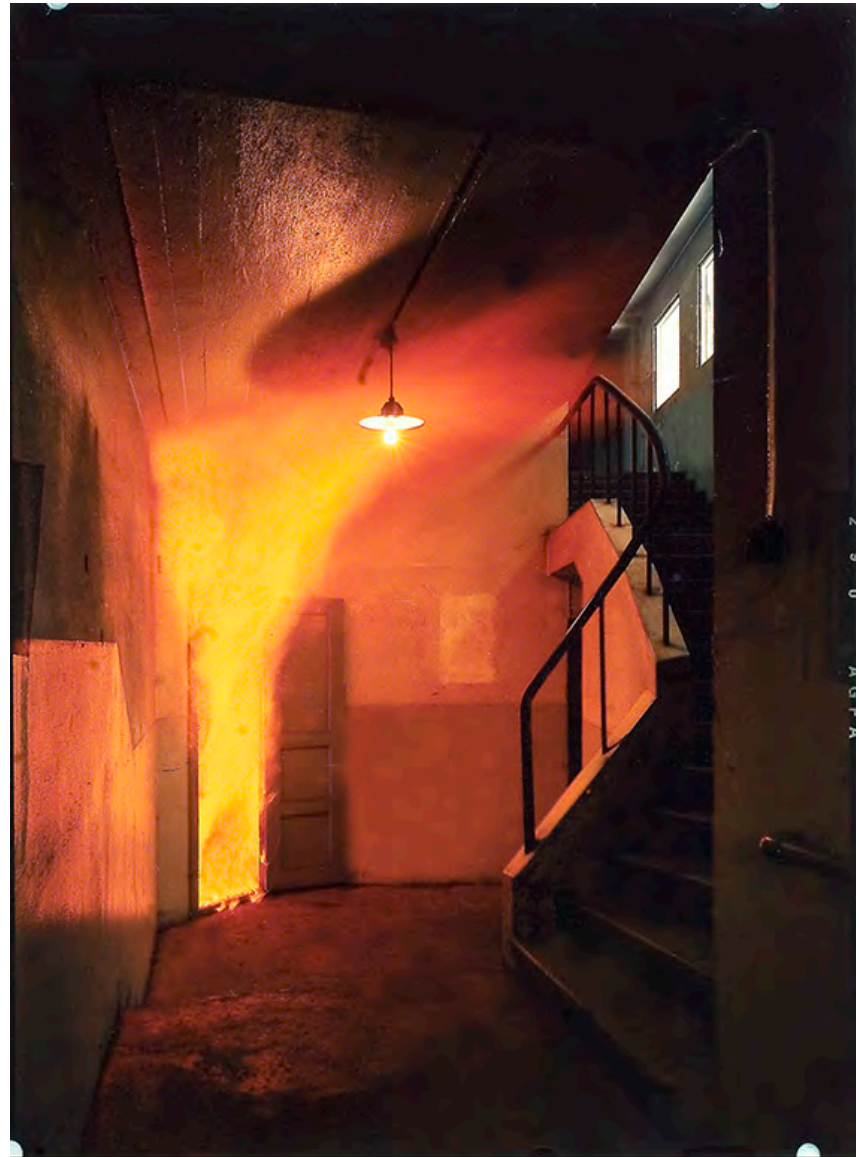
Fire No 03. (16.6.1994, Outokumpu, Finland), 1994, Archival pigment print, 160 x 128 cm



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



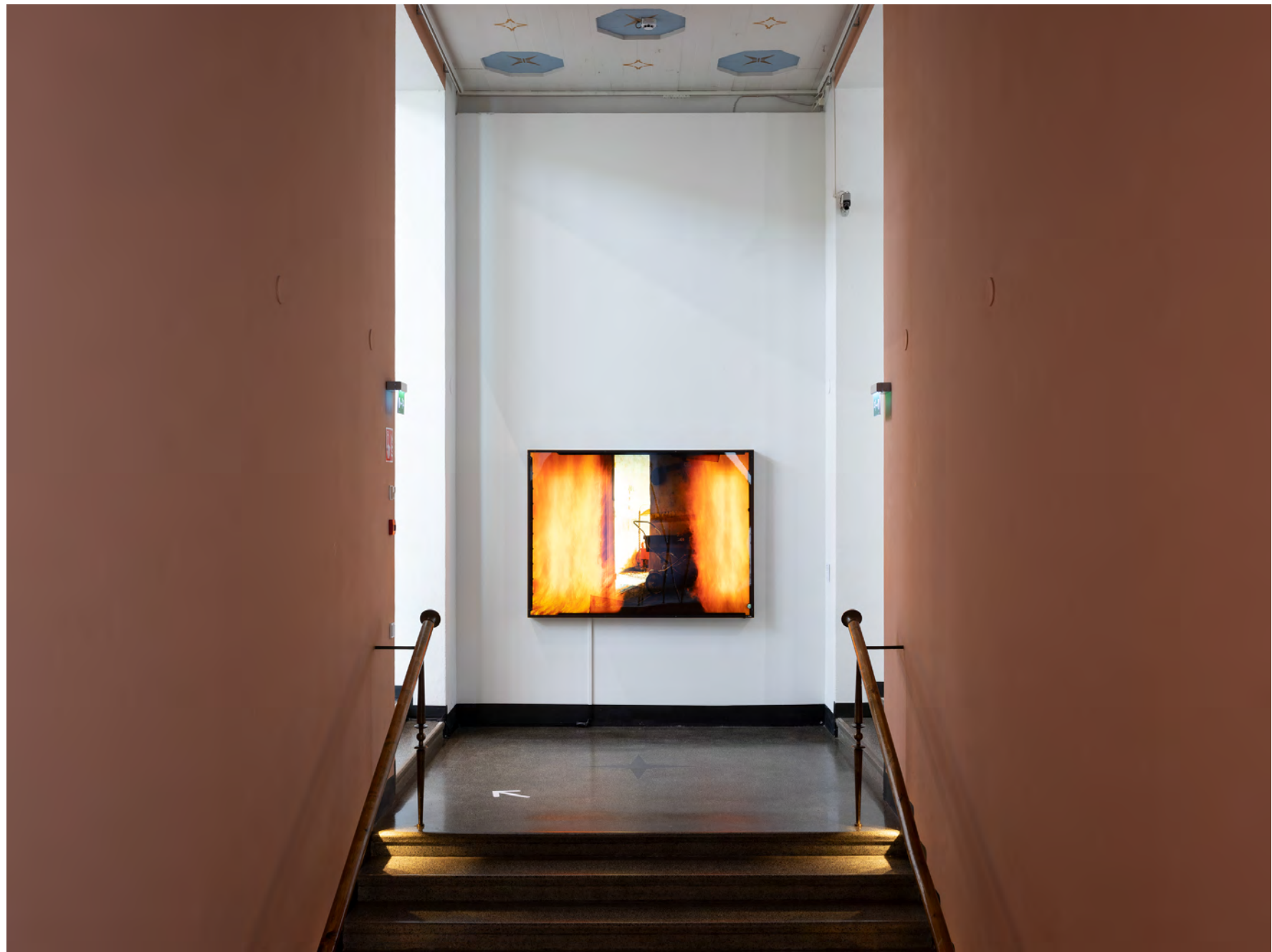
Fire No 19. (23.2.1997, Helsinki, Finland), 1997, Archival pigment print, 160 x 128 cm



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



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

Persons Projects

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