

Pekka Paikkari

December 13, 2024 – February 22, 2025

Opening Reception: December 13, 6-8 pm

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HB381 is pleased to present *Winter Tales*, an exhibition of sculptural reliefs by the Helsinki-based ceramic artist Pekka Paikkari (Finnish, b. 1960). Paikkari's compositions combine intentionality with entropy, produced through an aleatory process in which drying clay, sculpted and incised, splinters along chance rifts and is subsequently reassembled. His works are characterized by bifurcating lines and chalky, near monochrome hues which reveal the barren poetry of the wintertime landscape.

Paikkari uses everyday objects as tools—bricks, dinner forks, gardening rakes, mops, and brooms—to carve indents and striations into flattened slabs of clay. Following a prolonged process of drying, the surface is exquisitely marked, inlaid with a web of linear patterns and natural fissures, which Paikkari complicates through expressionistic washes of paint and aluminum oxide. The works' titles recall the stark landscapes of late autumn and deep winter, from austere tundra and snow-blanketed fields to frozen ponds, rowan berries, and the crisp mornings on which one's breath crystalizes with each exhalation. Their frequently monumental scale engulfs the viewer in what Glenn Adamson terms Paikkari's "visual topology."

In his essay for the exhibition catalog, Adamson writes:

Paikkari simply lets the material find its own form, cracking along undetectable internal fault lines. He discovered this possibility quite accidentally, about twenty years ago. He had made a piece on the floor, intending to cut it into a regular grid of tiles, but didn't quite get around to that and ended up leaving it overnight. The following morning, he found his work lying in random, amorphous shapes, each one of which was about the right size to pick up and fire in the kiln. He remembers telling his wife, "This is what I'm going to do for the rest of my life." So far, he's been right about that.

It is easy to understand why Paikkari was (and remains) so excited by this "hands off" way of working. Simple as it is, it results in an incredible complexity ... It is a way of complicating authorship, leaving space for the unexpected. And also a way to achieve a form that is indexical – Paikkari calls it "onomatopoetic," with meaning bound inextricably to the means of expression. There is no separation between cause and effect, between the aims of art and the laws of physics.

Paikkari studied at the Kuopio Academy of Design and has been a member of the Arabia Art Department Society since 1983. His work is included in many prestigious museum collections including the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Museu de la Ceràmica, Barcelona, and the Shigaraki Museum of Contemporary Ceramic Art in Japan, among others.