



Though the exhibition has closed, a trip to Seattle still provides a good overview of Simpson's achievements. Ten fully accessible pieces dot the metropolitan area in both public and, surprisingly, corporate settings. *Water Glass/Water Table* (2007) uses rooftop drainage to create a waterfall that perpetually flows into a giant green-tinted beaker standing in front of the street-level entry to a high-rise condo.

—Matthew Kangas

## HELSINKI

### "No Man's Land"

#### Forum Box

Entering the gallery brought viewers into contact with an unexpected obstacle: Ilmari Gryta's full-size transit shelter. Coated in reflective material and situated in the dimly lit entrance, it halted movement as visitors examined their reflections and the reversed view of the street behind them. The work seemed displaced as it mirrored an actual tram stop across the road. Moreover, its gleaming surfaces subverted its materiality. This conundrum—at once concrete and chimerical—offered a strange blend of the everyday and the remarkable.

That, at least, is how it appeared on the sunny day when I first visited "Ei kenenkään maa" or "No Man's Land." Next time, overcast skies had tempered its radiance and converted its reflective panels into scrims through which the luminance of *Fata Morgana*, Meri Peura's gold-capped mountain of steel, and *Sateenkaarenpää* (*End of the rainbow*), Gryta's colorful rotating column, could be glimpsed.

The first manifested a mirage; the second a fantasy. But despite being constituted of matter, their wondrous attributes remained beyond reach. The sides of Peura's mountain offered no foothold for climbing, and Gryta's isolated rainbow spun inside a cylindrical advertising case.

Peura's videos, with their depictions of individuals engaged in endlessly repetitive tasks, reinforced the sense of futility. *Golem* focuses on a man wearing a mask of gold who cannot stop running his hands over his face. The second calls up Sisyphus by showing a man who shovels and shovels, but the shape of the dirt mound before him—his personal mountain—remains unchanged. Gryta, on the other hand, concentrates on industrial subjects. Much like the transit shelter, his rainbow column mimicked the appearance of pillars supporting a nearby bridge. And a selection of small wall-mounted sculptures pointed to changes affecting the character of the neighborhood around the gallery. For example, *Arkki (Ark)*—a colorful stack of shipping containers apparently floating in the air—cites the relocation of a formerly adjacent

**Above:** Buster Simpson, *Secured Embrace*, 2011–present. Cast concrete, tree roots, and stainless steel cable, 52 x 168 x 52 in. **Top right:** Meri Peura, *Fata Morgana*, 2013. Metal and gold leaf, 380 x 850 x 400 cm. **Right:** Ilmari Gryta, *Pysäkki (Transit shelter)*, 2013. Wood, Plexiglas, and reflective film, 240 x 345 x 180 cm. Both from "No Man's Land."

container terminal during a massive urban redevelopment project.

The evocative "Ei kenenkään maa" explored that which remains elusive and the ensuing sense of exclusion or loss. The exhibition statement equates this condition with the drive for happiness through the attainment of riches, power, and honor—a delusion that convinces people to achieve things

that ultimately provide no real satisfaction. It also contends that the willingness to strive for such goals forms an absurd facet of being human. This position was realized through the artists' provocative amalgamation of lustrous materials, advertising structures, and mythical tales, magnets that draw and then frustrate us when they prove inaccessible or point to tragic outcomes. Though the experience conjured countless stories that warn against deception, the work itself avoided calculation or blatant moralizing. One of the show's strengths was that it remained visually intriguing, and the effective manner in which it linked ancient stories with present-day events contributed multiple nuances to its interpretative possibilities.

—John Gayer

