

G A S W O R K S

PRESS RELEASE

Juha Pekka Matias Laakkonen: Buoyancy 14 April – 19 June 2022



Gasworks presents the first UK institutional solo exhibition by Finland-based artist [Juha Pekka Matias Laakkonen](#). Making use of nature as raw material, Laakkonen's process-based practice and durational works reflect on the profound impact of human interactions with the environment, while addressing wider existential concerns around time, death and the limits of scientific knowledge.

At Gasworks, the artist will present a newly-commissioned performance and large-scale sculpture entitled *Framed Sea Cow*. This work is based on the features of a skeleton, documented by German explorer Georg Wilhelm Steller, of a female sea cow killed in 1742, just one year after the species was 'discovered'. The Steller's sea cow is considered to have gone extinct shortly afterwards in 1768, making it the first historical extinction of a marine mammal at human hands.

Presented as a live durational performance, Laakkonen's work will bring this extinct sirenian back into existence. Throughout the duration of the exhibition, the artist will carefully craft and assemble in the gallery a wooden replica of this creature's huge skeleton, based solely on the written description provided by Steller in the 18th century. Once completed, the resulting sculpture will remain dramatically suspended in the gallery like a ship in a bottle.

As part of the public programme accompanying the exhibition, Laakkonen will present his first ever musical performance. Entitled *Flock of Birds*, it consists of a short, repetitive composition played by an ensemble of young musicians from local primary schools in Lambeth. The composition is divided into simple steps so that each musician plays a single note in sequential order, thus drifting in and out of sync like a flock of birds.

The exhibition is commissioned and produced by Gasworks with generous support from the [Finnish Institute](#) and [Covi-Mora](#).

Gasworks commissions are supported by Catherine Petitgas and Gasworks Exhibitions Supporters.

– ENDS –

PRESS CONTACT

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[High res images are available here](#) (log in with email address)

IMAGE

Juha Pekka Matias Laakkonen, Dodo, 2015. Bird bones washed ashore collected and embedded in resin. Courtesy of the artist and Corvi-Mora, London.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Juha Pekka Matias Laakkonen

Juha Pekka Matias Laakkonen is an artist based in Rovaniemi, Finland. Recent solo exhibitions include Kunstverein München, Munich (2019); Kohta, Helsinki (2017); Corvi-Mora, London (2017 and 2015). He has exhibited internationally at organisations including Kiasma, Helsinki; Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius; Ystads Konstmuseum, Ystad; Lofoten International Art Festival, Svolvær; MHKA Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp; and KHM Gallery, Malmö.

About Gasworks

For over twenty five years Gasworks has played a unique role in the contemporary visual arts sector by working at the intersection between UK and international practices and debates. It does this by providing studios for London-based artists; commissioning emerging UK-based and international artists to present their first major exhibitions in London; and developing a highly-respected international residencies programme, mainly working with artists based outside Europe and North America. All programmes are accompanied by events and participatory workshops that engage local and international audiences with artists and their work.

Gasworks is also the hub of Triangle Network, an international network of small-scale arts organisations and projects that support and disseminate the work of emerging artists through artist-led workshops, residencies, exhibitions and outreach events. Gasworks and Triangle Network are registered as a charity in the UK under 'Triangle Arts Trust' and all their activities are free to the public.

Listings Information

Juha Pekka Matias Laakkonen: Buoyancy

14 April – 19 June 2022

Preview 13 April 2022, 6:30-8.30pm.

Gasworks, 155 Vauxhall St, London SE11 5RH

Free admission

Open: Weds – Sun 12-6pm.

www.gasworks.org.uk

@GasworksLondon: [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#) / [Vimeo](#)

URL: <https://bit.ly/juhalaakkonen> Hashtags: #juhapekkamatiaslaakkonen #gasworkslondon

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