

HARSH COLLECTIVE



Johanna Kestilä, "Leave the Message Babe" 2023, 85cm x 115cm, acrylic on canvas

For Immediate Release: October 5th, 2023, 6 - 9 PM, 532 w 28th St, New York, NY 10001

Harsh Collective is pleased to announce the solo exhibition "Love Dialogue" with Finnish artist Johanna Kestilä. The exhibition will take place from October 5th to October 29th, with an opening reception on October 5th from 6-9 pm. The exhibition features accompanying texts for the works written by the artist's daughter, Lotta Hukkanen.

"Love Dialogue" - Experiences of You

The works of the exhibition depict moments in which something special occurs and life, once again, shifts its course ever so slightly. Events in life occasionally rise to great heights, only to return to the rhythm of normalcy, much like the cadence of breathing. Every experience leaves some kind of trace. I seek and explore the imprints that different events leave on people, and transform them into paintings.

The transformation does not unfold within a closed, silent space; instead, experiences become visual blueprints in everyday practical moments - nursing a child, lying in the arms of a loved one - in situations where nothing else needs to transpire. Moments of stillness amidst the routines of everyday life provide the room to process emotions and events. After periods of motion, time is needed for things to settle into a certain order, so they can be better comprehended. The creation of these artworks is an process that perpetually unfolds, active even without intention. It is a process that perpetually unfolds. The inherent variability finds concrete expression in the pieces of art; the ambiance of intense moments intertwines with the stillness through stitches, transitioning into an observant state.

The artworks are not part of the same series, nor are they colorful or formal replicas of each other; instead, they are unique depictions of occurrences within human relationships. The paintings are visual portrayals that breathe and come alive in the present moment. The paintings depict the dialogue between people in various loving relationships, visually, narratively, and rhythmically. Many things happen in everyone's life, but how one sees them is individualistic.

Accompanying each artwork is also text - in the form of a letter or a poem - that elaborates on the context of the piece for its observer or stands entirely separate as an interpretation of interpretations.

-Johanna Kestilä

Johanna Kestilä (b. 1973) breaks free from traditional boundaries. She has studied weaving, construction drawing, textile design, visual arts, and visual art therapy. Johanna has explored various materials extensively, ultimately specializing in creating textile paintings that incorporate space and density. Kestilä's experience in therapy and psychology deeply influence her artistic practice.

She approaches the creative process with a perspective that challenges the concept of "finished" pieces. Initially, she paints the canvas to a point where one might consider it complete, only to then deconstruct the material into pieces. Afterward, she studies these reborn materials as entirely distinct from their original forms and reconstructs them into her completed work of art.

This process elegantly showcases her ability to infuse movement and rhythm from the exterior and bring it back out as an integral part of her creations. Despite the physically and mentally demanding nature of this technique, it manages to convey a sense of tenderness and vulnerability, leaving viewers in a state of calm and harmony.