

# UNDERNEATH

19.09.2020–23.01.2021

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**EMMA HELLE & HELENA SINERVO (FI)**

## **Merirequiem Beta (2020)**

Collaboration between visual artist Emma Helle and poet Helena Sinervo

Exhibition room: Hvelving

The blend of lyrical abstractionism and art historical deconstruction that is characteristic of Emma Helle's work comes into play in her interesting experimental collaboration with poet Helena Sinervo. Helena Sinervo wrote a suite of erotic poems of the sea and its symbolic liaison to the unconsciousness, with the intention of having Helle dream them into sculptures. In this ensemble of interconnected sculptures, Helle works with a poetic mind in a way that combines the essence of literature with sculpture in an intuitive fragmented fantasy. She seems to start with some words in her mind, where their connotation brings to mind other words and images, gently layering meaning and associations in an intricate texture.

Helle uses various materials with confidence, including porcelain, wood, and found objects to give the poems the form they need in order to manifest physically. The result is a sophisticated suite of unique works with deeper meanings. Playful and loaded with endless curiosity. The artifacts are vehicles for associations, not literal translations. In this way, the process of creating the sculptures with poetry as a point of departure is similar to the way poetry translates into music.

## **BIO**

**Emma Helle** is a Finnish sculptor who casts the spotlight on the marginalized creatures, usually relegated to secondary status in art history. She portrays cherubs and feminine sprites in the starring role, as active agents. Relaxed, unpretentious, and generous in her style of portrayal, she lends soft, curvaceous shapes to the feminine bodies with a breadth and richness of expression that evokes canonical works from art history. Throughout the ages, there have always been specific conventions that have dictated the portrayal of the human body, a legacy that Helle addresses through a dual lens of art history and corporeality. Emma Helle is a graduate of the Helsinki Academy of Fine Arts. Her work is represented in many private and public collections, including the State Art Collection, the Helsinki Art Museum HAM, and the Pro Artibus collection. She has had several solo exhibitions, including the Turku Art Museum, and she has taken part in group exhibitions at the Mänttö Art Festival, Kunsthalle Helsinki, and the Espoo Museum of Modern Art EMMA, Finland.

**Helena Sinervo** was born in 1961 in the industrial city of Tampere, Finland. She was brought up in the family of a post officer and a Karelian war refugee. She had four elder brothers, so she learned how to fight and climb trees. Sinervo now lives in Helsinki with my daughter and works as an independent writer. Sinervo studied music at the Conservatoire, and earned her living as a piano teacher until she took to literature, after years of literary studies at the universities of Helsinki and Paris. *Avaruusruusuja* (Space Roses, 2014) and *Merveli* (Merveli, 2018) are the latest of her eleven books of poems, and a large selection of her poetry (*Valitut runot*, Selected Poems) was published in 2011. Helena Sinervos poems have been translated into 28 languages. The most recent of her three novels, *Armonranta* (The Grace Shore), was published in 2016. For her debut novel, *Runoilijan talossa* (In the House of the Poet, 2004) she was awarded the Finlandia Prize for best novel, the most prestigious literary acknowledgment in Finland. She was also awarded the Dancing Bear Award from the Finnish National Broadcasting Company for the best book of poetry with *Ihmisen kaltainen* (Like a Human Being) in 2001 and *Väärän lajin laulut* (Songs of the Wrong Species) in 2011. Sinervo has also published a set of two novels (*Patarania* 2012, 2013) and a poetry book (2007) for children. Over the years she has also gained recognition as a literary essayist, teacher of creative writing, and translator of poetry.