



“Treescape”

KAUPO KIKKAS

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For years I have been looking for a way to represent trees. Trees, which are usually only defined by a mere biological classifier. Trees, which are the most obvious part of the space surrounding us that we take for granted. However I still feel that there is much more to trees.

When attempting to describe that feeling, I discovered that there are no words for it. There simply aren't and that's it. Thus I have been trying to say it with a camera for years now. Giving my thoughts freedom and hoping that my eyes and hands can do more with a camera than the rigid lexicology we have been taught.

I am not a tree hugger, an esoteric or particularly religious, but when I'm standing in the forest, I always get this undefinable feeling and desire to describe it. I have been aided a lot by the writings of Herman Hesse and Valdur Mikita, or perhaps not the texts themselves but the authors' desire to describe a feeling that cannot be described.

Old, wind worn grey planks of wood have caught my eye as far as I can remember, I have always admired old houses and fishing sheds with great love. Even though the tree which has become a structure, has been dead for hundreds of years, I see a story in the cracked and patterned plank that has lasted for more than a generation.

I have also used such wood in my work – in the first hundred years the tree matured, the next hundred years it spent as a part of a wall and now that the building has decayed and nature has taken over again, I picked up the old wood and gave it a role in my own story.

In order to stress what is important and to remove as much of the natural environment from the picture as possible, I have chosen the classical black and white medium. The pictures have a lot of texture and patterned dynamics accompanied with several double exposures.

“Treescape” consists of 15 pictures of varied format which are available in numbered original editions. In addition to those, facemount acrylic miniatures of the works are also available.



Lines



Neural Networks



Tree-leaf-tree



Gloom



Mirror Forest



Dislocation



Up



Dreamcatcher



Seabirds



Heart of the Tree



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Universi Castorum



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Spruce Net



Bad Cell

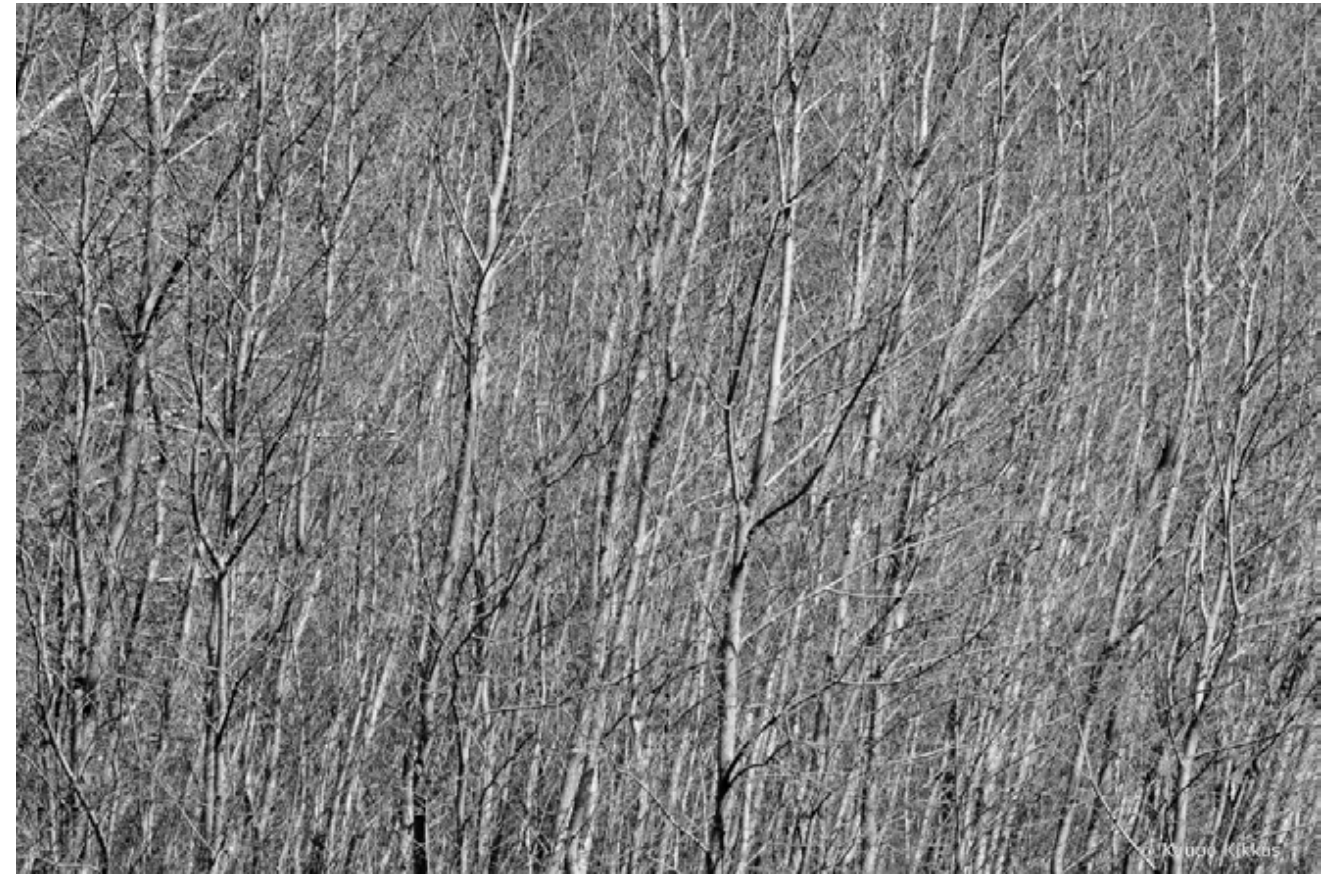


RÄGA

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Through a Kaleidoscope



VÕSA

Listen to the Trees...

For me, trees have always been the most penetrating preachers. I revere them when they live in tribes and families, in forests and groves. And even more I revere them when they stand alone. They are like lonely persons. Not like hermits who have stolen away out of some weakness, but like great, solitary men, like Beethoven and Nietzsche. In their highest boughs the world rustles, their roots rest in infinity; but they do not lose themselves there, they struggle with all the force of their lives for one thing only: to fulfil themselves according to their own laws, to build up their own form, to represent themselves. Nothing is holier, nothing is more exemplary than a beautiful, strong tree. When a tree is cut down and reveals its naked death-wound to the sun, one can read its whole history in the luminous, inscribed disk of its trunk: in the rings of its years, its scars, all the struggle, all the suffering, all the sickness, all the happiness and prosperity stand truly written, the narrow years and the luxurious years, the attacks withstood, the storms endured. And every young farmboy knows that the hardest and noblest wood has the narrowest rings, that high on the mountains and in continuing danger the most indestructible, the strongest, the ideal trees grow.

Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts, they preach, undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life.

A tree says: A kernel is hidden in me, a spark, a thought, I am life from eternal life. The attempt and the risk that the eternal mother took with me is unique, unique the form and veins of my skin, unique the smallest play of leaves in my branches and the smallest scar on my bark. I was made to form and reveal the eternal in my smallest special detail.

A tree says: My strength is trust. I know nothing about my fathers, I know nothing about the thousand children that every year spring out of me. I live out the secret of my seed to the very end, and I care for nothing else. I trust that God is in me. I trust that my labor is holy. Out of this trust I live.

When we are stricken and cannot bear our lives any longer, then a tree has something to say to us: Be still! Be still! Look at me! Life is not easy, life is not difficult. Those are childish thoughts. Let God speak within you, and your thoughts will grow silent. You are anxious because your path leads away from mother and home. But every step and every day lead you back again to the mother. Home is neither here nor there. Home is within you, or home is nowhere at all.

A longing to wander tears my heart when I hear trees rustling in the wind at evening. If one listens to them silently for a long time, this longing reveals its kernel, its meaning. It is not so much a matter of escaping from one's suffering, though it may seem to be so. It is a longing for home, for a memory of the mother, for new metaphors for life. It leads home. Every path leads homeward, every step is birth, every step is death, every grave is mother.

So the tree rustles in the evening, when we stand uneasy before our own childish thoughts: Trees have long thoughts, long-breathing and restful, just as they have longer lives than ours. They are wiser than we are, as long as we do not listen to them. But when we have learned how to listen to trees, then the brevity and the quickness and the childlike hastiness of our thoughts achieve an incomparable joy. Whoever has learned how to listen to trees no longer wants to be a tree. He wants to be nothing except what he is. That is home. That is happiness.

Hermann Hesse
(Trees. Reflections and poems)

