

ERNO ENKENBERG | Viewers and performers

28.3.-20.4.2025

Erno Enkenberg's second exhibition at Gallery Halmetoja focuses on spectators and performers. The paintings have a familiar laconic and representational style, but the world of the works is far from realistic. The setting is a circus and an art museum, the actors are people. There are elements in the paintings that break the narrative, that surprise the viewer.

Visually and thematically, Enkenberg makes use of the glitch aesthetic, a phenomenon that is sometimes referred to in Finnish as glitch aesthetics. This refers to the aestheticisation of digital glitches or errors. Consciously created errors or glitches are part of visual art, especially in the field of digital art. These phenomena are called "glitch art" and make use of technical errors. Distorted textures, distorted images or programming errors are common media art devices. In traditional painting, glitch themes are less common. In painting, for example, distortions, pixelated elements or colour distortions have been deliberately created to resemble digital media errors.

Enkenberg's painting style is akin to a realistic gaming aesthetic. In the new paintings, people move through walls, paintings and other surfaces. Errors in the structure of games, the breaking up of the game world and, for example, characters moving through walls, are common problems caused by coding errors. In games, errors become part of the gameplay and narrative. This blurs the boundaries between functionality and artistic expression. Enkenberg creates these errors on purpose. He himself has written that the wall is not a barrier but enables a symbolic transition from one space to another. In the case of a painting within a painting or, for example, the outside wall of a train, the symbolic significance of the transition is emphasised.

The aesthetics of games aim for impact and immersiveness. Enkenberg, on the other hand, deals with immersiveness on a more meta level. He says he wants to stop the viewer in front of the painting, to be amazed by the painting without even understanding what it is about. Some of the works deal with exactly this. The viewer stops in front of the painting so that he is sucked into it. In the visual style of Enkenberg's works, one can see a general curious commentary on technology and digital culture. In terms of content, one can read in them a critique of society's expectations. The glorification of flawlessness labels difference as a flaw and leads to its concealment.

Erno Enkenberg manages to grow the narrative cracks caused by the glitch aesthetic into a metaphor for a broken world. Fortunately, he also knows how to bring a smile to the audience's face. At times, the paintings' glitchy aesthetic appears as a wink from the performer to the viewer.

Veikko Halmetoja, gallerist

Erno Enkenberg (b. 1975) is a visual artist from Espoo. He studied at the Wimbledon School of Art and the Academy of Fine Arts in London. He has held numerous solo exhibitions and participated in a large number of group exhibitions. His paintings have recently been shown in Kiasma, for example, in the recently completed Milky Way exhibition. His works are in the collections of the State Art Museum, the Heino Art Foundation and the Saastamoinen Foundation, among others.

