

Mikko Rikala *Towards Nothing*

Opening Friday, September 20, 2013, 6–10 pm
Exhibition from September 21 to October 26, 2013

Gallery Taik Persons is highly pleased to present Mikko Rikala's first solo exhibition in Berlin: *Towards Nothing*.

"What are the possibilities of Man to observe and understand the world beyond the rational mind?" This is the essential question Mikko Rikala seeks to instantiate through his photographic work. Epistemological by nature, Rikala's enquiry examines the tension between "seeing", equatable with the realm of physics and its sizeable dimensions as a form of rational knowledge, and "perceiving", a conscious moment of subjective experience that presents a form of potentially irrational knowledge. The logic of the irrational is based on his assumption of their mutually inclusive relationship in that "rational experiments can result in the discovery of something irrational". Rikala's ultimate incentive is to transcend the limitations of human reason and intellect, and in turn conceive and make graspable that what we, on this side, feel is the unthinkable, unimaginable beyond of incommensurable space.

Aside from conceptual and minimalist artists like On Kawara and Sol LeWitt, Rikala names Far Eastern philosophy as an informative source and influence. Exercising methods of "meditative repetition" and patterning, arrangement and decomposition, his work systematically juxtaposes and breaks up processual, relative movements of linear time and circular time. Structures of disintegration and decay, as indicators of the inevitable, progressive passage of time, and, likewise, transitional phenomena of recurring, self-renewing character, as signifiers of the cyclical and interstitial passage of time, are elementary themes in Rikala's works. Their visual motifs are taken both from the natural and man-made world: eroding stones (*Three Forms of Decay*, 2013) alongside computer scans showing marks of digital erosion (*Empty Scan 1*, and *Empty Scan 2*, both 2012); the moon with its planetary impact on the recursive succession of the tides (*Lunar Effect*, 2012); clocks recording expanded instances of hours and minutes next to images of clouds, whose real time is captured in the documentation of their gradual evaporation (*The Vagaries of Precision*, 2013).

In *6-10 km Towards Nothing* (2013), a work of forty pencil drawings, single lines of ten centimeters length are reproduced ten thousand times, thus traversing, slowly yet gradually, the distance of five kilometers. While *Towards Nothing* explores a personal encounter with the act of deceleration and the seemingly endless motion of gestural repetition, Rikala's photographic sculpture *Vertical Kilometer* (2013) construes distance and duration through its sense of velocity. An installation of piled prints, *Vertical Kilometer* is made up of two hundred images that each retrace the invisible line created by someone diving into a pool from a height of five meters. Connected to one another, the stacked images amount to a continuous, imaginary line of one kilometer. With reference to On Kawara's series of *Date paintings*, in Rikala's work *Cyclic Repetition* (2013), the (im-)measurable four dimensions of spacetime are further visualized through the motif of the calendrical year and its specific dates of seasonal turning points, which Rikala comments on with the following citation from Vesa Haapala's and Markus Pyörälä's 2012 book *Kuka ampui Ötzi?* [Who shot Ötzi?]: "Rain, I dislike the sound of it, It reminds me too much of the old saying: Whenever he felt indivisibly happy, he knew he had slipped into the imploded side of his mind." The ever-returning downfall of rain evokes in Rikala his implicit knowledge of the inherently detached condition of the self that is trapped within the confines of everyday time and space.

Shao-lan Hertel

Mikko Rikala, born in 1977 in Tampere, Finland, studied photography at the Institute of Design and Fine Arts of the Lahti University of Applied Sciences from 2005 to 2009 and is currently pursuing his master's degree at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture in Helsinki, Finland. His recent solo exhibitions *Towards Nothing* (2012) and *Clouds and Waves* (2012) were held at Korjaamo Gallery, Helsinki, and Hobusepea Gallery, Tallinn, Estonia, respectively. In 2010, Rikala was awarded with the EMMA Prize of EMMA - Espoo Museum of Modern Art. He is part of the Maanantai artist collective, which just released the book *Nine Nameless Mountains* with the German publishing house Kehrer.