



Jani Leinonen, *The Forest*, 2021, stained glass. Courtesy the Artist.

Press release 5 March 2021

Jani Leinonen's exhibition *The Truth* to open at the Serlachius Museums in Finland

Jani Leinonen is one of Finland's best-known contemporary artists. His exhibition *The Truth* is an emotive installation in which magical light is filtered through a stained-glass painting into a ruined building. The exhibition opens at the Serlachius Museums on 27 March 2021.

The exhibition space building is burnt out and partially collapsed. The smell of burnt wood mixes with smoke floating in the space. Amidst the ruins is a miraculously intact stained-glass painting, through which reflected light gives the place a magically beauty.

The text of the stained-glass painting *Do you want the truth or something beautiful?* has been compiled, in a manner familiar to the artist, from the logos of supranational companies and products. Leinonen challenges viewers to think about the truths of our own time. Simultaneously, the artist hopes the work will evoke thoughts about the efforts made to influence us.

"Rarely do the companies behind the logos want to tell the truth. They just want to tell us about their wonderful and beautiful achievements. Do we even want to hear the truth, or just something beautiful?" asks the artist.

The Truth was originally scheduled to open last autumn. The pandemic postponed the opening for half a year, however. According to Leinonen, the last few months have presented new opportunities to interpret the exhibition as truth seems to have become relative.

Leinonen made his first stained-glass paintings in 2019, in a five-hundred-year-old barn in Switzerland. In the space, the paintings created an atmosphere akin to a church or chapel. He also wanted to create the same atmosphere for the Serlachius Museums exhibition.

The artist discovered the Munich company Mayer'sche Hofkunstanstalt company, which makes and restores stained-glass paintings around the world. On one floor, the company produces the works of contemporary artists. The stained-glass paintings of *The Truth* were made there.

Political art provokes emotions

Jani Leinonen is one of Finland's most prominent contemporary artists. Living and working in Helsinki, the artist has attracted international attention with his works, in which he criticises supranational companies by exploiting their own brands.

In 2019, his work *McJesus* (2015) sparked violent protests in front of the Haifa Museum of Art in Israel. The work in the exhibition depicts a crucified Ronald McDonald. He has dressed the Elovena girl in a burqa and participated with his works in Banksy's socially critical anti-amusement park *Dismaland* in the UK.

The Truth is open at Serlachius Museum Gösta from 27 March to 5 September 2021.

Additional Information and image requests:

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The Serlachius Museums are open:

in the winter season, 1 September–31 May, from Tuesday to Sunday, 11 am–6 pm.

in the summer season, 1 June–31 August, every day 10 am–6 pm.

Visiting addresses:

Serlachius Museum Gösta, Joenniementie 47, Mänttä

Serlachius Museum Gustaf, R. Erik Serlachiuksen katu 2, Mänttä

Serlachius Museums in the social media:

<https://facebook.com/serlachius>

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