

..otherwise you'll catch your death...

The artwork of Niina Lehtonen Braun (b. 1975) places the 'everyday' and all its poetic, clumsy and absurd aspects on centre stage. Her artwork displays a very personal point of view as well as indelible moments. It attempts to connect the featured characters (or symbols of characters, such as a gravestone) to the outside world, presenting them as 'worldly spirits'. This is something the artist undertakes passionately and at high speed – and with it employing her versatile collection of images and words.

This deliberate implementation of a 'fleeting format' makes the work both accessible and fragile. As luck, love and perfection seems to constantly slip through our fingers, we are faced with a continual recurrence of old wives' tales, paradoxical advice and laconic observations such as, 'Put something on or you'll catch your death' or, 'You'll have time to be ashamed in the grave'.

That said, Niina Lehtonen Braun's art doesn't present a dismal vision, void of hope – instead it offers varied perspectives, highlighting how and from where people find their leads in life, how they experience things, how they remember things and how they make sense of them. Niina Lehtonen Braun could be described as a very original storyteller, one who examines the strive for perfection – and at the same time manages to avoid it herself. Her images are open, sketch-like and reveal a personal working process, free-reigned and imperfect, just like life itself.

It is this approach, combined with the technique of collage, that gives Niina Lehtonen Braun's images such richness and versatility. The viewer, captured by role in a stage-production of humanity, cannot retract from the most difficult questions posed: Can you teach life? What is love? What is communication? Why are we constantly at crossed wires? Why can we not attain the things we desire the most? Does art offer a fertile soil or reflective image of our lives, a type of alternative language that, perhaps moreso than anything else, could allow us to express a profound, innermost knowledge – a knowledge that can so rarely be articulated using words?

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