

Related Programs

Free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. For a complete list of programs, please visit camstl.org.

Opening Night

Friday, May 24, 7:00–9:00 PM

Friday Evening Tours

Fridays, May 31–August 9, 6:00 PM

Enjoy a 30-minute guided tour of the exhibitions every Friday this summer.

Presented by Wells Fargo Advisors.



Breakfast with the Curators

Friday, June 14, 8:30 AM

Complimentary coffee and baked goods provided by Companion Bakehouse.

Register at camstl.org/breakfast. CAM members are invited for breakfast and a private tour of the exhibitions. Learn more about the artwork and talk directly with the curators.

Curatorial Tours

Saturday, June 15, 11:00 AM

Thursday, July 25, 6:00 PM

Saturday, August 10, 11:00 AM

Join Assistant Curator Kelly Shindler for a unique walkthrough of the current exhibitions.

First Fridays

Friday, June 7, 5:00–9:00 PM

Friday, July 5, 5:00–9:00 PM

Friday, August 2, 5:00–9:00 PM

Enjoy an evening of art, music, and culture the first Friday of every month.

In partnership with KDHX, DJs and musicians will present music responding to the exhibitions, Museum staff will lead tours, and the bar and café will be open. Arts organizations throughout Grand Center are free and open the entire evening.

Performance: Chromaconditional

Friday, July 19

Bar: 7:00 PM / Performance: 8:00 PM

\$10; free for members. Purchase tickets at camstl.org/chroma

Electronic music pioneer and artist Erkki Kurenniemi is the subject of many works by exhibiting artist Mika Taanila. For this special performance, musicians, engineers, and filmmakers Kevin Harris, Mike Murphy, Adrian McBride, and Jeremy Kannapell will follow in the footsteps of Kurenniemi. Building on his experiments, the group will use special sensors to connect the motion and colors of a gigantic video projection to sound patterns, creating a musical soundscape that will fill CAM's Performance Space.

Concrete Cinema: *The Future Is Not What It Used to Be (2002)* and *Futuro—A New Stance for Tomorrow (1998)*

Thursday, August 8, 8:00 PM

Join CAM and the Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts for a collaborative summer series featuring film and discussion by select contemporary artists that activates the courtyard shared between the institutions. On August 8, view Mika Taanila's documentaries *The Future Is Not What It Used to Be* (2002), about the electronic music pioneer and idiosyncratic inventor Erkki Kurenniemi, and *Futuro—A New Stance for Tomorrow* (1998), about the space age Futuro House, designed in the 1960s. Peter MacKeith, Finland's Honorary Consul for Missouri, will introduce the films.

Mika Taanila: Tomorrow's New Dawn

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS / MAY 24–AUGUST 11, 2013

Tomorrow's New Dawn is the first solo exhibition in an American museum by artist and filmmaker Mika Taanila (b. 1965, Helsinki, Finland). The artist's work in film, video, and photography poses incisive questions about technological advancement—specifically, about the cost of progress. Taanila investigates what we risk with our relentless drive toward advancement, continually testing the limits of our intellect, the environment, and even our own bodies. He uses documentary forms to consider the consequences of human achievement, often emphasizing the ultimate failure of utopian visions. Taanila approaches this idea from a variety of vantage points. *The Most Electrified Town in Finland* (2012), for example, examines the construction of the world's largest nuclear power plant while the short film *Six Day Run* (2013) documents a Finnish ultra-runner's participation in a grueling multi-day race.

Other works reflect Taanila's interest in unstable and fleeting technologies, including the short music video *Verbranntes Land* (2002). In a new body of experimental photograms entitled *Black and White Movies* (2013), the artist engages in the photographic equivalent of action painting. Taanila creates these prints by destroying VHS tapes from his personal collection according to the plot of a particular film, then placing their remains on photographic paper, and exposing them to light. Both *Black and White Movies* and the sculptural installation *Twilight* (2010) also exemplify the significant gallery practice that Taanila has developed over the past decade.

The artist further explores ideas about temporality and progress in his longer-form documentaries *The Future Is Not What It Used to Be* (2002), on the electronic music pioneer and idiosyncratic inventor Erkki Kurenniemi, and *Futuro—A New Space for Tomorrow* (1998), on architect Matti Suuronen's space-age Futuro House, both of which will be screened at CAM on Thursday, August 8. Mining the archives of our recent past as well as documenting current phenomena in the moment, Taanila's overall project illustrates the maxim of spiritual guru Sri Chinmoy, alluded to in *Six Day Run*, that "today's goal is only the starting point for tomorrow's new dawn."



The Incredible Shrinking Man, from the series *Black and White Movies*, 2013. Pigment print, 23.6 x 28.3 inches. Courtesy the artist.

Mika Taanila: Tomorrow's New Dawn is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Kelly Shindler, Assistant Curator. This exhibition is generously supported by the FRAME Foundation; the Consulate General of Finland, New York; AVEK; and The American-Scandinavian Foundation.

Support for CAM's exhibition program is provided by Jeanne and Rex Sinquefeld; William E. Weiss Foundation; and the Crawford Taylor Foundation.



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CONSULATE GENERAL OF FINLAND

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AUDIOVISUAL CULTURE



Audio Tour: Download the CAM app at camstl.org/app or ask for an iPod at the front desk to hear directly from the artist and curator on the audio tour.

GUIDE TO COMPLETE WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION



The Most Electrified Town in Finland, 2004–12

The Most Electrified Town in Finland, 2004–12 🎧

Three-channel HD video installation, color and black-and-white, 5.1 sound, 15 minutes

Cinematography: Jussi Eerola; Sound design: Olli Huhtanen; Music: Pan Sonic; Production: Lasse Saarinen

Based on the feature documentary *Return of the Atom* by Mika Taanila and Jussi Eerola

Courtesy the artist and Kinotar Ltd.

The Most Electrified Town in Finland documents the construction of the Olkiluoto3 (OL3) power plant in the small town of Eurajoki on the west coast of Finland. OL3 is the first nuclear plant to be built in the West since the 1986 disaster in Chernobyl, Russia. When completed, it will be the most powerful of its kind in the world. Although the plant was originally scheduled to begin operations in 2009, planning and technical problems have delayed the opening to 2016 at the earliest. The plant's operators granted Taanila permission to film its construction for a longer-form documentary titled *Return of the Atom* that is in progress.

Configured as a gallery installation, *The Most Electrified Town in Finland* presents a visualization of the complexities of the OL3 project. Taanila juxtaposes rapid shots of the plant's construction with images of daily life in Eurajoki and the bucolic Finnish landscape on three synchronized video projections. He emphasizes the radical shift away from the region's rural roots towards an industrialized future. This contrast is underscored by Taanila's choice of media, employing both outmoded Super-16mm film (which cinematographer Jussi Eerola processed in his home bathroom) and high-definition digital video. The work's cheerfully ironic title, taken from a promotional billboard in Eurajoki, belies the threats to environmental and human health that accompany the aspirations for OL3.



Six Day Run, 2012

Six Day Run, 2012 🎧

Single-channel video projection, color, 5.1 sound, 15 minutes
Cinematography: Jussi Eerola; Sound design: Olli Huhtanen; Music: Circle; Production: Lasse Saarinen and Cilla Werning
Courtesy the artist and Kinotar Ltd.

Filed on the grounds of the U.S. Open and the site of the 1964 World's Fair in New York City's Flushing Meadows Corona Park, *Six Day Run* follows decorated Finnish ultra-runner Ashprihanal Pekka Aalto (b. 1970) as he competes in the annual Self-Transcendence Six Day Race. Organized by followers of Bengali spiritual guru Sri Chinmoy (1931–2007), the race illustrates the cornerstone of Chinmoy's philosophy, which teaches that sustained and demanding physical activity leads to higher spiritual awareness. In the film, Aalto and his fellow competitors run continuously around a one-mile track on minimal sleep and often in the rain. As the race progresses, the film becomes more experimental and abstract, echoing Aalto's own meditative and perhaps increasingly delirious state. "In a way," notes Taanila, "he resembles a human machine devoid of its own will, but at the same time, he has a free and weightless spirit."



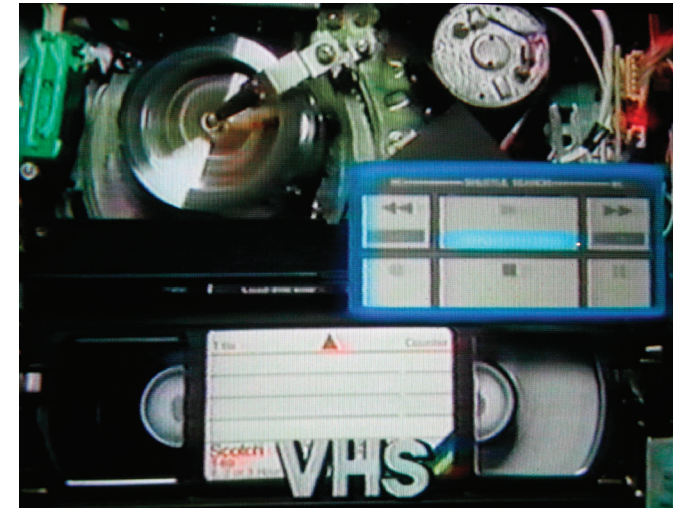
Twilight (installation view), 2010

Twilight, 2010 🎧

Two-channel looping video installation, black-and-white, silent, 6 minutes
Two video projectors and metal floor rails
Courtesy the artist and Kinotar Ltd.

Twilight features a pair of digital projectors that slowly travel back and forth across the gallery floor. Their grainy, doubled footage, sourced from a 1997 research project at the University of Helsinki, shows laboratory

toads engaged in the universal act of searching for food. But instead of pursuing their prey in nature, they hunt in a highly controlled, clinical environment in which progressively dimming light slows their reaction time. The work explores how dependent we have become on technological aids to understand and communicate with the natural world and, conversely, how the natural world has been impacted by scientific experimentation. *Twilight* also reflects Taanila's interest in obsolescence, evidenced in both the already-outmoded projectors and the research that has undoubtedly been supplanted by more recent studies.



Verbranntes Land, 2002

Verbranntes Land, 2002

Video, color, sound, 6:36 minutes
Courtesy the artist

Verbranntes Land—German for "scorched earth"—is a music video Taanila made for the Finnish band Kiila. It is structured as a brief homage to VHS (Video Home System), the dominant consumer-grade video format from the 1980s until the early 2000s. Unlike digital video, which primarily masks its mechanics on computer chips and hard drives, VHS possesses a physicality with its spools of tape that record images and sound. Taanila considers the medium's material qualities through found footage from an instructional video, which describes the process of video degradation and demonstrates how copies of VHS recordings lose the visual clarity of the original. In *Verbranntes Land*, images decompose in front of our eyes, illustrating the artist's ongoing interest in the fragility of technology and its impact on how we see the world.



Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!, 2013

Black and White Movies, 2013 🎧

Eight black-and-white photograms
Courtesy the artist

Les yeux sans visage (*Eyes Without a Face*)
Roma, città aperta (*Rome, Open City*)
Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!
Kiss Me Deadly
The Incredible Shrinking Man

"I have hundreds of VHS cassettes of movies recorded off Finnish TV broadcasts and copied from friends. Sometimes the films became eerie fourth-generation grainy depictions of the originals. Before the Internet, seeing certain films in remote Finland was not easy. For these photograms, I picked some of my favorite movies from those tapes. I took a violent key scene (or a chain of scenes) from each film and used that as the inspiration for destruction. *Kiss Me Deadly*, for example, ends with an explosion, so I exploded my tape with consumer fireworks. The flamethrower treatment for the cassette of *Roma, città aperta* parallels the torture methods of the Gestapo commanders. In *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* Varla (Tura Satana) kills a man with her bare hands and feet, so I destroyed that one with my own body. For each image, I collected the remnants, placed them on photographic paper in a traditional darkroom setting, and exposed the paper to light. All photograms are named after the original film and retain the same black-and-white palette." — MT