

Tuomas Kärkkäinen

Ämminkäiset

19.2.–27.3.2021

Ämminkäiset exhibition in Gallery Kuvitus displays prints, plywood sculptures and ceramics based on the exhilarating characters of the newly-published book. A sharp-eyed visitor might also notice some traces of a sihteeritihvilä creature in the gallery.

Tuomas Kärkkäinen's debut children's book *Suomen ämminkäiset värrikuvina* (S&S, 2021) draws the attention of elementary pupils and also older readers to the small wonders of urban environment, making trivial something meaningful. Kärkkäinen loves to play with language and he follows the footsteps of verbal talents **Roald Dahl** and **Ilpo Tiihonen**. He has also self-published poetry for adults and he dreams of writing a prose novel one day.

The book has been inspired by fantastic bestiaries and animal non-fiction books, from where it gets its structure. The book presents 15 creatures, *ämminkäiset*, living in the urban environment. Each creature has their own double page spread dedicated to them. On the left page, the reader can see the illustrator's interpretation of the creature in their natural habitat. On the right page, the scientific name, size and the species-specific behaviour of the ämminkäinen in question are described alongside traces left by the creature, the creature's distribution and plenty of other important information.

You cannot see them, as the creatures are shy in nature. This means that a creature-spotter has to pay attention to their traces in the urban environment. The book reveals, for example, that a hungry immi scampering in the area might be to blame for the disabled street-light. Kärkkäinen maps the city's subconscious by highlighting surfaces, shapes and sounds from the urban landscape that would normally be left unnoticed due to their location or their monotonous lack of expression.

Glowing in color, the book includes a chapter on ämminkäinen research in the past and present, alongside character introductions. At the same time, the book encourages readers to enjoy a new hobby: ämminkäinen-watching, creature-spotting. The book advises on how to organize a competition of creature-spotting with scoring points and all. The children's book makes one's own living environment a more meaningful place which, during the corona pandemic, seems more important than ever.



Tuomas Kärkkäinen

(b. 1983) is a self-taught researcher on the ämminkäiset creatures, an illustrator, a visual designer and a partner in Merkitys Design Oy. He holds a degree of Master of Political Science degree in communications from the University of Helsinki and a Bachelor of Art in graphic design from the Aalto University

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Galleria Kuvitus

Hämeentie 28, Helsinki
Mon-Fri 12-16

Please reserve a time for a gallery visit
in advance: galleria@kuvittajat.fi

