

LIFT ANNOUNCES FINNISH VISITING ARTIST
MILJA VIITA

Toronto, October 16, 2019—The Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT) is pleased to announce that **Milja Viita** has joined us from Helsinki as a visiting artist from **October 1 to December 20, 2019** as the inaugural resident in a residency program for alumni of the **Academy of Fine Arts of the University of the Arts Helsinki**. This residency, supported by the Academy and the **Saastamoinen Foundation**, is designed to provide international opportunities for alumni in the form of residency grants to prestigious residencies in New York, Maastricht, London and Toronto. This year is their first year collaborating with LIFT on this initiative.

Milja Viita is a visual and media artist who combines experimental and documentary elements in her work. Viita's works have been exhibited in significant Finnish art museums and galleries, as well as at film festivals and on television. Viita received the Finnish Film Foundation's Risto Jarva award for her work *Eläinsilta U-3033* in early 2019. Viita was chosen for the LIFT residency in Toronto, a residency aimed for artists working with moving image. <https://miljaviita.live>

"At the moment, I am interested in materialism and the illusion of immaterialism. In a more practical sense, I work with a film installation built for a 35mm film projector. I will be turning my focus to the construction of film, its core. The object of my focus is the Disney classic *Bambi*. The work will be completed in cooperation with a chemist specialising in DNA research. I intend to work on the aforementioned installation during my residence in Toronto as well. I will utilise the opportunity to transfer the filmed material (on 35mm film) to cinefilm and develop the copy by hand."

According to Viita, the residency provides, especially for a media artist, a communal working environment experience.

"Traditional film, as an art form, is communal: the director is a part of the production crew, in which every member takes the project forward. This kind of working environment is rare for media artists and many do not even want it. However, sometimes it is nice to feel you belong somewhere. The LIFT residence is a special and valuable opportunity for an artist working with moving imagery to be a part of a community working with the same mediums. I will have the means, the atmosphere and the people who are passionate about their work. In general, during a residency, there is a strong opportunity to discover a new point-of-view or a new world."

A public event with Milja Viita will be announced later this month.

Milja Viita's visit is made possible in part through support from **Saastamoisen säätiö** (the Saastamoinen Foundation) and the **Academy of Fine Arts at the University of the Arts Helsinki**. The research behind her film project is supported by **Koneen säätiö** (the Kone Foundation).



The **Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT)** is Canada's foremost artist-run production and education organization dedicated to celebrating excellence in the moving image. LIFT exists to provide support and encouragement for independent filmmakers and artists through affordable access to production, post-production and exhibition equipment; professional and creative development; workshops and courses; commissioning and exhibitions; artist-residencies; and a variety of other services. LIFT is supported by its membership, Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ontario Arts Foundation, the Government of Ontario and the Toronto Arts Council. <http://lift.ca>

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For additional information please see <http://lift.ca> or e-mail Executive Director Chris Kennedy at director@lift.on.ca