

## **Roi Vaara**

### **BIO**

Roi Vaara was born in 1953 in Moss, Norway.

He studied at the University of Industrial Arts, Helsinki, 1972-75, and carried out art research at Jyväskylä University 1976-77.

He moved to Stockholm in 1977 for three years.

First exhibition - drawings and paintings - 1978.

In 1980, he joined the Ö-group: installations and actions.

Since 1982, conceptual, absurd and humorous performances.

Roi Vaara was one of the founders and for many years a member of the board of the intermedia art association Muu in Helsinki.

Roi Vaara is the internationally best known performance artist in Scandinavia. His work emphasises an aesthetic discourse between the artwork and its specific place or situation, rejecting the objectification of art destined for a vacuum.

So far, Vaara has carried out about 300 unique performances. His work has been presented at some 200 international exhibitions/festivals in more than 30 countries. He has exhibited throughout Europe, as well as in Canada, Mexico, the USA, South Korea, Thailand, China, Cuba and Japan.

Vaara worked for Künstlerhaus Bethanien's International Atelierprogramm in Berlin 1997-1998.

### **International performance art festivals**

NIPAF, Japan 1995, 1999

Rencontre Internationale d'Art Performance de Quebec, Canada 1994, 2000 and 2002

X'Teresa - Arte Alternativo, Mexico City 1995

Performance Art in NRW, Germany 1997

Performance Index, Basel, Switzerland 1999

Polysonneries, Lyon, France 1999

For Eyes and Ears, Odense, Denmark 1999

Full Nelson, Los Angeles, USA 2002

7a\*11d, Toronto, Canada 2002

Live Biennial of Performance Art, Vancouver, Canada

MAD, Encuentro de Arte Experimental, Madrid 2003

### **Occasional performance programmes**

Performance, Relikte und Sedimente, Offenes Kulturhaus, Linz, Austria 1993

Aree intermediale e sinestetiche, Rome 2000, 2001

SPAN2, London 2000

Acciones en Ruta, Mexico City 2003

### **Other performances**

Havana Biennial 2003

Manifesta, San Sebastian, Spain 2004

Venice Biennial, Italy 2001: Vaara's performance at the opening was also broadcast on BBC World News.

### **Works also exhibited in**

Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid

El Museo del Barrio, New York

Le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Canada

National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest

Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki

Kyoto Art Center, Japan

Trevi Flash Art Museum, Rome  
KunstWerke, Berlin  
Institut Valencia d'Art Modern, Spain  
Kunstmuseum Luzern, Switzerland

### **Festival organizer and curator**

Poikkeustila (state of emergency) - the first national performance art festival, Helsinki 1999, with a total of 60 performers on stage.

Vaara received a state award from the Arts Council of Finland in 2000, which he used in the following year to organize the EXIT international festival for unusual live art in Helsinki, with about 300 artists from 32 countries putting on some 200 performances. The festival was the world's largest in its genre.

Performance Art from Finland, Lublin, Poland 1997

Streetlevel, S'Hertogenbosch, Holland 2002

Vaara was the initiator and one of the founders of IAPAO (International Association for Performance Art Organizers) in Essen in 2003 ([www.iapao.org](http://www.iapao.org)).

### **Visiting lecturer/teacher**

Academy of Fine Arts, Maastricht, Holland

Brooklyn College of New York City University, New York

Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana, Mexico City

Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki

Theatre Academy, Helsinki

University of Art and Design, Helsinki

Hochschule der Künste, Berlin

Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, USA.

### **Black Market International**

Since 1988, Roi Vaara has been part of Black Market International, an international, collaborative, occasional coming together of performance artists, whose work uses performance art as a simultaneous form of communication. BMI has performed throughout Europe, in the USA and in Thailand, for instance, at the Kassel Documenta (1987 and 1993) and at the EXPO 2000 World Exhibition in Hanover, at Resource Kunst (1990) in Budapest and EDGE 90 in Glasgow and Newcastle, and at Franklin Furnace's Asylum in New York (1991). 1998-99, Black Market Network Meetings in Linz, Dublin and Frankfurt were important events for artists, students and researchers on the genre.

### **Bibliography**

Vaara's art has been featured in books including:

RoseLee Goldberg: Performance, Live Art Since the 60s, Thames and Hudson, England

R. Martel: Art Action 1958-1998, Intervention, Canada

Klassen: Performance Art Netzwerk, Benteli Verlag, Switzerland

E. Jappe: Performance, Ritual Prozess - Handbuch der Aktionskunst in Europa, Prestel Verlag, München-New York).

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