

Hertta Kiiski

Bloomrotmilk

Amanda Hakoköngäs

The animal's gaze is pleading, in heat, deep.

Or possibly none of these. Maybe it is indifferent. It just wants to rest, drink or run away.

(We are thirsty all the time.)

Hertta Kiiski's works capture a powerful sense of existence. When I look, I touch with my eyes. The gaze is tactile. I lick various surfaces and colours with the thirst of my gaze. Situations that tempt you to look. Often there is another pair of eyes facing you, staring back greedily from the images.

Existence is the desire to stroke and to strike. A strange, recurring vibration in fingertips, paw pads and hooves. A feeling of endless lust for freedom.

Existence is a playful, sad and dirty pursuit. Existence is a flower that develops slime, gives birth and dies away. It is a sheep that wants to suck the belly skin of another sheep, which through pain and pleasure thins out until it is paper-thin. It is a lovely wet, soft lump of fur and skin—but it doesn't yield any milk.

For this thirst is far too great. The lust is too slippery.

Our only true desire: freedom.

Existence is a ring on a bird's slender ankle. (Through which I want to suck sweet nectar into myself.) It is a stage set built in zoos, where every animal knows how to play its part. Ringed, worried and amused. Me standing on this side of the glass, microplastics in my womb,

and you looking at me.

(I'm thirsting for your gaze.)

Look at me, wild, playful and afraid.
Caress me, press me to your chest.

Water me, for I know how to suck.

*On butterfly wings, an expression
that you think is watching you;
when it's looking elsewhere—life.*

(Mirkka Rekola, Who is Reading with You, 1990)