

The artist, who lived in Finland for seven years, invited Finns to spend the day with him: "We shared quite profound things," says a participant in the performance

Artist Parsa Kamehkhosh invited Finns to participate in his new series of five performances. An exhibition is now being made of the photos taken during the performances.



Marjaana Mustonen (left) and artist Parsa Kamehkhosh, who participated in the project. PHOTO: AMAN ASKARIZAD

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ON AUGUST 23, 2021, THERE WAS AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE HELSINGIN SANOMAT website asking for volunteers to participate in the performance.

Artist Parsa Kamehkhosh's Saturdays art project invited volunteers through an open call and announcements to participate in a new series of five performances, where he would spend one Saturday with each participant from morning to midnight. The application criteria were that the participants were Finnish, spoke English, and did not already know the artist .

Kamehkhosh selected the first five applicants for the project. A total of twenty people registered.

Born in Tehran, Iran in 1985, Parsa Kamehkhosh wanted to get closer to Finns and Finnish society with the help of his performances.

"Even though I've lived in Finland for about seven years now, I haven't had the opportunity to get in touch with the deeper layers of Finnish society or with Finns outside of small work and study circles. Through this idea, I wanted to dive to the level of friendship with people who, as an introvert, I might never have otherwise met," he says.

Parsa Kamehkhosh graduated with a Master of Arts from Aalto University's Visual Cultures, Curating and Contemporary Art (ViCCA) training program in 2021.

THE PERFORMANCE MEETINGS were organized in November-December 2021 on five different Saturdays. Each meeting started in Helsinki at eight in the morning with the taking of a joint photo and ended at midnight with the taking of a new photo. In between, the performances went to, for example, the participants' homes, cottages, saunas, swimming, naps and dinner.

The age of the participants varied between about 30 and 50 years.



Juho Lehto (left) and Parsa Kamehkhosh. PHOTO: AMAN ASKARIZAD

The performances of the Saturdays art project did not actually involve performing, but primarily consisted of being together and being present in an ordinary day. The participants and the artist planned the meeting program together.

"Through this project, my purpose was to create a situation where the glass wall between the Finns and me could be challenged and, on some level, perhaps also removed," says Kamehkhosh.

"So both the participants who took on this challenge and I can understand how it feels for both of us to be welcomed and jump straight from two strangers to friends and spend a whole day together," he continues.

ONE OF the participants of the art project was Aini Jalonen , who emphasizes the importance of things shared during the performance. "We talked a lot and shared quite deep things," says Jalonen.

He says that he is looking forward to seeing the photos taken at the beginning and at the end of the day side by side, and wonders how the time spent together will look between the photos taken in the morning and in the evening. During Saturday, Jalonen and Kamehkhosh went to lunch, an art exhibition and a concert, for example.

The long duration was one feature that strongly shaped the course of the performance meetings.

"That's where you take what comes, and you have 16 hours to spend", thinks Topias Salonen , who participated in the project .

Kamehkhosh and Salonen's performance day naturally formed around photography and art, and the photo taken with Salonen's analog camera is also another of the day's photos together.

THE INTERESTINGNESS OF THE SATURDAYS ART PROJECT lies partly in the setting and non-artism it has built . The meetings move at the interface of performance and everyday encounters and are based on mutual trust.

Parsa Kamehkhosh mainly uses performance, sculptures, installations and different combinations of these in his artistic work. In addition to Finland, his works have previously been exhibited in Germany, Iran and the United States, among others.

The volunteers who participated in the Saturdays art project were Pihla Aaltonen , Aini Jalonen, Juho Lehto , Marjaana Mustonen and Topias Salonen. The photos taken during the meetings will be exhibited at the Helsinki-based Myymälä2 gallery in June.