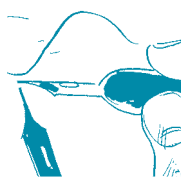
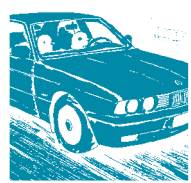


# Comics from Finland



# SARJAKUVA



Tove Jansson.



## A small country with many voices

The most intriguing thing about Finnish comics is their diversity. Although Finland is a small country in terms of population, it offers plenty of room for different approaches to producing comics. There is a great deal of visual experimentation going on, and comic artists freely pick and choose elements from the traditions of both art and entertainment for their work.

Comics are an accepted and widely read art form in Finland. Almost every Finnish newspaper publishes at least one Finnish comic strip, as do many magazines. Comics are treated on a par with other art forms in grant support programmes, and libraries acquire many comics and graphic novels.

Finnish comic artists are highly trained: nearly all of the younger generation of artists hold degrees in art or graphic design. This is also evident in the covers and production quality of the publications.

There are a number of small independent comics publishers producing high-quality work in Finland. The Finnish anthologies *Glömp* and *Laikku* have been awarded the prize for best fanzine at the Angoulême International Comics Festival. Finnish comic artists have won many awards at the Fumetto festival in Lucerne, and Finnish titles have been

nominated for the award for best graphic novel of the year at Angoulême.

The makers do not shut themselves away in the northern corner of Europe; they are busy establishing links on the international scene. This openness to outside influences is evident in the multiplicity of voices in Finnish works: there is not a uniform school or direction that must be followed here.

We speak a small language that nobody else can understand. Yet a surprising number of our comics are published abroad. Around 50 Finnish graphic novels have been published in French alone since the turn of the millennium.

In the same period, a total of over 100 Finnish graphic novels by around 20 artists have been published in translation, including English, Swedish, Polish, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, Serbian, Italian, Hungarian and Portuguese.

I hope this brochure conveys the same impression we Finns have of ourselves: open to outside influences but self-willed; eager to experience things but keeping our work in order; a bit distant in the North but at the heart of the comics world.

Heikki Jokinen  
Comics critic



## Terhi Ekebom

Terhi Ekebom (b. 1971) displays a mastery of numerous graphic styles and an assured use of colour. A common thread running through all of her work is the depiction of sensitive emotions and delicate feelings. She illustrates things that are rarely depicted in images.

Ekebom holds a degree in graphic design. Her brief comics have appeared in various magazines since 1992, and her first graphic novel, entitled *A Cow's Dream*, was published in 2001. Her miniature work, *Stella di Natale*, was published in Italy, and short-form comics have appeared in various countries, including the l'Association Comix 2000 collection and *In Case of Fire* (1999), a

serigraphic work published by Le Dernier Cri in France.

Her graphic novel *Honeymoon Island* (2007) tells of the disappearance of love in a way that is reminiscent of visual poetry. Her images are delicate, yet they contain unrestrained emotional power. *Voyage* (2010), combining scratchboard, ink and pastels, takes the reader on a journey into a mysterious rainforest.

Terhi Ekebom also does illustration, book cover and graphic design work as well as fine art, including fresco-style wall murals.





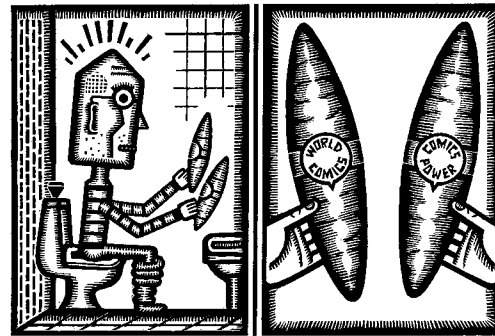
# Matti Hagelberg

Matti Hagelberg's images engraved in black scratchboard possess robust power, yet a surprising number of them also reveal details and expressive sensitivity. Hagelberg's stories are often brief slices full of unexpected juxtapositions and imaginative situations.

Everything is linked together thematically, however, creating a new reality that exists parallel to our familiar world. Most of his comics combine an absurd sense of humour, an external observer's take on things and a blend of cultural influences.

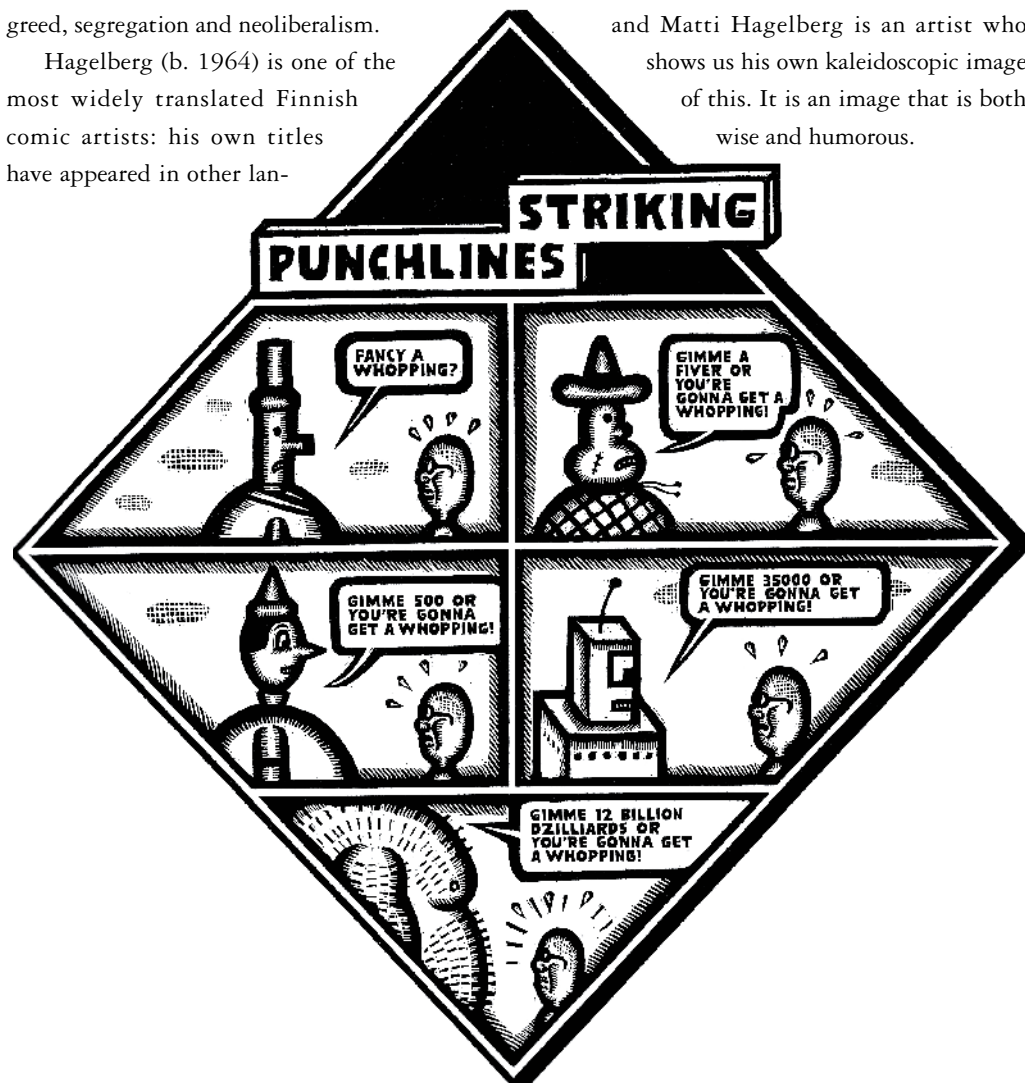
*Kekkonen* (2004) makes Finland's long-serving former President Urho Kekkonen into a storybook figure alongside Elvis, Jesus and space aliens. *Silvia Regina* (2010) is a humorous, biting depiction of Finland as a land characterised by greed, segregation and neoliberalism.

Hagelberg (b. 1964) is one of the most widely translated Finnish comic artists: his own titles have appeared in other lan-



guages in their entirety, and individual pieces have been included in anthologies abroad as well. His wide-ranging output encompasses silkscreen prints and an opera libretto, *The Meistersingers of Mars*.

There are many perspectives on reality, and Matti Hagelberg is an artist who shows us his own kaleidoscopic image of this. It is an image that is both wise and humorous.



# Jyrki Heikkinen

The comics by poet and comic artist Jyrki Heikkinen (b. 1958) are characterised by a dream-like quality, verging on surrealism. His graphic style is not rooted in realism, but rather in the depiction of subjective experience. Heikkinen's lines often describe the outlines of a person, just as his stories depict the edges of reality.

Heikkinen studied metal art craft and published his first collection of poems in 1984. He began publishing his comics in the 1990s.

His first graphic novel, *Punäjäkälä* ('Lichen planus', 2005), displayed his own authorial voice. The protagonist is afraid he is losing his memory and his ability to speak, and undertakes a long journey to straighten out his grandmother's gravestone. The narrative gushes forth along the border between dreams and reality. It was published in French under the title *Le Lichen Rouge* (2007).

*Tohtori Futuro* ('Doctor Futuro', 2007) is also a work about the demise of memory and the mind. A superhero who has lost his powers is no

longer in control of his life and flees the ghosts of the past. The backgrounds of the images grow organically and are more reflections of mental spaces than landscapes.

Comics and poetry are combined seamlessly in Heikkinen's works *Kiitosvirret ja ylistyslaulut* ('Verses of Thanks and Songs of Praise', 2008) and *Apua on tulossa* ('Help is on the Way', 2010).







## Tove & Lars Jansson

Moomintroll is Finland's best-loved hero. He is the character created by Tove Jansson (1914–2001) in 1947 who went on to appear in children's books and a comic strip published in the *London Evening News* from 1954 to 1975. At the peak of its popularity, the strip was published in over 40 countries.

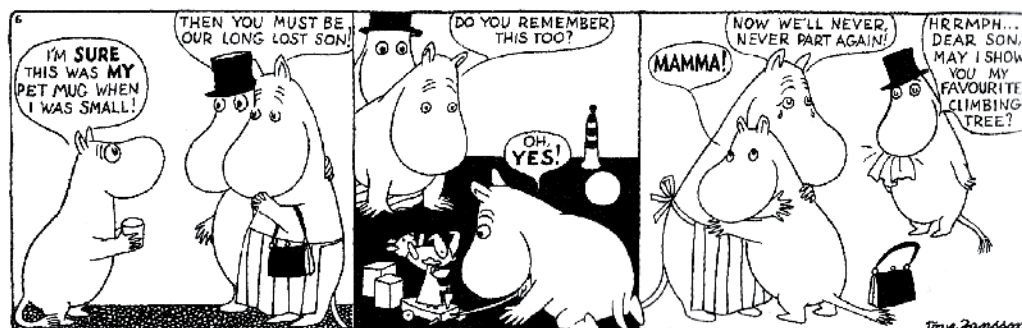
Tove was assisted right from the beginning by her brother Lars Jansson (1926–2000), who began by translating the comic strips into English and from 1957 helped to write the manuscripts for the stories. From 1959, Lars drew the Moomin comics.

The timeless appeal of the Moomins stems from both the content and illustrations in the stories. The Moomins' world is not an idyll free from conflict, but it is characterised by toler-

ance, kindness, philosophical humour and merry anarchy.

The illustrations are lively, displaying careful composition and creative details. Just look at the lines between the frames, which often have details that drive the narrative forward.

The Japanese are especially big fans of the Moomins, and a long-running animated series of the Moomins was produced in Japan. The fine Moomin comic strip collections published in Canada by Drawn & Quarterly since 2006 have attracted favourable attention in North America as well. Encouraged by these, new Moomin collections are now being published in a number of other countries as well. The Janssons' gentle humanity and timeless storytelling continue to speak to new generations of readers.



## Pertti Jarla

Finnish newspaper comics are in excellent health: they are widely published and eagerly read. One of the favourites to emerge in recent years is *Fingerpori* by Pertti Jarla (b. 1971). It is a hugely politically incorrect comic strip with plenty of smutty jokes and bad puns, set in the fictional small town of Fingerpori on the Finnish coast.

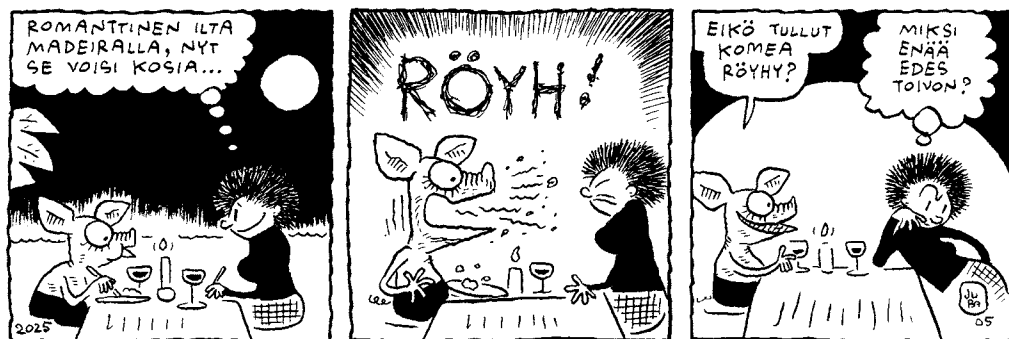
The series has its roster of regular characters, but there are also guest appearances by figures including Superman, The Phantom, the Pope, Hitler and Jesus. Fingerpori is an alternative universe, bordered by Mordor to the north and by the Vatican to the south. Pertti Jarla described the town as an

'East German Duckburg'.

Fingerpori was established in 2007 under the name of Karl-Barks-Stadt, but that title was changed when the strip was picked up by *Helsingin Sanomat*, a major daily paper, later that year. Now it appears in some 40 newspapers, and collections of the strip have sold over 300,000 copies.

Pertti Jarla draws Fingerpori firmly in the style of traditional humorous comics. The slightly retro clothing, settings and objects lend Fingerpori a 1970s feel.





## Juba

*Viivi ja Wagner* ('Viivi and Wagner') has been a hugely popular comic strip in Finland for many years. It appears in around 45 newspapers, and over a million copies of the collected strips have been sold in book form. There have even been stage plays, a musical and postage stamps based on the strip, which was started in 1997 by cartoonist Jussi 'Juba' Tuomola (b. 1965).

The strip enjoys a phenomenal level of popularity. Its main characters are an environmentally conscious woman called Viivi and a grotesquely self-centred, cynical pig called Wagner. The action centres around their relationship and daily life. The strip deals with subjects such as sex, relationship niggles and unemployment in a matter-of-fact way.

*Viivi and Wagner* breaks the established comic-strip mould: it avoids getting stuck in a rut, freely takes up any and all subject matter and does not always need to end with a traditional punch line, often choosing to leave the reader confused. The everyday setting can morph into near-surrealism at times.

Juba, who studied to be a translator, draws in a minimalist style and has had a long career as a cartoonist. Other works of his have been published in collections and international anthologies. The initial drafts of *Viivi and Wagner* came about when Juba was living in Paris. The strip has appeared in Swedish and Estonian translations as well.



## Kati Kovács

The comics by Kati Kovács (b. 1963) are characterised by a Carnival-like spirit and uplifting sensuality. Reality turns somersaults, and events as well as characters are extremely exaggerated.

After studying graphic design in Helsinki, Kovács moved to Rome, where she still lives.

A total of twelve of her graphic novels have been published, and her work has been translated into Swedish, Hungarian, French and German.

Kati Kovács' work is straightforward and highly individual, characterised by themes of a longing for freedom, a hunger for life, standing on the cusp between childhood and adulthood, and an ebullient *joie de vivre*.

Kovács' pen drawings revel in her stories, depicting small details and

surprising twists and turns. Her stories generally focus on women,

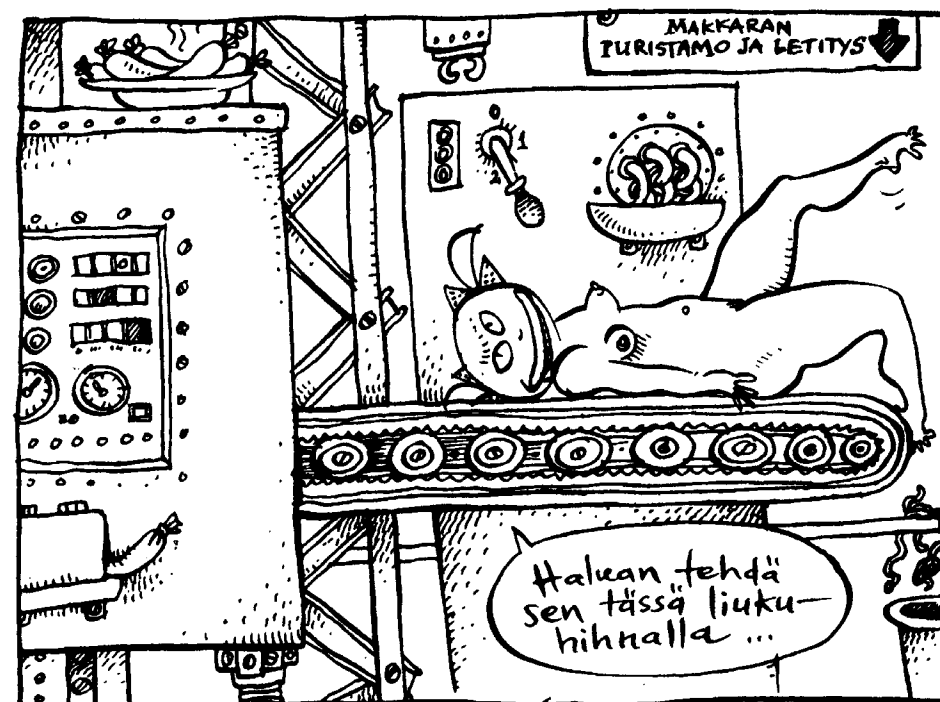
whose stories Kovács depicts with warm, satirical humour.

The men in her stories are usually either handsome Adonises or pathetic mummy's boys. The heroine of her book



*Miestennielijäksi sirkukseen* ('Become a Man-Eater and Join the Circus', 2003) explains why a cartoonist's work is preferable to that of a man-eater in the circus. "Men give you stomach-ache and a heart murmur." Therefore, she says, "Only on paper can I preserve my freedom."

Nukufilm, an Estonian animation studio, is currently producing a 60-minute stop-motion animation of an opera based on a libretto by Kati Kovács, entitled *A Rapid Love Story of Lisa Limone and Maroc Orange*.





# Kaisa Leka

Kaisa Leka's comics are highly autobiographical. Her first graphic novel, entitled *I am not these feet* (2003, translated into French and Italian) is a story in diary form about how she had her feet and lower legs, which were affected by a congenital deformity, amputated.

It is an honest, affecting work that contains a great deal of light and power. In her other comics, Leka (b. 1978) has used her self-deprecating style to tell about her Hare Krishna faith and everyday incidents from her life.

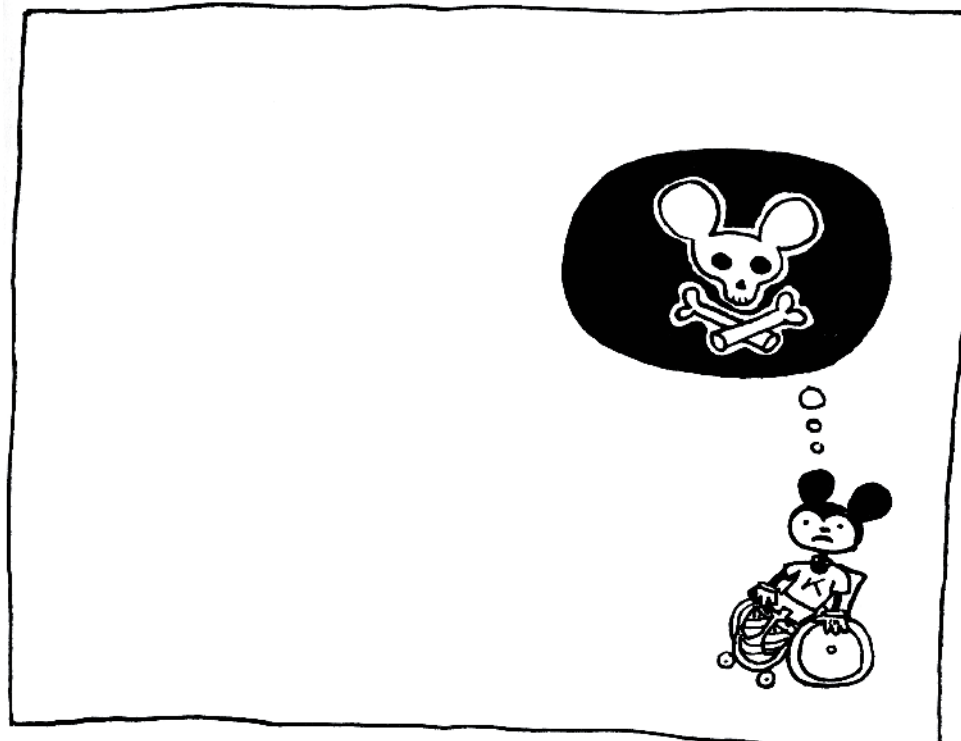
*Tour d'Europe* (2010) is a hefty book about a long cycle journey Leka and her husband undertook through Europe. All of Leka's books are self-published, which



enables her to take particular care over their design. In fact, her books have received awards for their design. She publishes her books in English.

Having studied graphic design, Kaisa Leka produces uncluttered drawings, choosing to focus on a tight narrative rather than showy visuals. She draws herself as a mouse and her husband as a duck, while reducing their surroundings to a few visual references.

Kaisa Leka is an active blogger and posts comics depicting episodes from her own life online.



# Mika Lietzén

Mika Lietzén (b. 1974) specialises in depicting interpersonal relationships. His unassuming narrative leaves room for emotion and the reader's own thoughts, yet it is sufficiently precise to provide the reader with everything that is necessary.

Lietzén, who has a master's degree in English language and literature, sometimes uses brush strokes that verge on minimalism. His title *Tarinoita lännestä* ('Tales from the West', 2007) contains four stories about people, reminiscent of novels. The stark black-and-white images render the narrative elegantly spare. This work has also been published in Swedish translation.

In the graphic novel *Kukkakauppiaan onnenpäivä* ('The flower-seller's lucky day', 2005) with a script written



by Pauli Kallio, Mika Lietzén elegantly employs a muted palette to convey the pain a vanished love brings to the changing seasons. Lietzén portrayed his own low-key observations of the street where he lives in his comic strip *Humalistonkatu* ('Humalisto Street', 2006).

*Elegia* ('Elegy', 2008) is a starkly minimalist one-act play about a man and a woman who remi-



# Sami Makkonen

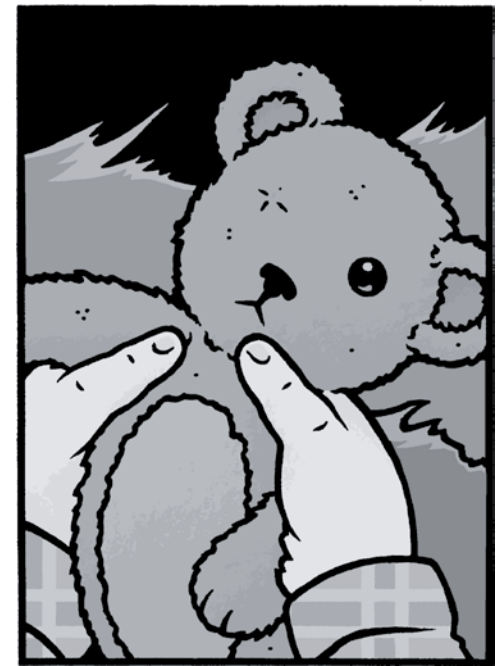
Fantasy and horror are the central genres in Sami Makkonen's work. In all, some 600 pages of comics by Makkonen (b. 1975), who studied fine art painting in Tarttu, Estonia, have been published in the United States. These include books such as volumes 2 and 3 of the *Hatter M.* graphic novels (2009 and 2010) based on scripts by Frank Beddor, *Deadworld: Slaughterhouse* (2011, script by Gary Reed) and *Blue* (2008, script by Elizabeth Genco).

Makkonen's illustrations are painterly, drawn with thin lines and often rather allusive and hazy. Muted colours create a magical effect. Makkonen continues to work as a fine artist, and his paintings are rooted in this same visual world.

Makkonen's career as a comic artist took off when he won the fantasy-themed competition run by the Finnish Comics Professionals organisation with his work *Pelastus ja anteeksianto* ('Salvation and Forgiveness', 2007). Based in Helsinki, Makkonen began working for American



publishers after they noticed his work on the internet. This link is still going strong: a couple of Makkonen's new titles will soon be published in the US.



# Tommi Musturi

Like Finns in general, Tommi Musturi's comics use few words. That laconicism is combined with visual variety, quiet humour and gentle nostalgia. Musturi's drawing style varies, but the same topics and narrative monologue style recur in his work.

Musturi (b. 1975), who graduated with a degree in graphic design, takes particular care with the finishing of all of his works. He runs his own publishing company and from 1997 to 2009 he produced the internationally renowned *Glömp* anthology.

*Toivon kirja* ('Book of Hope', 2007–) is a series that will grow to reach five volumes about the quiet life and everyday experiences of an ageing man. Its unhurried narrative takes on a hypnotic

quality and manages to bring life even to moments where nothing is happening.

*Samuelin matkassa* ('On Samuel's Journey', 2009) is a story with a pop sensibility and no words, which explores Musturi's recurring themes of independence, freedom and the individual as a part of their environment. Musturi's books have been published in English, German, French, Portuguese and Swedish translations.

Tommi Musturi is active in numerous artistic fields: besides comics, he is involved in music, graphic design, illustration, fine art and performance art. His works have been shown in over 50 exhibitions throughout Europe, and his short-form comic strips have been published in many countries.





# Timo Mäkelä

Timo Mäkelä (b. 1951) is an unrivalled illustrator. His lines are supple and lively, capable of capturing the most fundamental elements of his subjects. He is equally adept at depicting fine cityscapes, human emotions and rocky coastlines.

Mäkelä, who began drawing in the 1970s, has produced comic strips, graphic novels, political cartoons, illustrations for newspapers and magazines and music album covers. His subjects often deal with relationships, creativity and musings on the meaning of life.

Mäkelä's graphic novel *Vaaleanpunainen pilvi* ('The

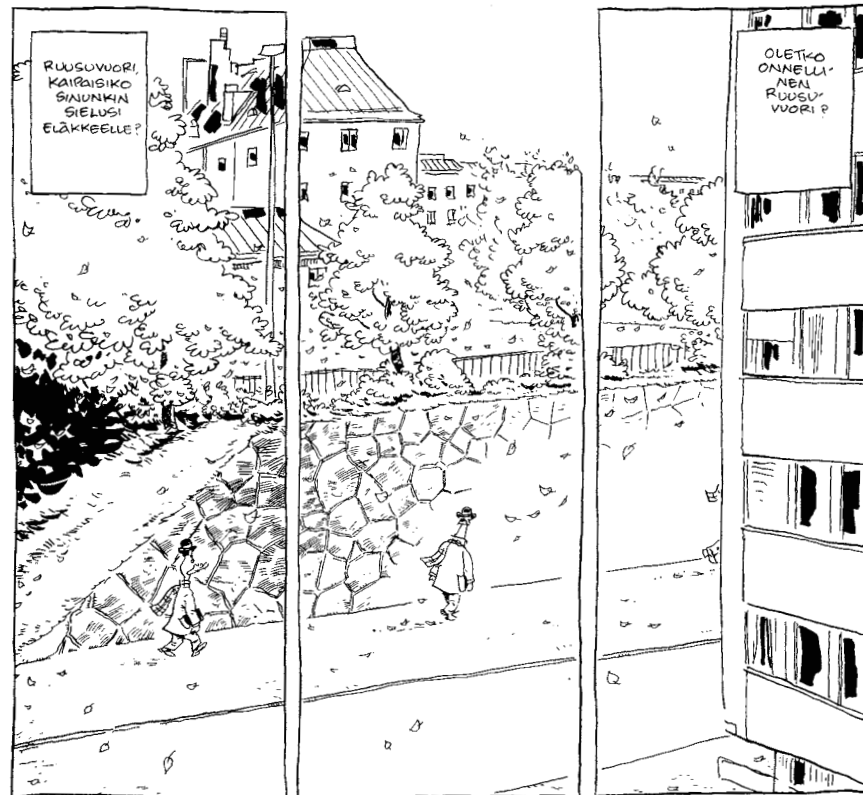
*Pink Cloud*', 2001) is about romantic relationships involving four people approaching middle age. It is a carefully structured story with multiple layers, whose evocative visuals that serve to support the narrative.

The newspaper comic *Minun elämäni* ('My Life', 2001–), which depicts the thoughts of an old man, is unusual in its choice of topics, as is the chronicle of everyday tribulations that is *Pieniä julmia tarinoita* ('Little Brutal Stories', 1997–99). The drawing style in these series varies along with their subject matter.

*Rooma* ('Rome', 2004) is



a collection of tales based on novellas as well as Mäkelä's own short stories about the diversity of human life. *Kuolematon mestariteos* ('The Immortal Masterpiece', 2007) is a modern-day take on the novella of the same name by Honoré de Balzac.



# Pentti Otsamo

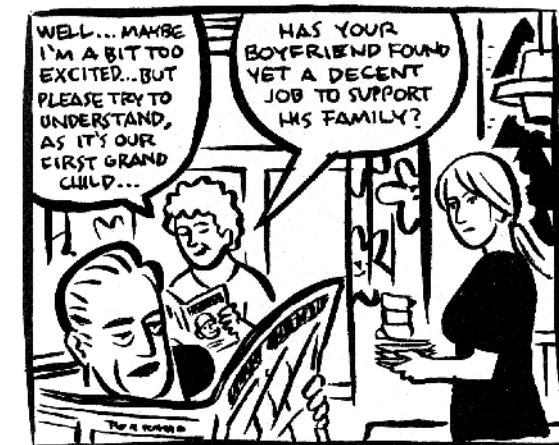
Deep, powerful emotions are extremely difficult to depict in an affecting way. It is all too easy to veer towards exaggeration, heavy-handedness and cliché. Pentti Otsamo (b. 1967) neatly avoids these pitfalls in his comics which depict everyday life.

*Pieni olento* ('The Fall of the Homunculus', 1998) is a comic that was published first in Canada and then in four additional language versions. An unexpected pregnancy changes Anna and Joel's lives. They are forced to look for answers to all the questions they haven't managed or even thought to ask yet. In his comics, Otsamo probes people's thoughts and feelings, their uncertainties and fears.

Pentti Otsamo holds a degree in graphic design, and his artistry is evident in the density of his comics. He knows how to load an image with meanings and messages, even though his strokes appear to be made in a starkly realistic style.

Otsamo's works published since his debut in 1980 have included the *FC Palloseura* series about the world of football with a script written by Pauli Kallio, short comic novellas and illustrations.

The Canadian *Drawn & Quarterly Showcase* published Otsamo's tale of childhood, *Life During Wartime* (2004), which has also been translated into Swedish and Italian. *Siperian kielioppi* ('A Siberian Grammar', 2008) is a biographical work about the Finnish explorer M.A. Castrén.





# Heikki Paakkanen

Heikki Paakkanen (b. 1949) is a comic artist and cartoonist whose artistic output also encompasses animation and illustration.

In Paakkanen's series of five satirical graphic novels about characters called the Guerrilla and the Conscientious Objector, an old fighter and a young pacifist travel through Finland, Sweden, France, Russia and the United States. In each country they discover something startling in the rubbish bins of history. These works have been translated into Russian, Swedish and French.

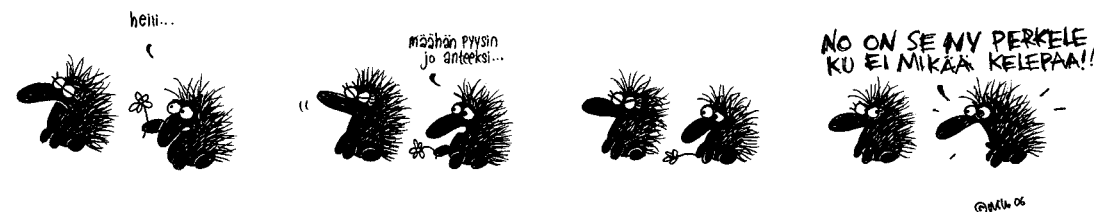
Paakkanen's works are united by a restrained scurrility that does not tip over into tastelessness. He employs an anachronistic, anarchic brand of conservatism to prevent that from happening. He lauds the



drawing machines and devices, right down to the smallest knobs and buttons.

memories, objects and customs of the past while displaying a healthy scepticism of all authority. Paakkanen enjoys being able to delve into different eras and places and rummage around in our fixed mindsets.

Paakkanen's visual approach is governed by *horror vacui*, the fear of empty space. His lines are comically baroque, and his panels are bursting with precisely drawn objects. He clearly delights in



# Milla Paloniemi

*Kiroileva siili* ('The Cursing Hedgehog') is a comic for the internet age. This sparky, spiky mammal who was born in the margins of Milla Paloniemi's college notebook and rose to fame on her website was already well known when the first collection was published in 2007.

Collections of these comic strips rose to the top of the Finnish bestseller list and stayed there for a long time. The sixth volume will be published in 2012. The publisher also brought out an English book, entitled *The Cursing Hedgehog*, in 2011.

The title of the comic comes from the figure at its core: the main character is an angry hedgehog who swears even more enthusiastically than Captain Haddock. But as you might expect, there

are tender feelings lurking underneath that spiky exterior.

The hedgehog's bad language may be therapeutic for many who are happy with their lot yet cannot help feeling that the world is kicking them in the teeth. Good thing there's someone who's willing to put it into words...

Milla Paloniemi (b. 1983) is a graphic designer who draws in a stripped-down style, often without any backgrounds. The animals' expressions are conveyed in tiny details.

*Tassutellen* ('Pawing Around') is another animal-based comic strip by Paloniemi. It was published in book form in 2007 and features a dog and cat who are much better behaved than the Cursing Hedgehog.







## Ville Ranta

Stories are at the core of Ville Ranta's comics. His debut work, *Sade* ('Rain', 2003, translated into Polish), is a 200-page graphic novel about an epic flood. In his diary-like works, Ranta (b. 1978) depicts family life, the work of the artist and his travels to comic festivals.

Ranta is a self-taught artist. Over the years his



comics have become visually looser and more sketch-like. His output of drawings and sketches is prolific, and he quickly puts work from his sketchbook up on his website. He has also written plays for the theatre.

Ranta's satirical work entitled *Célébritiz* (2006) is based on a script by the French writer Lewis Trondheim. It was a success in France and has been translated into Finnish. *Isi on vähän väsynyt* ('Daddy's a bit tired', 2005) tells of Ranta's day-to-day life with his family and has been translated into French.

Ville Ranta is not afraid of reinterpreting history and societal issues. His 288-page work *Kajaani* (2008, translated into French and Swedish) gives a new, highly personal account of the great Finnish cultural figure Elias Lönnrot. Ranta also draws comics for newspapers that comment on current issues, and he delves into the essence of religion and faith in *Eräänlaisia rukouksia* ('Some sort of prayers', 2009) and *Paratiisisarja* ('The Paradise Series', 2010, translated into Swedish, French and German).

## Aapo Rapi

After self-publishing several works, Aapo Rapi (b. 1976) achieved his breakthrough with *Pullapoika* ('Doughboy Book', 2005, translated into French). It is a story set in the early 20th century about a factory owner's son who does not share his father's values and instead campaigns for Marxism among the workers.

*Meti* (2008) is a record of stories told by the artist's grandmother about the course of her life. The narrative unfolds at a calm pace, and the smallish panels contribute to the leisurely progress of the stories. The French translation of this work was nominated in the competition for the best graphic novel at the Angoulême International Comic Festival in 2010.



Aapo Rapi gained a master's degree following studies in Tampere and Edinburgh, and he is not content to follow fads. His comics have a strong authorial presence in their subject matter and illustrations, and they are the result of much thought and deliberation. Testing the boundaries of good and evil is replaced by an affectionate understanding of the various aspects of life.

Rapi's lines are soft and round and easy to read. His images have a gentle, quirky sense of humour that is somewhat reminiscent of the films of Aki Kaurismäki. Rapi's characters are often on the margins of society, people who plough their own furrow. In addition to his comics and illustration work, Aapo Rapi teaches courses in comic art.







## Anna Sailamaa

Anna Sailamaa (b. 1979) was studying to become an art teacher when she began drawing comics in 2002 and decided to focus on the genre in her studies. Sailamaa was awarded first prize in the short-story comic competition at the Arctic Comics festival in Kemi in 2007 and also

won first prize at the Fumetto comics festival in Lucerne in 2009.

Her debut work, *Ollaan nätisti* ('Be Good Now', 2008), is a collection of five stories centering around family relations. They contain finely tuned depictions of people's ties to one another. In the short story entitled 'Sisko' ('Sister'), we see two sisters in the kitchen. One is cooking while the other tells her about meeting a widower, his grief and his inability to deal with his pain. "I wish the world weren't like this," the woman says. But it is.

*Paimen* ('The Shepherd', 2011) is set in northern Finland, where Sailamaa originally hails from. In that book, a young man finds a dead swan in the woods. It becomes a symbol of the depopulated rural district and affects the man deeply. The story conveys the sadness surrounding a vanishing way of life.

Sailamaa's simple yet rather bold drawings focus on people. People are the cohesive force in the stories and the reason for telling them. Atmospheres are often created via close-ups or images that are restricted to small details.



## Tiitu Takalo

Tiitu Takalo (b. 1976) views the world from a feminist perspective. She portrays life as a woman, the expectations generated by women's surroundings and the many ways violence impacts on everyday life. *Kebä* ('The Ring', 2007, translated into Swedish) tells the story of Julia, a 16-year-old girl who practises boxing, dares to break the bounds set for her by falling in love with a girl.

The 13 brief stories in *Jää* ('Ice/Stay', 2008) examine a child's difficult relationship with her father, the differences between men and women and the experiences of two people in love. Takalo manages to extract a great deal from often-used themes, making them resemble real life. *Tuuli ja myrsky* ('Wind and Storm',

2009, translated into Swedish) is about women who have grown tired of being victims.

Even though Takalo holds many strong opinions, she values diversity. Being aware of your own worth and ideas does not have to mean that you hate others or are aggressive.

Tiitu Takalo studied illustration, and her images are realistic yet beautiful. Her lines are expressive and humane. Her narratives are measured and clear.

Takalo's message is simple: be yourself. You won't succeed if you try to live as someone else, so

there's no sense in trying to be something you're not.







## Ville Tietäväinen

Ville Tietäväinen's images are characterised by supreme attention to detail. The backgrounds are well researched, angles carefully considered and the draughtsmanship thoroughly professional. This precision stems from his education: Tietäväinen (b. 1970) trained to be an architect.

However, Tietäväinen never practised as an architect and instead started to produce illustrations and comics while he was still a student. He began his career as a comic artist working with Harri Hannula on a book set in Thailand, entitled *Hymyilevä kuu* ('The Smiling Moon', 1995).

Tietäväinen's own graphic novel, *Linnut ja Meret* ('The Birds and the Seas', 2003, published in French in 2005), is a beautiful, profound work of 120 pages. The theme of the book is human freedom and how to grasp it.



people going. This story about one person raises a number of important issues concerning our world.

The story is about two young people from Hong Kong who fall in love, but numerous obstacles are put in their way by their families, class differences and the notion of honour. There is a parallel story about the Vietnamese refugee camps as Hong Kong is handed over to China.

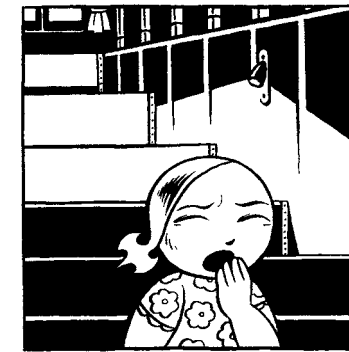
*Näkymättömät kädet* ('Invisible Hands', 2011) is an outstanding book that tells the story of Rashid, a Moroccan who arrives in Spain without any documentation. It depicts the conflicts between dreams and reality and the strength, hope and letdowns that keep

## Petteri Tikkanen

The world of childhood is a mystery, but Petteri Tikkanen (b. 1975) portrays it with humanity and understanding. A young girl called Kanerva appears in several of his comics, observing the world in wide-eyed wonder.

In the book *Kanerva ja yks juttu* ('Kanerva and One Thing', 2007), Kanerva deals with the death of her grandmother. The beginning and end of life find one another and understand each other. The titles *Kanerva ja kirottu lokki* ('Kanerva and the darned seagull', 2008) *Eero* (2009) and *Mopo* ('Moped', 2011) investigate childhood and growing up.

Tikkanen, who holds a degree in graphic design, uses his brush to create images of the magical world of childhood, but there are always



shadows lurking somewhere in the background. Dark hues and balance are ever-present, just as in life. Tikkanen's style is organic and lyrical without becoming overly cloying.

Petteri Tikkanen is a two-time winner of the first prize at the Arctic Comics festival in Kemi. A study trip to Mozambique provided the material for his heartfelt travelogue, *De Mocambique Portagem Normal* (1999).

There is another side to Tikkanen, which is his inter-

est in horror. He draws horror comics for his self-published zines and also plays guitar as Black Peider, a character reminiscent of a Mexican wrestler. Tikkanen's comic *Black Peider* (2008) depicts sexual fantasies.





# Katja Tukiainen

Katja Tukiainen (b. 1969) investigates the world from her own perspective, with warmth and humanity, without neglecting even the tiniest details of our lives. In her works, fashionable cynicism makes way for emotion and experiencing the world in its entirety.

In her early comics, Tukiainen – who qualified as an art teacher – often depicted the world of young girls. In her graphic novel *Tyttö ja mummo* ('The Girl and the Granny', 1999) she traced women's entire life cycle via the relationship between a girl and her grandmother.

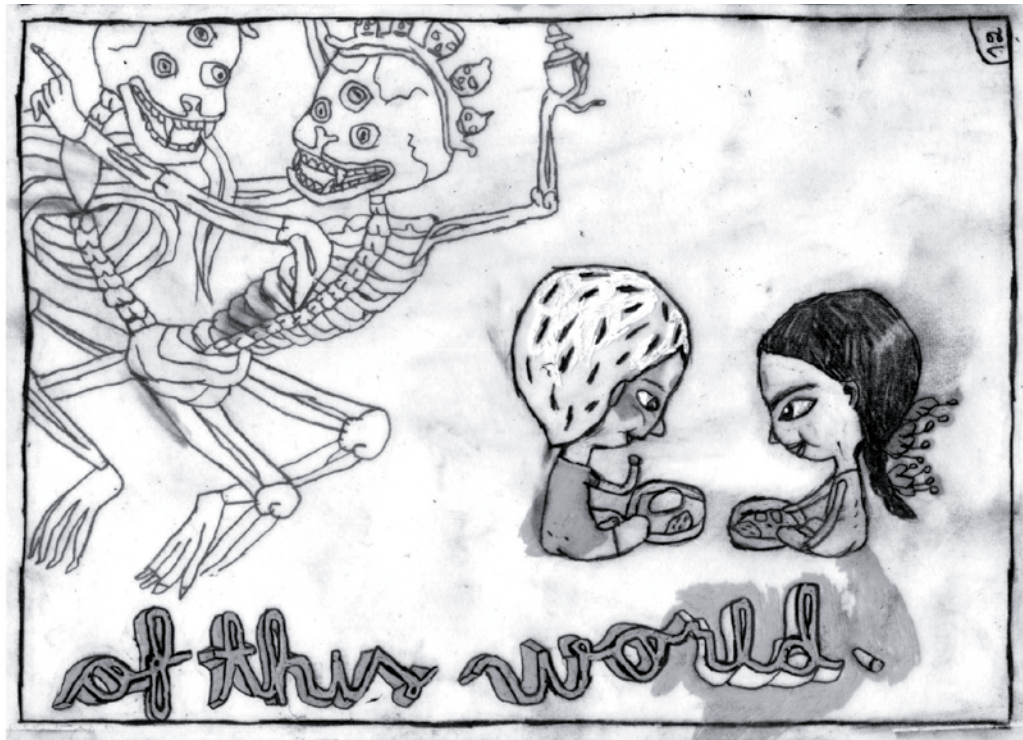
*Postia Intiasta* ('Post from India', 2002) is a travelogue about a land that is very special to Tukiainen, where she often travels to practise yoga and to teach courses on comic art. *Rusina* ('The Raisin', 2008) tells about the birth



of a child. Both of these books have been translated into Swedish.

Katja Tukiainen does not shy away from using different tools and materials. She sometimes draws in pencil, sometimes in Indian ink. Her drawings may use clear lines, sketchy outlines or collage. The aim of the narrative and the overall feel she wants to achieve determine the methods she uses.

In recent years, Tukiainen has concentrated on fine art and installations for gallery shows. The colour pink appears in many of her works, and her pieces never have any right angles. They are anything but bombastic. Her imagery is linked to the lives of girls and women.



# Marko Turunen

Marko Turunen (b. 1973) combines science-fiction clichés with pop culture and violent superheroes with the surrealism of minor everyday tasks. Serious themes such as death and the peculiarity of childhood meet an observant, unassuming sense of humour.

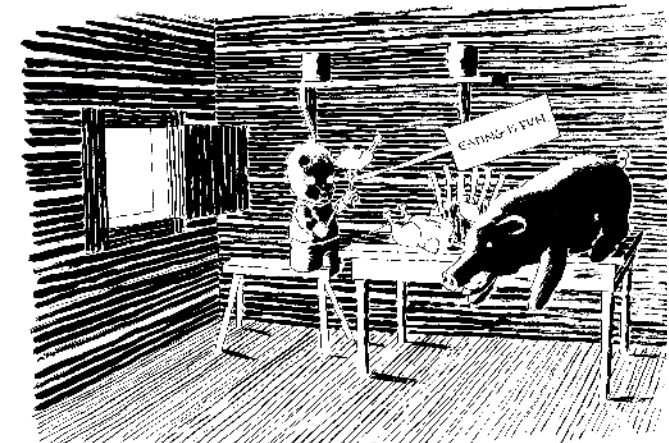
The results are uncompromisingly individual, and Turunen was awarded the top prize at the Arctic Comics festival in Kemi in 2000 as well as at the Lucerne comics festival in Switzerland in 2003.

Marko Turunen studied sculpture. His books have been translated into French, German and Italian, and his short stories have been published in several countries.

In *Tiskipäiväkirja* ('The Dishwashing Diary', 2002)

Turunen observed daily life by illustrating the dishes that had to be washed every day. *Kuolema kulkee kintereillä* ('Death Walks on its Hind Legs', 2003) maps out the everyday existence of superheroes living in a flat on a housing estate. *Pohja* ('The Ground', 2003) is about a childhood in which everything is odd. *Libat puntarissa* ('Flesh on the Line', 2007) features newspaper clippings from his father's career as a wrestler.

Turunen's graphics may be single-coloured line drawings or images that play with bold fields of colour. Images that contradict the often laconic text create a surreal dimension. His panels are rather like snapshots taken with a cosmic camera.





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A cartoon illustration of a grey donkey standing with its arms crossed, looking down at a small, dark, mushroom-shaped object on the ground. The donkey has large ears and a long, slightly curved nose. The mushroom-like object is dark and has a textured, gilled surface. The background is plain white.



The same publisher included Vähämäki's 2008 comic entitled *Äitienpäivä* in the 2009 case 5 anthology. That story dealt with childhood. Vähämäki's other comics have appeared in national anthologies, and she has taken part in international anthologies.





This booklet features 25 Finnish comic artists and their work.

We hope this selection will convey what we consider to be the key features of Finnish comics: diversity, delight in storytelling and visual inquisitiveness.

Finland will be the Guest of Honour at the 2014 Frankfurt Book Fair. Comics will take their place alongside other literature. With their high quality and diverse range of voices, Finnish comics have established a place for themselves at international comics festivals, book fairs and other events. This publication aims to open the door to the world of Finnish comics. Come on in!

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