

For immediate release

Tyyne Esko

Paintings, Poetry and Protest

Self-taught, but with a consummate intuitive knowledge of the formal aspects of painting, the Finnish artist Tyyne Esko created oils that document and decry the changing social landscape of her country during the second half of the twentieth century. Mourning the past and assailing the present, she engaged nature and poetry to convey the pain of isolation and loss experienced by the poor and less fortunate, abandoned and then ignored by what she perceived to be an increasingly smug and indifferent society.

In 1972 at the age of fifty-two, Esko began painting images of traditional Finnish houses and structures that were fast disappearing as developers replaced them with sprawling, homogeneous projects in the name of the "new" architecture. Having been a faithful listener to radio broadcasts of the work of the populist poet Dan Andersson, she began to empathize and identify with the hard lives of the rural people described in his poems. The resulting paintings memorialized their lives and complemented the gentle, idyllic beauty of rural Finland with sublime, atmospheric canvases.

More and more, Esko directed her attention to the bureaucrats and petty functionaries of local political life. With an unerring eye for hypocrisy and cant, her metaphor images laced with ironic text, she skewered the local bosses with her brush, primarily for their betrayal of trust in caring for the disadvantaged, the weak, and the poor.

Tyyne Esko has shown widely in Finland and Sweden. This will be her first one person exhibition in New York.

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Dates: 9 May - 28 June 2002

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