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Ūí Ūí presents

OUI + OUI

63 / 2026 • MACON HOLT 1/2

Oui oui on ukkosenjohdatin, joka kysyy: mikä innostaa, kuka muovaa tätä hetkeä, ja millä on merkitystä tulevaisuudessa. Oui oui zoomaa siihen, mikä tekee elämästä elämisen arvoista.

Välittikö ystävä kirjeen sulle?

Liity Oui oui -tilaajaksi [täällä](#).



Tämä kirje on lähetetty alun perin 7.2.2026.

Oui oui 64 ilmestyy tuota pikaa klo 7.

HUOMENTA,

*Jos miljoonat ihmiset rakastavat teosta, sen täytyy olla hyvä.*

**Tervetuloa Oui oui'n kevätkaudelle 2026!** Ylempi ajatus hiipii mieleen silloin tällöin, ja aina pähkin, mikä ajatteluun ajaa. Kulttuurikriitikko **W. David Marx** – joka on viime aikoina kahminut palstatilaa viimeisen 25 vuoden kulttuuri-ilmiöt kertaavalla *Blank Space* -teoksellaan – [antaa](#) seuraavanlaisen vastauksen.

”Kynninen selitys milleniaalien maulle on sanoa, että X-sukupolvi voitti kulttuurisodan 1990-luvun lopulla vakiinnuttamalla indien ja kaupallisuutta vastustavat arvot osaksi valtavirtaa. Jokainen vuosituhannen vaihteessa kasvanut saattoi tuntea olonsa sorretuksi sen vuoksi, miten ilottomalta ilmapiiri vaikutti: piti vihata popkulttuuria ja potea syyllisyyttä kaikesta. Kun sitten tuli **Britney**

**Spears, Backstreet Boys** ja koko se popkulttuurin uusi aalto, oli helppo ajatella: *Tämähän on jännittävää ja hauskaa – miksi mun kuuluisi ajatella, että tämä on väärin?*

Popmusiikin laaja levikki sekä yleisön ja tekijöiden linkit marginalisoituihin yhteisöihin saivat sen näyttäytymään rockia ja muita genrejä demokraattisempänä ja edistyksellisempänä. Seurannutta muutosta on kutsuttu poptimismiksi. Kun esimerkiksi kulttuurijournalismissa oli aiemmin keskitytty laatuun, erinäiset mittarit ajoivat toimitukset kirjoittamaan siitä, mikä on suosittua.

W. David Marxin mukaan poptimismi “vie liberaalin inklusiivisuuden periaatteet pidemmälle ja sanoo ihmisten maun arvostelemisen olevan väärin: *On väärin haukkua kenenkään makua huonoksi siksi, että he pitävät popmusiikista tai roskaruoasta ja*” – tämä on olennaista – “*siksi meidän tulisi vapauttaa heidät, ei pelkästään hyväksymällä heidän makuaan, vaan pitämällä sitä arvossa.*”

Tunnistan dogmatismia, jossa ilmiötä puolustetaan ideologisista syistä ikään kuin ‘vihollista vastaan’. Monisyinen laatu keskustelu yksinkertaistuu kysymykseksi henkilökohtaisesta mausta ja käytöstavoista. Vaikka edistyksen, laadun ja uutuuden ihanteista sietää olla skeptinen, lienee kyse enemmän siitä, millä tavalla teos vaikuttaa vastaanottajan mieleen ja mielikuvitukseen. Haluaisin ymmärtää, mitä kiistämätöntä merkitystä laadulla on yhteiskunnallisesti – ja mitä se edes tarkoittaa – ajassa jossa suosio ratkaisee ja taiteesta halutaan olkapää.

Vallitsevan yrittäjyyden ihannoinnin Marx selittää senkin osin vastareaktion 90-luvun markkinavastaiseen ilmapiiriin. Kun pop hyväksyttiin osaksi *Kulttuuria* ja markkinat määrittivät mitä menestys on, oli luontevaa assosiaatio, että raha ja sen tavoittelu on ok myös. ”Artistit ovat yrittäjiä, ja *ketä me olemme kritisoimaan heitä, jos he rakentavat massiivisen uran tyhjästä?* Syntyi demokraattinen, liberaali oikeutus ansaita paljon rahaa: yleisön makua palveltiin, he saivat mitä he halusivat.”

“Sitten seurasi vuoden 2008 finanssikriisi ja taloudellinen epävarmuus. Asumisen ja terveydenhuollon kustannusten nousun myötä boheemina runoilijana eläminen New Yorkissa ei enää ollut mahdollista. Monet kokivat, että heidän on rikastuttava mahdollisimman nopeasti suojana taloudellista romahdusta vastaan. Kun yhteiskunnallisesti edistykselliset ajatukset oikeudenmukaisuudesta, työstä ja inklusiivisuudesta yhdistyivät taloudellisiin realiteetteihin, syntyi käsitys, että yrittäjyys on eettinen kapitalismin muoto.”

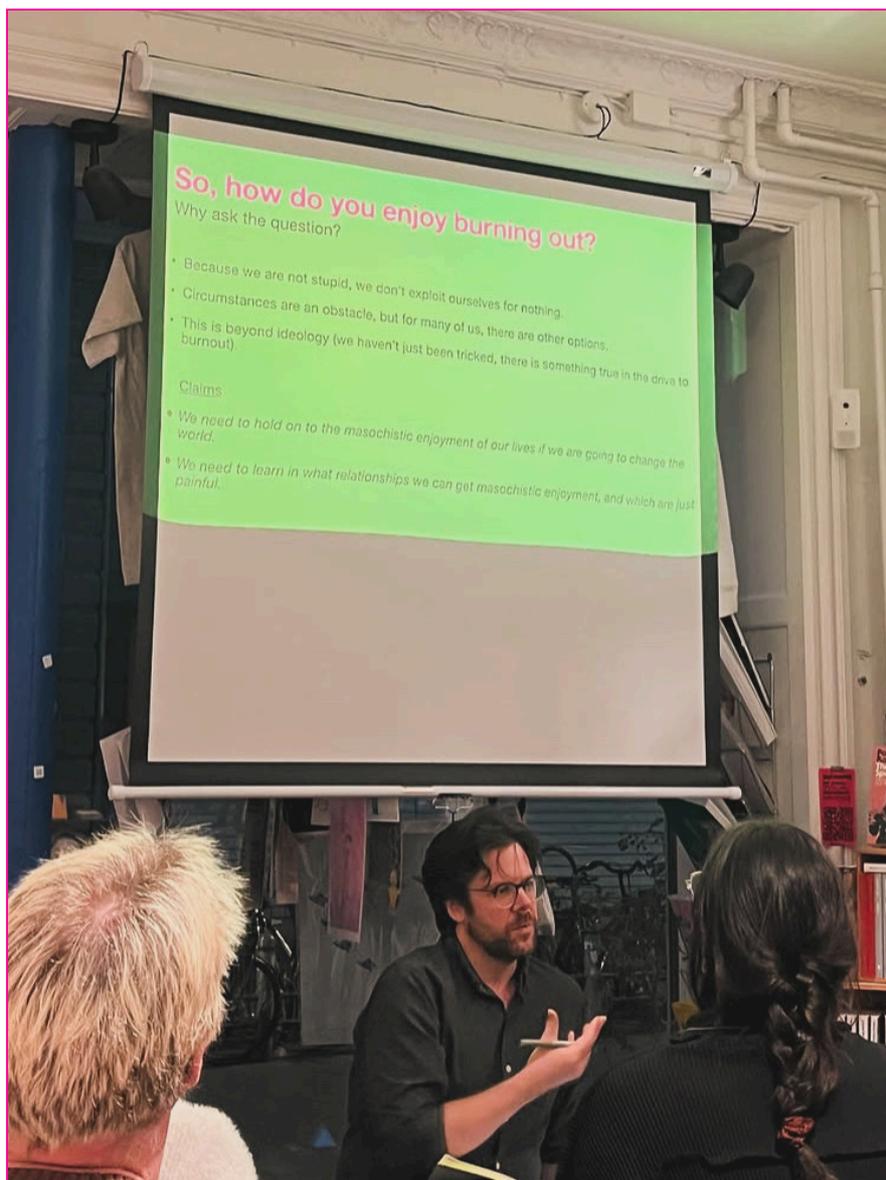
“Tässä piilee myös ristiriita”, Marx sanoo: “On outoa, että monet taloudellisen tasa-arvon puolustajat [–] pitävät massatuotetuinta kulttuuria kaikkein vapauttavimpana.”

On ihan validi kysymys, miksi kenenkään tulisi välittää syvällisestä, haastavasta tai innovatiivisesta kulttuurista. Viihteen logiikka on kuitenkin itseään ruokkiva kehä. Mitä tiukempaa on taloudellisesti, mitä absurdimmaksi maailmanmeno yltyy, sitä enemmän tekee mieli laittaa aivot narikkaan. Ja mitä enemmän arvostamme haluttavuutta laadun sijaan, sitä korkeammiksi elinkustannukset nousevat kautta linjan. Riskien ottaminen, tai omaehtoisella taiteella eläminen, käy aina vain kalliimmaksi.

pietari

*Oui oui'n ystävä:*

Taiteen edistämiskeskus  
Centret för konstfrämjande  
Arts Promotion Centre Finland



## MACON HOLT

*Kulttuuriteoreetikko, kriitikko*

Macon Holt on kriitikko ja kulttuurintutkimuksen lehtori, jonka löysin etsiessäni kiinnostavia kööpenhaminalaisia tekijöitä ja ajattelijoita. Macon järjestää Kööpenhaminan ykköskirjakaupassa

**Superissa** *What the Fuck is Going on?* -nimisiä workshopeja, joista viimeisimpään pääsin osallistumaan marraskuussa. Ilta oli upee: napakka kriittisen teorian luento kiinnostavasta teemasta näkemyksellisellä kulmalla ja lopuksi pohdittiin pienissä ryhmissä Maconin kysymyksiä ja nautittiin virvokkeita. Workshopien preseihin ja muistiinpanoihin voi perehtyä Maconin nettisivuilla [tästä](#).

Macon on julkaissut myös kirjan nimeltä [Pop Music and Hip Ennui: A Sonic Fiction of Capitalist Realism](#), joka tarjoaa raikkaan näkökulman viimeaikaisen populaarimusiikin kulttuuripolitiikkaan. Kustantamon tekstin mukaan kirja "ei puolustele popmusiikin sortavia piirteitä mutta ei myöskään vähättele sen tuottamaa nautintoa". Lisäksi Macon on työskennellyt *aesthetic advisorina* eri taiteilijoille, ja opettanut yliopistoissa Briteissä, Ruotsissa ja Tanskassa.



Vinkki: Säännöstele kiinnostava keskustelu viikon ajalle, ellet nauti kaikkea kerralla.

## I

# The stories we tell ourselves

**PIETARI: You told me that *operative fictions* are the "fictional ways we organize action" – the stories through which we structure what we think we're doing. Does that mean existing stories or ones you invent?**

MACON: Both, and they relate. One activist told me how *The Lord of the Rings* influenced her growing up: a story of friends with little chance of winning, struggling against a big bad thing, sacrificing themselves to make it happen. That became a story she made up about herself and her actions.

Every story is interpretable, so people take different things from them. It's hard to claim a causal connection, although a lot of research tries to find which stories help solve the climate crisis. What you find instead is that people with a sense of justice read *The Lord of the Rings* through that lens. How it influences them is multi-causal: shaped by parents, upbringing, and the political stories they hear at the time.

**Interesting.**

Some people are very into post-humanist sci-fi. I like to juxtapose that with the TV adaptation of *The Last of Us*. In utopian studies, there's a term: critical dystopia – a dystopia for someone, but not for everybody. In *The Last of Us*, the mushrooms are having a great time. Some climate activism follows a very anti-humanist vein, like "*let the mushrooms have it.*" I don't know about that. I like that we can go to a café and have found ways to organize society.

Here's the paradox: a lot of sustainability work tries to save the world of extractive capitalist realism from its own consequences. Ideally, they want us to keep doing what we're doing, but without consequences. The weird thing is: the very actions they propose inherently have consequences – their own undoing.

Much sustainability discourse isn't about actually solving the problem. We already know what would really have to happen: stop with the whole growth paradigm and stop producing so much carbon to fuel economic growth.

There are small solutions, but I'm not convinced they work. Carbon credits, for example, aim to create a new economy, but the same issues persist: people who can afford to be less responsible buy credits from others. It just moves responsibility around.

This perspective got me called nihilistic, but I'm not sure it's nihilistic. It's more about acceptance. The crisis will continue to unfold, and how do we live with that? I don't think a revolution will happen to change it, and I also don't think business will solve it. The incentives aren't there.

### **What would it take to stop with the growth idea?**

It has to consistently not work. Right now, incentives are too powerful because they seem meaningful. When you do these things, that's the return: symbols get exchanged, money comes in, your score goes up.

For this to become contestable, it has to stop making sense. Honestly, I don't know what happens after that, but I feel this is the direction: a retreat from material reality. Even though COVID disrupted life on a massive scale, it didn't make the climate crisis any more prominent in public discussion. And then, almost simultaneously, we see this turn into intense militarism – ICE raids in the US, the war in Gaza. All these events become so salient.

The techniques and technologies deployed in these conflicts are like R&D for managing massive social unrest as the economy destabilizes and inequality rises. You try stuff on a population you don't care about, see what works. It's not a conspiracy – just a side effect of the process.

Historical precedent exists: in the 1920s in Gaza, colonial troops from the British Army came from Ireland, where they had tried out certain population control techniques, and applied them in Palestine.

There's uncertainty in the air, tension around power systems, which, to me, indicates the growth paradigm is failing. And it's already stopped working for most people: apartments are hard to get, careers are hard to make.

### **Have you noticed a shift against growth?**

People don't believe in it. But also, I'm in such a bubble – I don't fucking know. There's a kind of nihilism – or a very desperate move to *resist* nihilism, especially with the rise of far-right politics. Everything seems meaningless, so people hold on to something. That something might be racist and stupid, but it's something stable. That is where you go if you can't make your life make sense to yourself.

### **Nostalgia.**

Yes. And there's a general collapse into slop in culture. AI slop is a symptom of people feeling nothing means anything. Social media dominates our lives, and young people are terrified of being cringe. They can't create or commit to anything meaningful, because putting themselves out there risks ridicule. To be attached to anything now seems pathetic, which is a really hard basis to create anything from, right?

**There's a shift toward wanting to return to 2003, a time before smartphones. I get the sense people crave sincerity and are even open to being cringe.**

Yeah, there's that too. You see that in the trad wife movement and similar trends: wanting to believe very desperately, but attached to nothing. The material basis is so undermined.

**Why do you think people relate to trad wife or far-right ideas instead of progressive ones?**

Part of it's the fault of progressive movements – they've been so beaten down, they don't have the power. I remember asking some Copenhagen Business School students, mostly Gen Z: "So, is the world just done?" They said, "Yeah." And that's why they were sitting there, to work out how to get enough to survive whatever's going to come up.

**I want to resist that. How do we avoid succumbing to the spiral?**

I'd like to resist it too. Giving in to resignation won't end well for anybody.

**It's not productive... To an extent, it is a choice. You can do something, even without resources.**

100%. That's very much what my Thursday's [What the fuck is going on?](#) workshop is about. The title of the session is *It's after the end of the world, don't you know that yet?*, which I've taken from [this song](#) by the black American jazz composer **Sun Ra**. From a Black diaspora post-slavery perspective, the apocalypse has already happened.

Sun Ra also built his own fiction, a myth around himself. He believed he was a pharaoh from Saturn, gathering Black Americans to take them back to their kingdom in the stars, because this place is dumb.

That story then animates the question: Why seek rights from people who take them away from you? Why want liberty in a system that's already proven unworthy? There's a whole other thing you should be doing instead. It's like an aestheticized version of African nationalism, but with a twist: not returning, but creating something new. *No, we're going to return to space* – somewhere arguably we've never been before.

**Talk about fictional stories.**

Exactly. This sentiment – that worlds end quite frequently – is usually not apparent to people who are relatively comfortable, or who believe they can be accepted by the world as it is. And if you don't, then you have a different kind of freedom.

So Thursday's workshop is about thinking about this problem from Black studies perspectives: stop trying to save the world, make new ones. You can do that in a much more intimate, interpersonal way, where you have a lot more agency.

My previous workshop in October was about burnout and masochism, and it was quite provocative, because the question was: why are you doing this to yourself? What do you like about it? One session had three people from the same sustainability organisation, all on stress leave. And what they realized was that their job was basically handing out certificates so capital transactions could happen.

**So the burnout was caused by the circumstances.**

Yeah. It was this realization: *this is so meaningless, and I really wanted to make a difference.* Burnout is not just stress and exhaustion. It's those two plus disappointment – having an idea you can do something, then realizing you can't, or it's not what you thought it would be. While also being exhausted. You're hurting yourself for something you don't even want anymore.

**Which sounds like a metaphor for everything.**

It is! [Philosopher] **Gilles Deleuze's** [book on masochism](#) has a very nice theory. The masochist is a sadist who's ashamed of their desire to impose their will on the world. So they create an elaborate game where they get punished – but in a way where they force the other person to do the punishing. That way, they get what they want but can pretend they didn't ask for it.

**Makes sense.**

And that's the deal I think a lot of us are making: *I don't feel like I'm allowed to have a middle-class life, so I try to do it through sustainability work. I tell myself it's good, hard work. But then it turns out I wasn't even doing that. So now I have the thing I didn't fully identify with – a middle-class job prospect – but I'm just stressed for something I can't even identify with.*

Deleuze's main point about masochism is that it only works if there's a contract – spoken, written, whatever – between the two parties: when, where, how, what acts. But the thing is, there isn't an actual sadist in the relationship, because an actual sadist doesn't give a fuck about your contract. They'll just do whatever they want. And that's what capitalism turns out to be – a sadist. You try to make a deal with it, and it's like: *oh, that's cute.*

So you have these people – not exactly on the frontline, but still believing they're doing some good – and all of them are burnt out. The next week, another person from the same organization came. There's a real hunger there. I tried to serve that in some way, but it's beyond me what a solution would be.

**I'm also a music artist, and I wrote an album called *Maailma loppu*, which in Finnish means “world, end.”**

Like an imperative?

**Yeah. Only later did I realize it meant letting the things I'm afraid of happen. And that there have been many world-ends in my life – just smaller ones.**

If you think of worlds not as the planet, but as systems of meaning-making, it's much easier to mourn what you've lost instead of melancholically holding onto things that don't exist anymore. That's much more generative. Sadness is far more comfortable than insisting you're not sad.

**I think there should be workshops for people clinging to the past.**

Yeah! A kind of a low-key political project.



## II

### Navigating collapse

**PIETARI: I'm interested in this idea of *thinking beyond the immediate now*. Do you have any vision for what will happen in 5–10 years?**

MACON: I purposely try not to. It's a nice remedy for disappointment if you don't have fixed expectations. In my personal life, I ask: do I like what I'm doing now? What can I do now to keep doing that? On a larger scale, the vision is more vague. There are signs preceding what will probably come next, but I don't know exactly what will happen in the Danish political scene.

In the UK, it looks likely **Nigel Farage's** party could win the next general election. We'll likely see more consequences of the growth paradigm failing – it hasn't worked since 2008, arguably earlier, but only seemed to work. Now the failure is more apparent, and consequences will show.

**What do you mean?**

A move toward populist right-wing politics, displacing blame from the economic system onto migrants. This leads to social unrest. Meanwhile, none of the actual problems will be addressed: health services will worsen, environmental issues remain, AI will become a terrible force of firing people for things it can't really handle. Unless the bubble bursts, that's an outlier – but we might see some as people are starting to realize AI's limits.

**To me, the AI boom sounds like a bad joke because it's so unsustainable.**

Yeah – I tell people I don't worry about AI taking over the world because data centers will flood from energy usage. Sea-level rises. AI won't save us – it's burning too much fuel. It's like a race: how far can the tech go toward Terminator status before it's underwater? Bleak, but kind of fun.

I see a lot of potential in the widespread dissatisfaction. That should be harnessed. I see good work from people like **Gary Stevenson** in the UK campaigning around wealth inequality. He's not in politics, deliberately, but tries to get people to listen.

Also, movements like Solidarity or Palestine activism offer opportunities to channel dissatisfaction into meaningful action, potentially disrupting capitalism.

**In Finland, I get the sense that many people would want to act but not *with the left*. The left seems more focused on internal conflicts than on building collective**

**momentum.**

Yeah, we love that. It's our favourite thing.

**Is it the same here?**

Yeah. That's why there's a whole bunch of parties, but even those splinter. The right is pretty good with splinters – they just kill each other. I don't know if it's a good thing, but it's very effective. Identity politics has split the left over the past two decades. I've discussed this with friends: we need to stop talking about the left and start talking about the things that matter.

Labels don't always help. We have strong critiques of what we're against, but are sheepish about proposing how we should live. In a sense there is no vision, though there are modest attempts. [The new mayor] **Zohran Mamdani** in New York is a good example – he focused on just three priorities. That focus sparked hope and imagination.

[The cultural theorist] **Mark Fisher** got in trouble for this, too. While I studied with him in London, he wrote *Exiting the Vampire's Castle*, the essay that caused the left to claim he was racist and sexist and accuse him of being a terrible human being. The essay was prompted by a TV interview [comedian] **Russell Brand** had done – a part that has not aged well [Brand was later charged with sexual assault and rape] – in which he spoke about his disillusionment with voting. And Mark was fascinated because he saw this as the establishment dealing with a working-class person who had actually thought about something.

In the essay, Fisher went on to critique how contemporary universities work hard to ensure no one talks about class. Class isn't identity in the sense of possessing a label; it's a function of your relationship to others. Later, Black studies examine Blackness similarly – as a relational function. Both perspectives can work together, not hierarchically. And you can do the same kind of thing with sexuality and gender. You can explore how relationships have multiple dynamics, not just a fixed structure.

This stance got Fisher into trouble. It was also an example of the left's tendency to dismiss a valid point because of how it was delivered – ignoring the good because the messenger or method is objectionable.

**Isn't that what he was writing about?**

Yes, exactly. The thing he was criticising happened to him immediately. Of course we can also talk about the choice of rhetoric: if you want to win people over, maybe don't call them vampires in a castle.

This British writer, **Ash Sarkar**, recently wrote a book [*Minority Rule: Adventures in the Culture War*] about the need to stop this identity work because it's been adopted by the right. For example, the idea that the right are peddling that Jewish students feel unsafe during protests only makes sense within the original identity framework. In reality, no one knows they're Jewish, and no one is targeting them – people are protesting their government committing genocide. It's a strange kind of adoption, and it inherently separates people. The more you focus on identity markers at a macro level, the easier it is to dismiss others.

And many of the fights are substantive as well. People in good faith will point out, “the way you run this leftist organization entrenches sexism or racism.” To me, that's a pragmatic problem: figure out

what's being done, then do other things, instead of salting the earth of the organization. The first option is harder because it involves working with people's emotions, egos, and sensitivities. But if you believe in the political project, that's the approach you'd want.

One of the things I've learned in teaching is that it's a really great chance to learn how to deal with your own ego. When an upset student ask a question that's more of an attack, don't react to the attack. Hold onto yourself as stable, not something that needs to defend itself. Hold everyone's confused emotions and deal with the complicated stuff that you're trying to put in front of them.

### **The left should learn to manage their own emotions?**

Their emotions and egos. It's not easy. Many people have been shaped by some really horrible experiences. You need to feel and acknowledge that, but not let it direct all your actions. Even over-managing your ego can backfire; you end up not caring about anything.

One thing I do in these workshops – I didn't realize it until later – is consciousness raising. I find people with painful questions and help them use theory and philosophy to understand what they are, making them more manageable.

It's for situations where someone thinks, "*What the fuck is going on?*" – *here's a way to think about it*. It doesn't solve it, but it becomes more manageable when you think about it as dynamic relationships, concepts, interactions between them, the imperatives, and the incentives that emerge from that, and then critically decide where to intervene. Similar dynamics appear across different media.

The psychoanalytic model of depression as anger turned inward is a useful analogy for the financial crisis: public anger suppressed by austerity turns into depression. Once you think this way, many things become manageable and addressable.

There are 15 people per session. I'm not changing the world at this rate, but it's something. Many of them are young professionals fitting into jobs to make a decent living – mostly women, late 20s to mid-30s. Someone noted it's like an inverse diagram of the male loneliness epidemic. These women feel alienated, confused, and alone, so they gather to think, work, and connect. Meanwhile, many men are just mining crypto, hoping to be the right kind of signifier for whatever mate they imagine they'll attract at some point. It's been quite interesting to realize: *wow, they're really not coming.* ■



**V I I K O N  
L E M P P A R I T**

Ruotsin suurimman aamulehden **Dagens Nyheterin** viikottainen soittolista on tämän hetken palkitsevimmin kuratoitu uuden

**LONTOO** – Kesän lopulla Lontoossa esitetään myös 1990-luvun lopun kohauttajan, brittiläisen näytelmäkirjailija **Sarah Kanen**

musiikin lista. Viikottain päivittyvä Spotify-lista [täällä](#). En ollut ikinä kuullutkaan [Horse Visionista](#) tai [waterbabysta](#), jotka istuu ihanasti pakkasaamuihin.

**LONTOO** — Kyllä tänä kesänä hellitään heitä, jotka Lontooseen losauttaa: Tate Modernissa on esillä nykyaiteilija **Tracey Eminin** 40-vuotisen uran läpileikkaava retrospektiivi [A Second Life](#). Eminin tunnetuin teos lienee *My Bed*, johon voit tutustua 3-minuuttisella [videolla](#) lisää: *“I spent 4 days in The Bed and when I got out of bed I looked at it and thought it was disgusting, and then I realized that this bed had probably saved my life and kept me safe [-] I realized that it was art.”*

(1971–1999) kolmas teos *Cleansed*. Kanen veli Simon on sanonut, että “overseas many people think that Cleansed is Sarah's best play”. Liput eivät vielä oo tulleet myyntiin, mutta niihin pääsee käsiksi aikanaan [täältä](#). 23-vuotiaan edelläkävijän esikoisnäytelmä *Blasted* (1995) kertoi Jugoslavian sodasta ja sisälsi ulostamista, masturbointia, raiskauksia ja kannibalismia.

**Psst...** Otan mielelläni vastaan palautetta ja suosituksia osoitteeseen [studio@uiui.fi](mailto:studio@uiui.fi) – voit myös vastata suoraan tähän viestiin.

Meilaa miete



oui oui -kirjettä kuratoi luovan toimiston **Ui ui** creative director pietari pyykönen. pp <3 ilmiöitä, semiotiikkaa & popmusaa.

Saat tämän viestin, koska olet tilannut Oui oui -uutiskirjeen.

Oui oui kartoittaa nykyhetkeä ja hahmottaa tulevaa.

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