

KONSTENS HUS
VID HAVET

TAITEENTALO
MEREN ÄÄRELLÄ

ART HOUSE
BY THE SEA

CHAPPE

Gustav Wasas Gata 11
10600 Ekenäs, Finland

chappe.fi

Media release 9.9.2025

Forest Creatures exhibition 10.10.2025–22.2.2026 in Chappe, 2nd floor (Clara & Lindö)

A century ago, the Swedish artist **John Bauer** (1883–1918) wandered through Småland's forests with his sketchbook capturing tree roots, mosses, stones, and woodland creature. From these meticulous nature studies emerged the beautiful world of *Among Gnomes and Trolls* (1907–1915), a mysterious visual world. The sympathetic trolls, delicate princesses, tiny gnomes, and other mysterious forest creatures have delighted children and adults alike for decades.

The exhibition presents lithographs from Bauer's iconic "*Troll*" portfolio alongside approximately twenty preparatory sketches, all on loan from Jönköping County Museum, the primary institution preserving the artist's legacy. The exhibition's approximately thirty works — including prints and sketches — offer insight into how John Bauer created illustrations and how he worked with storytelling. The wondrous beings, drawn from folklore, have inspired the contemporary artists featured in the exhibition. Using their chosen expression, style and technique, they have created works that engage in dialogue with Bauer's imagery. The artists **Valtteri Alanen and Eglė Šimėnaitė, Meri Hallenberg, Denisse Islas, Kristiina Kivimäki, Anni Oja, Lotta Rapeli, Sarah Råholm, Mailis Saralehto, and Maija Westerholm** respond to Bauer's legacy through their distinctive techniques and visual languages, forging a vibrant conversation between tradition and contemporary artistic practice.

The sculptures by **Runar Gottberg** are from the collection of the Västra Nylands museum [Museum of Western Uusimaa] and on loan from private individuals.

The exhibition is a collaboration between Chappe, the Children's Culture Center Färi (Turku), and the Jönköping County Museum (Sweden). The curators of the exhibition are PhD Pia Hovi, curator at Chappe; MA Marika Leinonen-Vainio, director of the Children's Culture Center Färi; and PhD Martin Sundberg, Head of Documentation and Collections at the Jönköping County Museum.

JOHN BAUER

John Bauer (1882–1918) was born in Jönköping, Sweden, and studied at Stockholm's Technical School and Althin's School of Painting before being admitted to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in 1900. The

CHA C CHAPPE PPECH P
AP CHAPPE P CHAP CHAP E
CHAPPEC P CHAP CHAP E

KONSTENS HUS
VID HAVET

TAITEENTALO
MEREN ÄÄRELLÄ

ART HOUSE
BY THE SEA

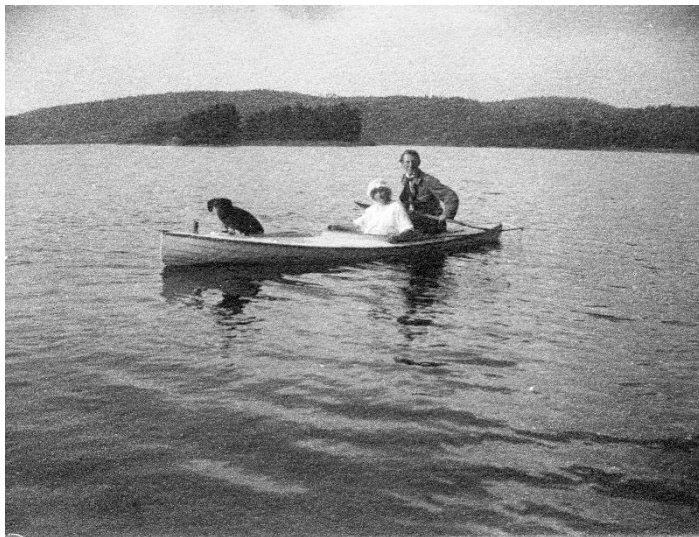
CHAPPE

Gustav Wasas Gata 11
10600 Ekenäs, Finland

chappe.fi

Academy's conservative curriculum, heavily influenced by traditionalists like history painter Georg von Rosen (1843–1923), provided rigorous classical training.

During his student years, Bauer met and married fellow artist **Ester Ellqvist** (1880-1918) in 1906. Two years later, in 1908, the artistic couple embarked on an extensive grand tour through Germany and Italy; an immersive artistic pilgrimage that brought them to culturally vibrant cities and legendary museums.



John Bauer and Ester Ellqvist on Lake Bunn near Björkudden, where they lived.

1915

Photo: Ove Eklund

The Image Archive of Jönköping County Museum

During this period, Bauer had already begun supporting himself through illustration commissions, including a journey to Lapland where he contributed to a prestigious volume on landscapes and indigenous communities. While devoting substantial effort to *Among Gnomes and Trolls* from 1907 onward, Bauer simultaneously pursued a broader artistic identity beyond book illustrations. He accepted public decoration commissions and immersed himself in theatrical design work, revealing his versatility across multiple creative disciplines.

John Bauer's career unfolded during a pivotal era of artistic evolution, spanning the nature-focused traditions of National Romanticism and Realism, the dreamlike realms of Symbolism, and the emerging

CHA C CHAPPE PPECH P
AP CHAPPE P CHAP CHAP E
CHAPPEC

KONSTENS HUS
VID HAVET

TAITEENTALO
MEREN ÄÄRELLÄ

ART HOUSE
BY THE SEA

CHAPPE

Gustav Wasas Gata 11
10600 Ekenäs, Finland

chappe.fi

expressive language of early Modernism. This versatile approach—rooted in observation yet liberated by imagination—ensured Bauer's art remains strikingly resonant for contemporary audiences. John Bauer's artistic career was abruptly cut short by tragedy. On 20th of November 1918, during an autumn storm, the steamship *Per Brahe* sank in *Lake Vättern's* treacherous waters, drowning not only the 36-year-old artist but also his wife Ester and their three-year-old son **Bengt** (affectionately called "Putte", born in 1915). The family had been en route to Stockholm, where Bauer hoped to reinvigorate his career and personal life, when the disaster struck.

JOHN BAUER'S IMAGERY

John Bauer's fantastical creations, inspired by nature, can take many different directions—ranging from enchanting beauty to terrifying figures. They vary between charming and endearing to the grotesque and horrifying; the breadth of Bauer's creativity is immense.

The sketches offer a glimpse into how Bauer developed different illustration proposals and worked with the placement of images within the narrative. Bauer cared not only about the individual image but also about the sequence of illustrations he created for each fairy tale. Many sketches resemble comic strip drafts, with panel after panel. He devoted significant effort to sketching out various solutions and achieving a fluid narrative flow.

CHA C CHAPPE PPECH P
AP CHAPPE
CHAPPEC P CHAP CHAP E

KONSTENS HUS
VID HAVET

TAITEENTALO
MEREN ÄÄRELLÄ

ART HOUSE
BY THE SEA

CHAPPE

—
Gustav Wasas Gata 11
10600 Ekenäs, Finland
—

chappe.fi

ARTIST INFORMATION FOR THE EXHIBITION

Valtteri Alanen (b. 1994)

Valtteri Alanen is an object theatre artist, sound designer and experimental musician. He explores the foundational puppetness of being: How everything that exists animates all that is? Valtteri Alanen holds formal education in puppetry and object theatre at Turku University of Applied Sciences Arts Academy and DAMU in Prague. He is a self-taught sound engineer. Valtteri Alanen is a founding member of Trial & Theatre Collective, working and performing internationally.

Eglė Šimėnaitė (b. 1992)

Eglė Šimėnaitė is a Lithuanian artist, performance maker and film actress based in Helsinki, Finland, and Prague, Czech Republic. Eglė's artistic output revolves around the felt. Textures of touch, light, sound, absence, and bodies in space offer her a direct way of exploring humanity and its relationship to the environment, opening new, altered worlds through the senses. In her recent performances, she has been investigating the materiality of seemingly immaterial things: light as a body, humanity as a sound, **and** color as an experience. Eglė Šimėnaitė is a graduate of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague with a degree in Directing Devised theatre and contemporary performance.

Runar Gottberg (1932–2016)

Karl Runar Gottberg was born into a farming family in Persböle, Pojo. Even as a child, he took part in the daily work of the farm and fields. Under the guidance of his father Volmar, he learned woodworking in the workshop, particularly mastering the art of wood carving. Volmar had such great confidence in Runar's craftsmanship that by the age of seven, he was given his first own knife.

His first sculpture represented a cat, and by age eleven, he sold his first wooden piece. Gottberg kept wood carving as a hobby, but in adulthood – as life's other duties intervened – he crafted far fewer figures. In 1960, he began incorporating natural materials into his sculptures, with his first works depicting trolls. In 1988, Runar Gottberg held an exhibition at the Ekenäs library, where he presented 115 wooden sculptures. Gottberg expanded his artistic expression by working with cement as well; a significant example is the "The Troll Woman" – a cement sculpture located in the Ekenäs' largest playground, "Lion Park" [Lejonparken].

(Source: Gottberg, Wilmer. "Obituary". *Hufvudstadsbladet* 23.2.2016)

CHA C CHAPPE PPECH P
AP CHAPPE P CHAP CHAP E
CHAPPEC P CHAP CHAP E

KONSTENS HUS
VID HAVET

TAITEENTALO
MEREN ÄÄRELLÄ

ART HOUSE
BY THE SEA

CHAPPE

—
Gustav Wasas Gata 11
10600 Ekenäs, Finland
—

chappe.fi

Meri Hallenberg (b. 1993)

Meri Hallenberg is an artist based in Helsinki, working with painting, sculpture and moving image. The works explore themes of transformation and temporality, with time perspectives expanding to geological dimensions. Hallenberg is currently developing a long-term project on animals and their representation, where the animal, animal likeness, zoological research forms the foundation of the artistic process. Meri Hallenberg graduated in December 2024 with a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree from the Academy of Fine Arts at the University of the Arts Helsinki. Prior to her master's studies, Hallenberg earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree from the Academy of Fine Arts (2022) and completed a four-year painting program the Free Art School (2025–2019)

Denisse Islas (b. 1979)

Denisse Islas is an art educator and Experiential Colour Workshop for Babies® -instructor. Islas graduated as a graphic designer from Universidad Tecnológica de México in Mexico. She works in the Children's Culture Centre Färi, planning and organizing art workshops, art camps, and events. Denisse Islas uses traditional craft techniques and multisensory materials in her sculptures. Islas has created three-dimensional forest creatures for the exhibition by needle-felting wool fibers into solid masses.

Kristiina Kivimäki (b. 1962)

Kristiina Kivimäki graduated from the Turku Drawing School in 1986. Since then, she has worked as a visual artist and art educator, including at Children's Culture Centre Färi in Turku. Kivimäki is a storyteller, who addresses even serious topics, but often with the help of humor. Kristiina Kivimäki's mediums are painting and sculpture, and in her sculptures, she combines ceramics, and felting, as well as soft and hard materials.

Anni Oja (b. 1986)

Anni Oja is an animation artist based in Turku. She holds a Master of Arts degree from the University of Lapland university and trained as an animation director at Turku University of Applied Sciences Arts Academy. In her artistic practice, Oja employs a diverse range of techniques – ranging from digitally drawn and processed images to crafts and object animation. In her animation art, rhythm is in focus as a carrier of emotions, mental imagery, and that vital pulse which creates the illusion of life in animation. In Anni Oja's work, we often encounter concrete objects and a subtle language of materials – light and shadows – that the camera can bring to life. Anni Oja combines her artistic practice with a versatile professional career encompassing work as an animation teacher, animator, graphic designer, and scenographer.

CHA C CHAPPE PPECH P
AP CHAPPE P CHAP CHAP E
CHAPPEC P CHAP CHAP E

KONSTENS HUS
VID HAVET

TAITEENTALO
MEREN ÄÄRELLÄ

ART HOUSE
BY THE SEA

CHAPPE

Gustav Wasas Gata 11
10600 Ekenäs, Finland

chappe.fi

Lotta Rapeli (b. 1976)

Lotta Rapeli comes from an animation art background in her artistic practice. Rapeli graduated with a degree in Animation Direction from the Arts Academy at Turku University of Applied Sciences in 2001. She has worked as an animator and been active in the field of independent animation. Lotta Rapeli has worked as an art educator at the Children's Culture Centre Färi for over ten years. During this period, Lotta Rapeli has diversely planned content and led art workshops, art camps, recreational activities, and events. Rapeli has also created animations for the children's culture centre's theater productions, where performing arts and visual arts interact.

Sarah Råholm (b. 1988)

Sarah Råholm is a textile artist who lives and works in Fiskars, Raseborg. Råholm is strongly inspired by nature and mythology. She graduated as a textil artisan in 2022. Råholm has in recent years specialized in Finnish textile traditions and the possibilities of natural dyeing. She explores ecology, the forms of fungi and plants, and the colours that can be extracted from them. Sarah Råholm's rugs are traditionally woven on looms. The work is slow and ritualistic, using techniques with deep historical roots.

Mailis Saralehto (f. 1976)

Mailis Saralehto (MA, MFA) has worked as a visual artist since 2000, exploring in her works cultural and historical layers, sublimity, experiences of the sacred, and the structure of the landscape with elements of contemporary Gothic. Saralehto primarily works with installations, sculptures and video art. Mailis Saralehto's works have been exhibited in a number of national group exhibitions, as well as and international joint and group exhibitions in Germany, Latvia, and Sweden. Furthermore, her art has been presented in solo exhibitions both in her home country Finland, France, Germany, and Estonia.

Maija Westerholm (f. 1987)

Maija Westerholm has specialized in combining puppet theater and physical theater in her artistic work, with a particular focus on techniques from mask theater and clowning. Westerholm's artistic approach is characterized by a strong emphasis on experience and visuality. For her, the interaction with the viewer – the participant – is particularly important. Westerholm views the world through the lens of puppet theater, where inanimate objects, buildings and rooms can come to life. For Maija Westerholm, shame is a distinctively important tool – a force that allows the moods in her art works to fluctuate between melancholic seriousness and playful presence.

For additional information please contact marketing manager Janeta Asplund,
janeta.asplund@raseborg.fi, +358 19 289 2514 or Pia Hovi, pia.hovi@raseborg.fi, 019 289 2515

CHA C CHAPPE PPECH P
AP CHAPPE P CHAP CHAP E
CHAPPEC P CHAP CHAP E