

Press Release, April 23, 2020

## **Kimsooja creates site-specific planting project for Wanås Konst for Summer 2020**

In the summer of 2020, the Wanås Foundation presents *Sowing Into Painting*, a solo exhibition with site-specific installations, film, sculpture and painting by internationally-acclaimed artist Kimsooja. The artist is creating a planting project for the sculpture park Wanås Konst in the form of a flax cultivation that investigates the conceptual relationship between painting, agriculture, and textile. The exhibition opens on the weekend of May 9 – 10, without a vernissage, but visitors are welcome to explore the artworks in the Sculpture Park, Art Gallery, and Hay Barn. Wanås Konst has taken special measures to ensure visitors' safety and the outdoor area consists of almost 100 acres. The exhibition will continue until November 1, 2020.



Kimsooja, *Sowing Into Painting*, part of the exhibition Kimsooja, *Sowing Into Painting*, Wanås Konst 2020. Photo: Mattias Givell

### ***Sowing Into Painting* gives space for reflection**

Kimsooja uses nature and architecture and transforms them with the help of mirrors and fabric that call attention to us in our surroundings and give space for reflection. Kimsooja describes the exhibition at Wanås Konst as creating a circle within her oeuvre connecting her long standing interests in painting, textiles and agriculture.

Just inside one of the gates to the Sculpture Park, near the buildings at Wanås, flax grows as a part of Kimsooja's exhibition. Through her interest in cultivating at Wanås, she takes advantage of something unique to the site that most art museums cannot offer—the possibility of farming the land. Kimsooja, who has been active as an artist since the early 1980s, began



her artistic path as a painter with a particular interest in redefining the structure of the surface of the canvas. The canvases were eventually replaced by fabric, and Kimsooja began to rework the concept of surface and examine the three-dimensional in the woven fabric structure and through sewing. In the early 90s she transitioned to using pieces of fabric as they were while sewing and weaving became a way of examining the world, similarities and differences between cultures, and traditional women's work. In works entitled *A Needle Woman*, the notion of the needle became a metaphor for seeing the body as a needle that weaves together the fabric of life, places and cultures.

The flax field, sown at the end of April, will grow and change over the course of the exhibition from green sprouts to stalks with sky-blue flowers and seeds. Growing flax pulls us back within art history to the flax fibers that were used to manufacture textiles including canvas and linseed oil that is the classic binding agent in artists' oil paints. The planting project at Wanås Konst brings together Kimsooja's interests in painting and textiles that have characterized her entire oeuvre.

*These plants, which are grown and cultivated in a period of several months, will be transformed into paintings that could last for centuries. As well as a physical source of materials for painting, the field becomes a fluid tableau, covering the ground, in a pattern akin to a weaving in the earth. (Kimsooja)*

In the presentation by Kimsooja, the field becomes an artwork, her interest goes beyond the object, and she creates awareness of what is already there. Her interest in nature is rather about a wider understanding about the cosmos. She uses the surroundings, sharpening our senses, emphasizing the stillness of the site, the spiritual element—she wants us to see, hear, and feel more.

Kimsooja's oeuvre is associated with traditional South Korean bedcovers, which she has used in several installations since 90's. In the sculpture park, she has instead chosen to work with old-fashioned white sheets that in Sweden are traditionally embroidered with a monogram or decorated with lace—a frame of life that are a part of creating a home and that display care and reflection. Harald Szeemann has described the sheets in Kimsooja's oeuvre as a theater for birth and death, our ephemeral condition. Extending her *Laundry Woman* series, they are like a hanging field of paintings, in the beech wood forest, while they simultaneously provide connections to the mundane. In the Art Gallery, Kimsooja again works with textiles as a new series of large scale conceptual painting, through raw canvases of linen, both stretched and folded like *bottari*, the Korean cloth bundles used to wrap belongings and that have become a characteristic element of her oeuvre with references to migration, displacement, and urgency, as well as a formalistic form that is a three dimensional painting, a sculpture, and an object. Also in the Art Gallery are three of the six non-narrative chapters of Kimsooja's first 16mm film series *Thread Routes*. Started in 2010 and shot on five different continents, the films use textiles as a point of investigation into human life, culture, and the natural world. For the artist, the approach is a 'visual poem' showing differences and similarities connecting people and cultures across the world.



In the old Hay Barn from 1750, Kimsooja has installed a mirror floor that reflects the surroundings and structure of the ceiling construction, which rises like a cathedral with its highest point 15 yards up. Through the mirror floor, she gives space for the observer to enter, and become a part of the artwork. On the other side of the building, which is more than 54 yards long, she has worked with stuffing fabrics in cracks and holes in the stone wall, tracing back to her *Deductive Object* made in conjunction with her residence at MoMA PS1 1993. In the large space, artworks coexist that make us look far away and up close. Her works both occupy the room and leave it empty—the entire space becomes an experience, with this experience being her artwork.

Elisabeth Millqvist, artistic director of Wanås Konst describes the work with the exhibition: *Kimsooja's approach to stillness has made her an artist we have long wanted to work with as a part of our interest in the qualities of the site and highlighting nature. She first came to visit in July of 2018, and the plans slowly began to take shape. Now, almost two years later, during an ongoing global pandemic, it is a strange time to complete an exhibition, but fortunately, we could continue. I am so thankful we could keep in touch and continue working from a distance. Her orientation as an artist naturally establishes a dialogue with everything that is going on; the artworks give space for introspection and spirituality beyond religion. She creates a focus on the present that we need right now.*

In 2006, Kimsooja presented a comprehensive exhibition at Magasin III in Stockholm, Sweden; in 2013 she represented South Korea at the Venice Biennale, and she has collaborated in exhibitions at the world's leading art institutions. Kimsooja recently presented the city-wide project *Traversées\Kimsooja* in Poitiers, France as well as had solo exhibitions at Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts, USA, and Yorkshire Sculpture Park in England. She currently lives in Seoul. Read more at: <http://www.kimsooja.com/>.

## **Kimsooja**

### ***Sowing Into Painting***

**Curators:** Elisabeth Millqvist & Mattias Givell

**Exhibition Period:** Open May 9 – November 1, 2020

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Press room: <http://news.cision.com/se/wanas-konst>

**Wanås Konst – The Wanås Foundation**

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<http://www.wanaskonst.se/sv-se/>

Press room: <http://news.cision.com/se/wanas-konst> (images for download available here)

### ..... **Visit Wanås**

**Wanås Konst** – The Wanås Foundation, Wanås, SE-289 90 Knislinge, Sweden

**Wanås Konst** – The sculpture park with the collection is open daily 10am – 5pm all year round.

**Wanås Konst** – Art Gallery, Shop & Deli, Café

**Feb 29–May 9**, Fri–Sun, 11 am–4 pm

**May 10–Sep 30**, daily, 10 am–5 pm\*\*

**Oct 1–Nov 1**, Tue–Sun, 11 am–4 pm\*\*\*



**\*Easter Break**, Apr 6–13, daily, 11 am–4 pm

**\*\* Midsummer Eve**, Jun 19, closed

**\*\*\*Fall Break**, Oct 26–Nov 1, daily 11 am–4 pm

For updates about opening hours please see the website [www.wanaskonst.se](http://www.wanaskonst.se)

**Wanås Restaurant Hotel** – please see website [www.wanasrh.se](http://www.wanasrh.se)

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**Wanås Konst – Center for Art & Learning**, presents and communicates contemporary art that challenges and redefines society, working outside in the landscape around Wanås in Skåne, southern Sweden. The permanent collection in the sculpture park is complemented with a program of temporary exhibitions, both outdoors and in the Art Gallery, and events such as guided tours, artists' talks, performances and workshops engaging a wide audience. Wanås Konst produces site-specific international art and learning in an innovative and accessible way.

The collection in the sculpture park has 70 permanent works, created specifically for The Wanås Foundation – Wanås Konst by artists such as Igshaan Adams, Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg, William Forsythe, Ann Hamilton, Jenny Holzer, Yoko Ono and Robert Wilson et al. Since 1987 more than 300 artists have taken part in exhibitions. The sculpture park covers 40 ha and is explored on foot. A visit including the current program, the Art Gallery and the collection takes from 2,5 h to 4h. Additional special walks and activities are available depending on program and season. The sculpture park has approximately 80 000 visitors per year and up to 10 000 children take part in educational activities.

Wanås Konst is run by The Wanås Foundation, a non-profit foundation created in 1994, in Östra Göinge municipality, in the South of Sweden, 1.5 h from Copenhagen, Denmark. Founding Director Marika Wachtmeister initiated the art projects at Wanås in 1987. Since 2011 the foundation is led by Elisabeth Millqvist and Mattias Givell. Wanås Konst is part supported by state, regional (Region Skåne) and municipal funding, part self financed, as well as supported by private foundations and sponsors. Read more on the website [www.wanaskonst.se](http://www.wanaskonst.se)

Wanås is a place in the world where art, nature and history meet. At Wanås the sculpture park Wanås Konst, Wanås Restaurant Hotel and Wanås Estate coexist and a private 15<sup>th</sup> century castle is also found on site. Wanås Konst is part of [European Land + Art Network](http://www.elan.eu) (ELAN) and Wanås is a sustainable destination. More information on the website [www.wanas.se](http://www.wanas.se)