

# Timothy Persons

Rethinking and adapting to new questions and their solutions are the keys to developing new approaches to how we teach and comprehend the challenges of art education today. . . .

. . . It's impossible to gauge the impact of these innovations until they have been tested by time and unfolded into their whole reality. What is now known as the Helsinki School was in its essence an educational model devised by the department of Professional Studies at the University of Art and Design Helsinki, Finland.

It was an opportunity offered to a selected group of Master of Arts students to measure and critique their own originality outside of the curriculum they were working in. Our goal from the beginning was to take the class out of the classroom, enabling those selected students a chance to experience how to curate,

build, and present their work on a professional level. To reach this vision, the University in the mid-nineties created a series of site-specific exhibitions in the inner Helsinki area. These productions afforded the students the scenarios to make mistakes and find solutions to problems that they would not normally encounter. Eventually, Gallery TaiK was conceived to work as a primary showcase to introduce these selected artists to the international community. What began as a site-specific virtual gallery grew into a permanent fixture producing and curating exhibitions worldwide.

I would have never dreamed fifteen years ago that I would be in a position to be writing this introduction to the third volume of the series *Helsinki School—Young Photography by TaiK*. It's been a privilege and a pleasure to have the opportunity to work with this "now" generation of artists. A lot of credit needs to be extended to the University of Art and Design Visual Arts department that has been responsible for creating the environment where these young artists have been able to pursue and develop their ideas. It's a program that has evolved with each generation, helping them push the limits of how we use the photographic process as a thinking tool. The program's strength has never been in a specific system of learning, but in a supportive role as it encourages an artist to seek that road not traveled and make it their own.