



Villa Väinölä, elokuu 2018¹

Villa Väinölä (Alarjärvi, Finland), work of the famous architect Alvar Aalto (1926) was designed for his brother Väinö, as a home and workplace. In 1952 it was ceded to the municipality, becoming a medical office first, and then a residential space (1960-76), to finally become municipal offices (1977-99). In 2010, after more than a decade closed and abandoned, the town hall began its restoration, gaining momentum from 2015, when the Eero Nelimarkka Foundation (benefactor of the Nelimarkka Museum) took over the property to turn it into an artists' residence, cultural center and exhibition hall. In August 2018 I had the privilege of being the first artist to inhabit it, coinciding with its reopening to the public. The relevance of this fact motivate me to carry out an artistic project about this house, about the layers of memory that housed its walls, my experience there and the footprint of Alvar Aalto.

Despite the fact that we live in a world where nothing and no one escapes the lens of a camera, Villa Väinölä has remained oblivious to photographic exploration and exploitation. Although there are many snapshots of its exterior, its interior was almost a mystery before its restoration (and it continues to be so), revealed only through a few scattered images on the internet and in some private archives; therefore, its reopening generated great expectation. In order not to break with the magic that the concealment of the interior of the house generated, I decide to capture its essence in an abstract and metaphorical way, focusing attention on the textures of the building and on the numerous stratigraphic records made during its rehabilitation, which leave uncovered the different layers of memory that make it up. The allusion to Alvar Aalto is made through the inclusion of organic forms inspired by some of his designs, such as the Savoy Glass, the Paimio Chair or the 60 Stool, as well as the capitals of the Doric and Ionic columns of the house, but also using fragments of its plant. As for the personal trace left in the house, it is reflected in the works through gestural stains, children's stickers and fragments of drawings made by my daughter (who was 3 years old at that time and who accompanied me during the residency). In most of the works is also inserted a piece of the wallpaper from the room-workshop where the project was conceived.

¹ This series has its origin in an artistic residency held in Villa Väinölä during the month of August 2018, sponsored by the Nelimarkka Museum (Regional Art Museum of South Ostrobothnia) in Alarjärvi (Finland).