

Oona Mäkelä





Oona Mäkelä was born in Helsinki in October 1991.

She grew up in a family where drawing was the most typical way of spending time. Her parents were graphic designers and Oona used to spend time at their studio space and play with their tools.

The family spent a lot time at their summer house which was on a lonely island at a big lake. The island was called the Black Island since a long time ago it had completely burnt down. The summers spent in the nature effected Oona's work deeply and therefore nature topics are still her favorite. You can especially see it in her floral themes.

The love for nature shows in the organic use of line work often drawn with a brush – Oona's favorite tool. She is an expert of color and isn't afraid to try out new combinations.

In fact for her colors are a source of great excitement.

Oona's brand is about respect for the detail and quality. Every print she makes has its own character that is carefully thought through. You won't bump into anything similar somewhere else.

リンネル.jp

The Japanese lifestyle magazine
Linière came to pay a visit with
the actress Nao in summer 2025.



6 MIN / FUTURE / 28.5.2025

Trailblazers – behind the scenes with three fashion and textile industry professionals



Print Designer, Graphic Designer Oona Mäkelä

“This is not a job, it’s a way of existing”

You could say that creative work is part of my personality. I’ve worked and been creative with my hands ever since I was little. It’s a fire that’s in me. I don’t always need an inspiration or an assignment from a client – I just get the urge to express myself.

I do all my work by hand first. I don’t want it to exist only on a screen – it just doesn’t feel right. I want to feel the material and I use a lot of black ink. I pay attention to different smells things have, and I love the characteristic smell ink has. Working with my hands feels calming.

I’m interested in so many things. Lately I’ve been especially fascinated with three–

FINNISH TEXTILE & FASHION

Interview with Finnish Textile & Fashion about ideas and thoughts on creative work and the meaning of it.



ILLUSTRATOR AND GRAPHIC DESIGNER
OONA MÄKELÄ (ON THE RIGHT), ALONG
WITH WORK SAMPLES FROM SAMUJI AND
NAPA AGENCY.



Samuji



Thoughts with Designer Oona Mäkelä about print design for Samuji FW23

WE HAD THE PLEASURE OF WORKING TOGETHER ON NEW PRINT DESIGNS IN THE SAMUJI FW23 COLLECTION WITH GRAPHIC DESIGNER OONA MÄKELÄ. WE INVITED HER TO CHANGE THOUGHTS WITH SAMUJI'S HEAD OF DESIGN ANNE-MARI PAHKALA ABOUT SAMUJI, DESIGN, THE ROLE OF ART IN FASHION AND OONA'S WORK WITH PRINTS.



A-M: Hello, Oona. Nice to meet you again! What kind of a day do you have ahead of you?

O: Today I have a slightly easier day, I'm not going to my studio, I'm working at home. I usually go to my studio to keep a good routine. Today I keep my dog company so she doesn't have to be alone. Sometimes I also go to coffee shops to draw and get inspiration from other places like the Botanic Garden.

A-M: Sounds wonderful! Would you tell Samuji's friends who Oona Mäkelä is and something about your working techniques?

O: I am an illustrator, graphic and print designer from Helsinki. I like to draw directly on paper by hand, I often use ink and watercolours. I'm interested in the traditional techniques, I only edit digitally. I am interested in different materials and their textures, nature and organic subjects. I especially like hanging out with my dog Nopjes.

A-M: Where did your story begin?

O: My parents are graphic designers, so I've been under visual influences since I was little. I guess it has been clear that my work is a way of life and a way of spending time. The atmosphere in my childhood home has been favourable for drawing and different kinds of creation. My work has come out of it very easily. I have been free to make my own mark, there has never been an attempt to control or limit me in any way. The creative and visual field has always been my clear path.



A-M: Your hand drawn prints are recognizable, they made me curious of how your artistic themes are born. Would you tell me about the creation process of your patterns. Does your work show your experiences from your life or

Samuji

Interview with Samuji about the working progress and inspiration.



nanso

Oona's succesful co-operation with the Finnish company Nanso has been already going on for seven years. The result is a wide variety of different prints.



"I find simple shapes the most interesting but also the most challenging!"

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Almost Perfect 2023: Oona Mäkelä

DATE 10/11/2022	LOCATION Nishi	SHARE Facebook / Twitter
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Oona Mäkelä has been chosen to participate in the 2023 Almost Perfect -residence program.



"Hello! I'm Oona, an illustrator and designer from Helsinki. For some years now I've worked at my dream job as a freelance creative. I design prints for clothing (and occasionally rubber boots), illustrate book covers and create visual identities for sustainable businesses.

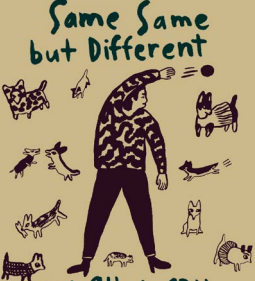
I try to bring something recognisable to my projects by using vivid colors, abstract shapes and playful fonts. I think it's important to always have something humorous involved, it makes the work more approachable. What brings me inspiration is everyday life and the small details of it. I keep my eyes open wherever I go, I think it's fun to observe passers by for example. I take walks in the forest everyday with my dog and there is always something interesting to be spotted in the nature.

I hope that this residency will bring me exciting new experiences in the new surroundings and with new people, and that I will take a lot of nice memories with me back home. I hope it will also give me new ideas and approaches to my work, something I didn't think about before. I'm excited to get to know a new culture and climate and I'm looking forward to be confused and surprised by things. I'm very curious to see how everything goes and I can't wait to step on the plain to Japan! "



Finnish Institute in Japan フィンランドセンター

Same Same but Different



Feb 9th to 13th
Almost Perfect

**Four weeks artist
residency located in Tokyo
organised by the Finnish
Institute in Japan.**

Exhibition: Feb 9 (Thu) – Feb 13 (Mon) 1-7pm
Venue: Almost Perfect, 2-3-2 Kojima, Taito-ku, Tokyo

Opening Talk Session with Anna-Maria Wiljanen, the director at the Finnish Institute in Japan: Feb 9 (Thu) 6-9pm
Please register for the talk event via [Peatix](#).

A casual party on Feb 11 (Sat) 5-7pm with drinks served.
Please come visit to see her works.

Exhibition *Same Same but Different* is a collection of illustrations, prints and small clay creatures. The exhibition is about the things we can all find joy from despite of our background – in this case nature and dogs. I wanted to focus on similarities between Finland and Japan instead of the differences. Even though as an outsider I will always be seeing a lot of difference I noticed I was still attracted to the same things as in Finland. Things here might just have a little bit different shape but in the end they are the same.

Bio:
Oona Mäkelä is a Finnish graphic designer, illustrator and print designer represented by Napa Agency. She's attracted to fascinating color combinations and shapes. She aims to create work that is easy on the eyes and has something humorous to it. She is inspired by everyday life and badly behaved dogs.

Photos: Oona Mäkelä



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