

MARIA LAX - SOME KIND OF HEAVENLY FIRE

Application for Freetheme

PROJECT STATEMENT

I'm from a small town in Northern Finland surrounded by a vast, sparsely populated wilderness. Most pass through the town on their way someplace else without ever knowing it was a hotspot for UFO sightings in the 1960's.

Unaware of this history myself, it wasn't until I read my grandfather's book that I learnt of the incredible stories of supernatural events, bravery and struggle against hardship in what is largely a barren land. Already suffering from dementia, he was unable to answer any of the questions I had so I went looking for the answers. I turned to the people who had seen the mysterious lights, to newspaper archives and my family's photo albums from the era.

The UFO sightings coincided with a time of great struggle for Northern Finland. People flooded from the countryside to the cities in search of jobs leaving abandoned houses scattered across this beautiful but harsh landscape. It's no wonder that the UFO sightings embodied a fear of the future, the unknown and the inexorable shift in lifestyles and livelihoods going on around them. Some reacted to the mysterious lights with fear, some took them as a sign they were not alone.

-Maria Lax

PHOTOGRAPHER BIOGRAPHY

Maria Lax is a London based photographer originally from a small town in Northern Finland. She is known for her use of colour and seamlessly blending reality and fantasy in her work and Maria's background in cinematography shines through in her strong use of lighting and experimental camera techniques.

Recent clients include Panasonic, Vice, Nicholas Kirkwood and Maya Njie perfumes. Her work has been exhibited worldwide and published in WIRED, Irish Times, L'Amour Magazine, Vogue Interior, Musee Magazine and Pacific Dissent among others. She is one of the winners of British Journal Photography's Female in Focus awards 2019.