IDA TAAVITSAINEN – ARCHAEOGRAPHIC SUBTLETY



Archaeography – where photowork meets an archaeological sensibility of attunement to memories in remains.



In reviewing my field notes from a trip to visit Jussi-Pekka and Camilla Taavitsainen in Helsinki perhaps twenty years ago (part of my current *döstädning*), I came across a photo of a table and chairs. My recollection is that they said it had belonged to composer Jean Sibelius, inherited through Camilla's family (my memory may be faulty, but I think she is his great-great niece).

I like such connections. Through things. Things: sites-of-happening: presences. Legacies. Associations. Memories. And here again now in my memory of their warm wonderful hospitality.

On that visit I met Ida, their daughter, and she shared with me her photographs. Monochrome, analogue, taken on a Nikon she'd been gifted by a family member.

The photographs I saw that evening haunt me to this day.

I was so taken with her portraits that on my return to California I bought myself a classic Nikon F2 with the 105mm 2.5 she had been using. I thought that sharing the same material optic would be a prompt to see things freshly. Through a glass.

I went looking, and find that Ida Taavitsainen remains an active photographer [Link]. And a remarkable one.

I ordered a copy of her book *The Memory of My Wardrobe*, and it arrived yesterday. A beautiful photobook. Soft high-key images of clothes-in-situ, minimalist mise-en-scène, with some accompanying words about associated people and memories. Extraordinary evocations, harmonies in the somatic everyday.



And there is a photo of the table.



I am well aware that I find an archaeological sensibility all around us. Here again. And expressed with such finesse!





