

Me, Mikko, and Annikki

Paul Buhle

2023

a review of

Me, Mikko, and Annikki: A Community Love Story in a Finnish City by Tiitu Takal. North Atlantic Books, 2019

The continuing interest at the *Fifth Estate* in anarchist/community struggles as seen in comic art, inadvertently passed over an extremely remarkable example in Tiitu Takal's *Me, Mikko, and Annikki: A Community Love Story in a Finnish City*, to which I wrote the Afterword.

Finnish radicals, who have always played an outsize role in Finnish culture, a language group of no more than five million speakers, but with a large and lovely comics community. In this wonderfully done account, they are represented in a struggle to save and build a communal society within a rare collection of wooden buildings dating back a century in a working-class neighborhood in Takalo's hometown of Tampere.

Developers have in mind tearing them down to build concrete high-rises. The graphic novelist Takalo has been part of this collective, and this may be a real love story with the fellow who shows up at a dance one night. They struggle with their comrades to hold off the developers by any means, while recycling and reusing the detritus of industrial society in their building process.

A chunk of this is pre-history, and drives home a point that Takalo made to me in her emails: Finns live in the vast forest/wetlands that younger people like those in the community call their own defining feature: they are part of that land, not separate, not conquerors.

Again and again, this is also an eco-comic as much as anything, with art that makes the point, in stunning color.

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<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/414-fall-2023/me-mikko-and-annikki>
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