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IMAGINING
A NEW SOCIETY

Public Painting as Politics in Postwar Finland

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Acknowledgements | 7 |
| Preface: Re-visioning the Invisible | 9 |

I PUBLIC PAINTING IN THE SOCIETY AND IN ART HISTORY

1. The Politics of Public Painting

| | |
|--|----|
| Monumental Painting as Public Art | 15 |
| Being Public | 17 |
| Private Sector Public Painting | 23 |
| Public Art and Agency | 26 |
| Monumental Memories: Art in Remembering and Forgetting | 29 |
| Setting the Framework | 32 |

2. Public Painting in Art History

| | |
|---|----|
| Mural, Monumental, or Public? | 36 |
| Between High Art and Decoration | 38 |
| National Art in an International Context | 41 |
| The Uninteresting Public Painting | 47 |
| Building a Tradition (of Ignoring Public Paintings) | 49 |

II FORMULATING NATIONAL ART

3. Picturing Ideologies

| | |
|---|----|
| Nationalism and the Early Finnish Public Painting | 57 |
| Realising an Ideology | 62 |
| National and Foreign | 68 |
| Addressing a Divided Nation | 75 |
| On a Lighter Tone | 82 |
| National Character for Art | 87 |
| “Art for the People” | 94 |

4. Public Painting in the Reconstruction

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| The Creation of National Unity | 100 |
| From War to Reconstruction | 106 |
| Raising the Destroyed North | 108 |
| Continuing Earlier Practices | 116 |

III PUBLIC PAINTINGS OF THE FINNISH WELFARE STATE

5. A Joint Effort

| | |
|--|-----|
| Constructing Finnish Art Policies | 121 |
| A New Task for Municipalities | 124 |
| School Construction and Art in Education | 129 |
| Governmental Art Commissions | 133 |
| Indicating Corporate Social Responsibility | 139 |
| Monumental Altar Paintings | 144 |
| Opportunities for Artists and Finnish Art | 149 |

6. Competing Art

| | |
|--|-----|
| Paintings through Competitions | 155 |
| Awarding the Correct Artists | 160 |
| Institutional Friction in Competitions | 162 |
| Local versus National | 167 |
| Painting for a Public | 170 |

7. Imagining Finnishness

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| From Politics to Images | 177 |
| Nation as a Family | 183 |
| The Days of Life | 190 |
| Work and Rest | 195 |
| Modern Society | 203 |
| Forgetting the War | 212 |

8. Abstraction in Finnish Public Painting

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Abstraction and the Public | 217 |
| Art in Architecture | 220 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| A Watershed for Art Historians | 226 |
| Institutional Acceptance of the <i>Art Informel</i> | 233 |

IV CONCLUSIONS

9. Public Paintings as Material and Political Agents

| | |
|---|-----|
| A Continuing Tradition | 245 |
| The Paradox of Public Painting (for Art Historians) | 247 |
| Nostalgia and a New Society | 249 |
| | |
| Notes | 254 |
| List of Works: Public Painting in Finland 1900–1970 | 273 |
| Abbreviations | 284 |
| Sources | 285 |
| Index of Artists | 307 |

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PREFACE

Re-visioning the Invisible

“There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument. They are no doubt erected to be seen—indeed, to attract attention. But at the same time they are impregnated with something that repels attention, causing the glance to roll right off, like water droplets off an oilcloth, without even pausing for a moment.”¹

The words of the Austrian writer Robert Musil from the 1930s apply similarly to public painting. Indeed, here lies the great paradox of public art: a permanent artwork becomes such an integral part of the visual fabric of the everyday environment that its audience stops seeing it. A work of art is only noticed, then, in its absence. Andreas Huyssen has suggested that the wrapping of the Berlin Reichstag by Christo in 1995 made the building visible in a way it had not been before. The veiling, in fact, unveiled the building.² The veiling functions as an antidote to the visual water-on-oilcloth effect of public monuments.

Finnish public paintings have become invisible not only for their daily audiences but also for Finnish art historians. In previous research, the number and significance of Finnish public paintings has been undervalued, as a consequence of which I set out to investigate a much smaller production than what in reality existed. This research began, then, at a very basic level: by tracing a production, which had not been recorded before. The number of paintings surprised me in the course of the research, and I came across new paintings up until the final stages of my studies. “Come across” is not perhaps a very scientific, yet perfectly valid term—the paintings came to my knowledge through many curious ways.

At an early point of my research in this field, I found an archival reference of a painting called *Kalapoika* (Fishing boy), painted by Otso Karpakka in 1958 for *Keskusjatkokoulu* (“Central Secondary School”) in Turku. [Images 129–130.] I lived in the city but I had never heard of such a school. It was obvious the school would not exist by that name anymore, so I inquired from the city administration which school this might be, and asked around if anyone would know such a school—but to no avail. Then, I found the *Fishing boy* by accident. Looking through my old photos, I saw the painting in my 8th grade class photo. There it was, and there it had been, on the wall of the school cafeteria of Puropelto School, where I had studied for three years. I had sat in the same room with the painting nearly 600 times. And I had absolutely no recollection of the work.

Since two decades had passed since my secondary school days, this anecdote likely tells more about my memory than my ability to see my daily environments. But I suspect it also hints towards my engaging with the painting during my school years, since I do remember the mural I participated in painting on the school’s wall—not less ambitious than a version of David’s *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*. And this was not the only time during my

research I encountered the invisibility of public paintings. I was not always directed to the right place when asking for the location of a painting in a building. There were also several cases when paintings had become literally invisible. One had disappeared from the school it had been placed in, very likely destroyed during a renovation, without anyone knowing anything about it. There were paintings supposedly stored and lost, and paintings no one I asked had ever heard about.

It is noteworthy that Finnish public paintings have frequently changed locations and owners; they are often placed in different environments they were originally designed for. The fact that public paintings were not realised directly on the walls may have saved some from destruction, but paintings have been moved for a number of reasons. Notably, social and commercial architecture has undergone significant changes since the execution of these paintings, as a consequence of which the locations of public paintings have also changed.

In office buildings, banks, and schools, there has been a tendency away from large halls with high ceilings to lower and smaller spaces, often further divided into small office cubicles. In many current office premises, there are no walls visible to the public to hang a large painting on. As a consequence, public paintings that were commissioned during the postwar decades have been moved to storage, or to more private, secluded spaces in the backrooms. The relocation of public paintings suggests changes in the social spaces of these buildings. Nevertheless, the fact that at present postwar public paintings often do not find a place to be publicly displayed suggests a change in the value attributed to these artworks.

During my visits to the localities of my research material, I saw examples of how public paintings were being used in the present day. In various localities, public paintings offered a visual background against which different kinds of visual displays were assembled. This may also be explained by the fact that in many of the buildings, large open spaces were not available in many parts. In meeting rooms, the paintings shared their walls with screens—placed in front of them. In several locations, I encountered paintings covered up by curtains. Twice this was explained to me by the fact that the imagery of the painting did not suit the time of year. This explanation reduces an artwork to the image it depicts.

Nevertheless, as Huysen suggests, veiling that is somehow grounded and justified may function to make an invisible artwork visible. In Nekala Kindergarten in Tampere, the painting *Satu* (Fairy tale) by Matti Petäjä (1951) was veiled with curtains as I arrived. [Images 1–2.] It was winter, and I was told that the “summer-themed” painting was covered during the winter time and ceremonially revealed every spring. It can be assumed that for the small children, who compose the main audience of the painting, the spring ritual points out its existence. But in what ways do they engage with or remember the veiled painting during the winter months?

In schools, I could see visual evidence on the uses of public paintings as ball playing arenas, or subjects to artistic commentary—they had been written and drawn on. Some of the paintings were severely damaged, which was commented to me with regrets of the city in question not having resources to restore them.

The principal of the Puropelto School in Turku told me that during the renovation of the school cafeteria at the turn of the 2000s, the painters had joked about having enough paint to also cover the painting *Fishing boy* by Otso Karpakka. Instead of painting it over, the painting was restored by the Turku City Art Museum. Also the school took pride in the work, matching the new wall colour and the curtains of the cafeteria to the blue and green



Image 1. Matti Petäjä, *Satu* (Fairy tale), 1951. Oil on canvas, 142 x 260 [cm]. Nekala Kindergarten, Tampere. Photo: Johanna Ruuhonen [JR] 2006.

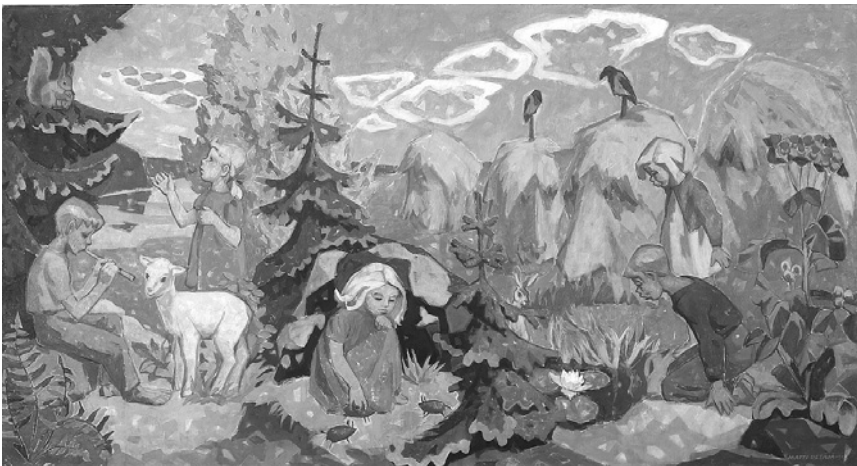


Image 2. Matti Petäjä, *Satu* (Fairy tale), 1951. As above. Photo: Marika Turtiainen, NYMU.

shades of the painting and creating another level of meaning for the colours: symbolising stream (*puro*) and field (*pelto*), the two words in the name of the school.³ In this case, the painting was an agent inspiring the transformation of the space it was located in.

This research addresses the questions of ignoring and omitting Finnish public paintings. Casting the first systematic look on the Finnish public painting production, my research will open up some of the curtains, which have veiled these artworks. It will, I hope, also facilitate further scholars in engaging with the previously invisible Finnish public paintings.

I

PUBLIC PAINTING
IN THE SOCIETY
AND IN ART HISTORY

Chapter One

THE POLITICS OF PUBLIC PAINTING

Monumental Painting as Public Art

An essential idea behind public art production is that it makes art accessible for a wider audience than inside galleries and museums. It is “everyone’s property” or “art for the people”. During the past decades, the understanding of public art has undergone radical transformations. Monumental art has changed from the definitional type of public art to an antithesis of publicness—a point of reference against which good public art can be defined. Especially since the 1990s, critical attention and literature on public art has been extensive. While the social dimension of public art has been emphasised, much of the earlier public art has been excluded from the new categorisations.

Traditional monumental art has been criticised for monumentalising violence, for promoting “universal truths” addressed to an undefined “general public”, which in reality has excluded most of the people, and for dropping monuments into their locations without acknowledging their site or audience.¹ Feminist theorists and activist-artists such as Suzanne Lacy and Lucy Lippard sought to redefine the genre in the 1990s. In 1995, Lacy introduced the term *new genre public art* in order to separate *truly* public art—that is based on “engagement”—from art in public places.² According to Lucy Lippard, public art is “accessible art of any species that cares about, challenges, involves, and consults the audience for or with whom it is made, respecting community and environment.” Consequently, much of what generally goes under the title of public art is, according to Lippard, not that. Nevertheless, various questions remain: which agents define the audience, what defines a public space, and what art best occupies it?³

My research focuses on a traditional genre of public art, monumental public painting, and its uses in the service of a given society at a given time—in Finland after World War II. Public art commissions were justified with reference to the public good, as the citizens were seen to benefit from the presence of art. Public painting had a central role within the Finnish artworld in the postwar decades and it played a significant part in the formulation of municipal art policies. Nevertheless, these paintings have not been highly appreciated by art historians. Therefore, I have had the opportunity to drill into an unexplored chapter in Finnish art history and political history. In this research, I discuss the postwar public painting within an international framework of public art and the Finnish artworld, and as a part of local and national political decision-making.



Image 3. Yngve Bäck, *Piazza*, 1963. Tempera on canvas, 400 x 550. Valkoinen Sali (“White hall”), Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2006.

The documentation of this research consists of paintings, which were commissioned by the municipal or governmental authorities in Finland roughly between 1945 and 1970, permanently placed in public locations—often meaning inside public buildings—and directed for a large audience (“the nation”) with specific functions. In addition, I discuss public paintings commissioned by other agents during this time frame, as the public painting production for private corporations closely related to the official commissioning. Art commissioned for the Evangelic Lutheran Church followed distinct practises but also had many congruent points with the secular public art commissioning. Ecclesiastic art is not in the most central focus of this research, but I discuss it in relation to the secular production to deepen the study on the networks of production and on the politics of public art.

Due to the participation of official agents in the production of public art and the political weight of the works, it may be tempting to draw direct parallels between the artworks and the society in which they were created. As Dario Gamboni has criticised, the tearing down of the Communist monuments has often been used to bear testimony to the end of Communism without discussing the specific contexts of the events.⁴ On the other hand, James E. Young has noted that “monuments tend to beg traditional art history”, and that the studies are often limited to formally aesthetic or “piously historical” approaches.⁵ I wish to avoid these pitfalls.

Giving credit to the essentially public nature of public painting, I concentrate on the processes of production and the specific contexts in which the Finnish postwar public paintings were created. The issue of public art was embraced in municipal and state politics, and advanced also by the private sector. The Finnish postwar public paintings may lack

as straightforward political messages as some of their European counterparts incorporated during the 20th century, but they were no less political. Public paintings were important agents in the networks of art policies during the postwar decades.

The main focus in my research is on the complex relationships between the political sphere and the production of art. I understand the *politics of public painting* in relation to the production of an artwork but also in relation to the position the work takes in its environment and among its public. The subject, the message implied by a painting, is merely one aspect of a work's politics. One of the key presumptions of my research is that in order to commission public art, spend money on art, which is then publicly displayed, the commissioning party must consider it beneficial on some level. I discuss the ideals, which motivated the public painting production, the explicit and implicit goals, which guided it, and the ways in which public paintings addressed these ideals and their given functions.

My research questions can be grouped into three overlapping series of questions:

First, I investigate the production of Finnish public paintings: What kinds of public paintings were realised in postwar Finland—how, where, by whom and for what purposes? I ask what agents participated in the producing networks, and how the processes of production regulated the outcomes.

Second, I discuss the publicness of these paintings: How were public paintings defined, and what aspects characterised them as “public”? What was their relation to public space, public authorities, and audience? What kinds of public functions were they attributed, and what kind of public agency did the paintings have?

Third, I explore the politics of public paintings. I discuss the relationship between Finnish public painting, nationalism, and the memory of war. I ask how politics translated into public paintings, and public paintings into politics. In addition, I critically question the role of public painting in art history, tracing reasons for its exclusion from Finnish art historical narratives.

An important aim of this research is to open up a new field of study and position public painting within Finnish art history, from which it has been conspicuous by its absence. Due to the vast and previously uninvestigated material of this research, I have chosen to present a wide array of examples, in order to create a general image of the production, which, on the other hand, means that many cases are presented only in brief.

As my argumentation as a whole demonstrates, the three sets of questions, those of production, publicness and politics, are intertwined and often inseparable. To answer these questions, I have mapped the Finnish public painting production up to a considerable degree, and studied it in a sociological framework and in the context of the political and economic history of Finland, employing critical theories on public space and public art as well as theories on the building of nationalism, commemoration, memory, and forgetting.

Being Public

The definitions of public art correlate essentially with the changing understanding of the concepts of “public” and “art”—neither of which is a small task to define exhaustively.

Art is in this research understood through its institutional formation: art is what is considered as such by the established artworld, created by institutions such as education, criticism, museums and galleries, and regulated by established practices.⁶ As commissioned, functional art, public painting has often balanced on the border of art and decoration, non-art. The Finnish artworld of the mid-20th century, which is studied in my research, was composed of rather small pools of people, forming often tight networks.

Public in relation to art can refer to a number of features, such as: (1) the commissioner, the public authorities; (2) the site of the piece, the public realm and accessibility; (3) the given functions of a work of art, its public, social goals; (4) the audience, or (5) public visibility in the media, press and literature. Giving different weights to these aspects, different definitions on public art can be created. All of these characteristics also demand further elaboration. Public art is situated in “public space”—where? It is made “for the public”—for whom? And it has public functions—such as what? Who, what and where is the public of public art?

Public and private have been traditionally understood as distinct zones, in a concrete, spatial sense, such as in contrasting the home and the market. However, in contemporary usage they are layered with different meanings referring to, for example, bodily and relational aspects. They are often defined against each other, with a normative preference for one. Different meanings for public and private have been paired by Michael Warner as open to everyone—restricted to some; state-related—non-state; political—non-political; known widely—known to initiates; in physical view of others—concealed; and so forth. They have also been coined with masculine and feminine, bearing different values. However, as Warner points out, these contexts overlap, and “most things are private in one sense and public in another”.⁷

Importantly for the purposes of my research, “the public” is not to be understood as synonymous with the political. Hannah Arendt, who coined the term *public realm* in 1958, argued that this social realm is distinct from both the private and the political realms.⁸ Also the theorist of the public sphere Jürgen Habermas placed the *public sphere* in the category of private. The bourgeois arena of public life belonged to the civil society, and hence, outside of the “public”, the state.⁹

It is noteworthy that public and private have different meanings and connotations in different languages and societies, and these meanings are not fixed but subject to historical variability. Writing from a contemporary American perspective, Tom Finkelpearl argues that “public” is associated as being of lesser value, as opposed to “private”, which refers to a privileged position: public schools versus private schools, public transportation versus private car, public housing versus private home, and so forth.¹⁰ While this is partly applicable to even Finnish society, the welfare state, which was established in the postwar decades, tried to eliminate these boundaries. In the late 1960s, the Finnish parallel school system was abolished, and currently practically all Finnish children attend public school. Also the Finnish universities are public and tuition-free. Comprehensive public healthcare system has been created and is widely used, even by those who can afford private insurances and health care. Thus, the “public” (*julkinen*) services are not necessarily connected to lower classes or the less fortunate. Instead, they are for “us all”. Yet, it must be noted, that the contemporary understanding of “public” is not as such transferable to the historical situations I discuss.

In defining the publicness of art, being located in public space is centrally important. Public space may refer to a built environment, media space, or virtual space.¹¹ And, in the

context of a built environment, public space refers to at least two different types of places. First, it can refer to a (ideally) generally accessible space, such as a street. Second, based on the governmental reading of “public”, public spaces refer to the different institutions within municipal or governmental bodies. These spaces, in which public services are offered to the citizens, create citizenship. The citizenship of a person is formed through the use of public services.¹²

These two understandings of public space also define and separate public sculptures and paintings. While public sculptures have been mostly created for the open, accessible urban spaces, public paintings have in Finland been located inside the walls of public institutions. Their public nature is, thus, emphatically different. The access of general public to public buildings is often limited: school buildings, for example, are restricted mainly to the students and staff of the institution in question, and public offices are accessible only to the degree of lobbies and customer spaces. Furthermore, the publicness of an outdoor public painting is not necessarily comparable with either public sculpture or indoor public painting. Finnish outdoor murals have most often been either commercial advertisements or unofficial, illegal projects. While guerrilla sculptures are rarely seen in urban spaces, the painting of an outdoor mural is faster, cheaper, and resources for it are available to a larger number of people. This genre, hence, occupies public space but does not have the official mandate of public sculpture.

Importantly, a built environment is not public as such but it becomes public when offering a setting for public life, as Henri Lefebvre and Rosalyn Deutsche, among others, have demonstrated.¹³ Public space is a social space, defined by the activities of its users. As Doreen Massey has emphasised, spaces also incorporate a dimension of time, and both space and time are created and understood in relation to social networks. Spaces are not fixed, nor are they experienced in the same way by different people.¹⁴

Contrary to its ideals of open access and general inclusion, public space functions in the production of hierarchy and control in the society. It is regulated by physical restrictions, juridical regulations, and social conventions; it is normative and gendered.¹⁵ Also public art participates in the creation of public space. Official public art has been used to mark public space, and suggest its proper uses and meanings.

The erecting of public monuments offers a good example on the hierarchical nature of urban public spaces: the more significant subject of commemoration, the more central location it has usually been assigned.¹⁶ On the other hand, the placing of monuments can also be used to elevate the status of a locality and emphasise its importance. Within the Finnish context, the monuments in the capital city of Helsinki have been seen to have “national” importance, whereas in other cities they have been merely “local”.¹⁷ While a sculpture transforms a space in a very concrete way, it is also important how art alters the meanings and interpretations of that space. This is why plans to move a public sculpture may create huge controversies or why graffiti has been strongly opposed in Finland and in many other countries.

The question of the site of a public artwork is not merely one of placement. Already in the early 20th century in Finland, public paintings were assigned a demand for acknowledging the space they were located into. Public paintings have typically been judged in relation to the architecture of their location. Since the 1970s, the demand of *site-specificity* has suggested an even stronger relation between public artworks and their space. Within this

discourse, artworks are required an active relationship with the site, not merely being “dropped” to their location. According to the strictest interpretation, with the famous case of Richard Serra’s *Tilted Arc* that was erected to and removed from the Federal Plaza in New York in the 1980s, a site-specific artwork cannot be moved from its original location without destroying the work.¹⁸ As Miwon Kwon has shown in her genealogy of site-specific art, since the 1990s, a focus has been turned from the study of the relationship with the physical site to the pursuit of an active relationship with the local community.¹⁹

Public art takes place at a *public site* and in the *public sphere*. The physical or geographical environment is not to be confused with the more abstract arena of public life, the existence of which has been linked to modern societies. Hannah Arendt defined public realm as an arena of social life, where the activities of people are displayed to be seen and heard by others—this appearance constituting our reality. According to Arendt, in the nation-states, the public realm found its political form.²⁰ Jürgen Habermas saw the historical development of a “public sphere” in Central Europe and England as deeply bound to the development of the European civic society. In Habermas’ model, the public sphere included forums such as the press, literature, but also cafés and the city. These forums enabled the public discussion of educated citizens, essentially members of the bourgeoisie, who thus formed “the public”, forcing the public power to legitimate itself in front of it.²¹

The Finnish media scholar Hannu Nieminen has bound the creation of the Finnish public sphere to the development of the Finnish nation-state. Nieminen’s society-specific understanding of a public sphere functions as a basis for my use of the concept. Nieminen argues that the function of the public institutions within the public sphere is to create presentations, which show the legitimacy of the current order, and enable the everyday communal activities. Nieminen has divided publicness into three categories: everyday publicness (*arkijulkisuus*), insider publicness (*sisäpiirijulkisuus*), and media publicness (*mediajulkisuus*). The main function of media publicness, according to Nieminen, is to transmit and fortify the definitions and interpretation created within the insider publicness, formed by those in power.²² Public art can be seen as a form of media publicness, comparable to the press and literature. Art commissioned by the authorities functions in the service of the insider publicness, conveying its agenda for a wider audience.

The publicness of public art is, at the same time, defined in the media space: public artworks are reproduced, presented, and represented in other forms of the media. Indeed, public paintings, which are located inside public buildings without general access, might be only made public in the press and art historical literature. Obviously, we know much more art, including public art, as reproductions than what we have seen “live”. Lisa Pon, in discussing a fresco by Raphael from the early 16th century and an engraving based on it, states that the “printed image was always the public one”. Furthermore, according to Pon, the engraving made the “painting public and made a public for the painting”.²³ In this respect, the public status of Finnish public painting is less solid than that of public sculpture also for the very reason of being omitted from the critical literature.²⁴

The creation of a public sphere and of a public (as audience) is bound together; the public sphere demands a public functioning in it. According to Michael Warner, the idea of public is a significant element in the modern society: “It’s difficult to imagine the modern world without the ability to attribute agency to publics, though doing so is an extraordinary fiction.” Publics are said to rise up, to support troops, to change sovereigns, and so forth,

whereas in reality, publics are incapable of any such thing.²⁵ An understanding of a public is essential also for the production of public art: it is made for “the public” and the understanding of this public is defined in the processes of production of the artworks, in planning and evaluating the works as well as in their visual content.

Public art always functions in a relationship with its audience, at least theoretically. However, the body of works discussed in my research was produced largely for an imaginary public: what was referred to in public discussions was an imagined public, and not the actual audience who came to live with the works. Anthony W. Lee, based on John Dewey, has separated public and audience in a concise manner: “The audience is an actual body whose specific composition can be counted and distinguished from other audiences. The public, by contrast, is a representation, invoked to give an audience meaningful form.”²⁶ Along the same lines, Michael Warner has defined three key meanings for public (as people). *The public* is a social entity, referring to a community, nation, or other form of organising people, including everyone in it. Second, *a public* may refer to a concrete audience, “a crowd witnessing itself in visible space”, and third, a public may come into being in relation to texts and their circulation. This kind of public must organise itself as a body and be addressed in a discourse: it is created by being addressed.²⁷

The audience of a public painting resembles the third type of public defined by Warner, with an artwork as the agent around which a public is organised. This public lacks the temporal and physical limitations of, say, a theatre audience, since a painting can be seen during a long time span, and under different circumstances. Being a part of its public, however, requires attention from the part of an individual—the painting must be seen. However, Warner also demands a reflexive circulation of discourse, in order for a public to be created. A public is “an ongoing space of encounter for discourse.” According to Warner, texts themselves do not create publics, but the concatenation of texts through time.²⁸ The Finnish public paintings do create a chain of works but their public is hard to indicate in a precise manner. A large number of people have seen many of these paintings when visiting public institutions, but they all have encountered different selections of works and under different circumstances.

In the Finnish context, the public of public art has generally been understood as “the people”, or “the nation”, encompassing an unspecified general mass. As Liisa Lindgren has pointed out, various agents have taken the position of speaking “for the people”. Already in the process of defining a public art project, a set of presumptions about the people has been employed. Private interests may have had a central role in projects, which have been formulated as manifesting a common goal or shared values.²⁹ The consistence, let alone opinions of the actual audience of an artwork have not been of interest. While the public of public art has been understood as “everyone”, it has referred to no one in particular.

This tendency has been widely criticised in recent literature. According to Cher Krause Knight, a public artwork does not have to refer to the largest possible audience; an artwork is public when individual voices from the audience are heard. Knight argues that the publicness of an artwork is the ability to “stimulate the intellects, senses, and emotion of viewers regardless of location.”³⁰ What matters is the relationship between the work and its audience, not the quantity of audience members.

Besides being located in a public space and in the public sphere, the functions and aims of an artwork create main components of its public status. According to Patricia Phillips,

“art is ‘public’ based not on *where* it is, but on what it *does*.”³¹ The question of the social impact of the arts has a far-stretching intellectual history. Plato considered the arts, poetry and theatre in particular, as having social importance—in corrupting the audience. For this reason the arts ought to be strictly controlled and their content harnessed for the public good.³² After Plato, art has been allocated a series of other functions, such as civilising people, constructing identities, activating and confronting audiences, conveying messages or as a vehicle of propaganda, and so forth. And, of course, there has been a strong counter-reaction towards all of these in the ideal of “art for art’s sake” (*l’art pour l’art*), according to which art has intrinsic, not instrumental value.

The main functions which had been machined in public art before the 1960s and the turn towards social aspects of public art were memorialising, civilising the people, and conveying messages. These functions were strategically one-directional and patronising. The public was defined as the object, who received the education, ennobling and messages the artworks suggested. Members of the public were defined as subjects in need of improvement: after the encounter with the art, they were to change for the better. Tellingly, the belief in the civilising possibilities of the arts gave a justification for the colonial enterprises in the 19th century. As art could mould people into respectable citizens, it was the “white man’s burden” to spread this civilisation.³³ Whether a colonial enterprise of the 19th century, or a Finnish municipal project in the 1950s, casting art as a civilising tool made it a one-directional initiative, while the spectator did not have an active part in the process.

More recently, a number of researchers and artists have been focusing on the creation of a more active audience participation. Patricia Phillips, for one, has emphasised the activist position of the artist. According to Phillips, public art “encourages the development of active, engaged, and participatory citizens, a process which generally can occur only through the activism of an artist and the provocation of art.”³⁴ In a similar vein, Cher Krause Knight has suggested populism as the character defining (good) public art. “Art becomes most fully public when it has palpable populist sentiments—the *extension of emotional and intellectual, as well as physical, accessibility to the audience*—not a pretension towards such.”³⁵ Populism, in the sense Knight uses it, does not refer to easiness or an aim towards pleasing all. It is understood as “increasing viewers’ agency through proactive choices.”³⁶ According to Knight, art should risk some discontent to engage with the audience; when it is unlikely to offend, it has the risk of being boring. “The great short-coming of much government-sponsored public art: the desire to propagate good will and nurture consensus has cultivated an aesthetics of the bland,”³⁷ Knight evaluates.

The recent critical discourses have frequently downplayed the importance of public site in defining public art. Indeed, not all artworks placed at a public site are public art. But all public art is necessarily placed, in one way or another, into the public—in the physical public space or the media space. Besides the prerequisite of a public site, meaning either wide accessibility or having public functions, a public artwork needs to fulfil at least one, but preferably several of the following criteria: it is commissioned by the public authorities, directed towards a general audience, and has some public, social, or communal functions or aims. The Finnish postwar public painting production may not implement all the current ideals of public art but these paintings were seen as having public, social agency during the time of their production—they were the public art of their time.

Private Sector Public Painting

The official commissioning of an artwork and the use of tax-collected funds can be seen as direct indications of the public status of an artwork: it becomes public property. However, the commissioner of an individual work is not centrally important for its public status. Instead, the acceptance of a work in a public location is. By allowing the presence of, for example, a donated artwork, the owner of the location signals acceptance. With its presence in a given location, an artwork changes the space and contributes to different readings of the site.

Public paintings commissioned by official agents carry a close relationship with the public authorities. The fact that official, especially municipal bodies allocated attention and funds for public art in postwar Finland is significant, and its many implications form one of the main points of interest in my research. Nevertheless, focusing merely on official commissioning would result in a partial view of the public painting production. A large number of agents commissioned public art in Finland, both in the early 20th century and in the postwar period. Private patrons commissioned public paintings for their own business localities and donated them to public buildings and, thus, to public authorities. Furthermore, in the course of time, paintings which have originated as corporate commissions may have become public property as their locations have become public institutions—or vice versa. In Turku, an oil-on-concrete mural, painted by Harry Henriksson for the headquarters of the Huhtamäki Corporation in 1947, was later integrated into the Turku City Art Collection, as the building it was located in was bought by the city in 1982. [Image 4.] In the context of a public office building, in a corridor with the entrance to the Institution of Migration, the imagery of the work, emblems of Turku to the left and the large vessels to the right gained wholly new connotations. Later, in 2008, the work lost its municipal status as the city sold the propriety to a new owner.³⁸



Image 4. Harry Henriksson, *Työ ja henkinen virkistys* (Work and spiritual recreation), 1947. Oil on concrete, 238 x 565. Huhtamäki Corporation. Linnankatu 60, Turku. Photo: Toni Vuori, The Museum Centre of Turku.

But how can the private sector commission “public art”? Indeed, much of corporate art is not public at all. Artworks may be spread around office spaces, and, according to the hierarchical structures of the corporate world, the most valuable art is often placed in the offices of the directorate of the company.³⁹ However, in recent years, there have been two main trends that have made even the inaccessible corporate art more publicly available. First, understanding the art of a company as a collection—and the possibilities in its PR-values—and aiming for its wider visibility. Second, companies creating art foundations to which a part of their art collections have been donated. Often these foundations have been created to “protect” works that are considered as having “national value”, in a situation when a company has been facing an international merger.⁴⁰

During the time frame of this research, private companies made art acquisitions that followed the same lines as official public art production; artworks were commissioned, situated and received in a similar way, corresponding both stylistically and thematically. However, a company must have justified its art acquisitions from its own perspective; the spending on art must have been seen as profitable for the business. As Annika Waenerberg formulates it, art is only one among the many reasons for companies to acquire art.⁴¹ Motivations for collecting or commissioning art have been the creating of more attractive customer areas or more welcoming working environments, propagating the values of the company by means of suitable art, and the PR-values imbedded in the support for art.

To be understood as public art, a privately commissioned artwork needs an accessible location. The art placed outdoors, on the façade or in front of the entrance of a building, is generally accessible to the degree the city itself is. Furthermore, an outdoor sculpture needs public permission. These works are, thus, quite straightforwardly “public”. Also commercial indoor spaces, which are open for customers, such as lobbies, reception halls, restaurants or contemporary malls, can be considered public, since they are accessible to a large part of citizens during the opening hours of the company.

However, clear-cut definitions based on accessibility still escape us. The canteen of a large corporation presents a borderline case: it is public space within the corporate context, but accessible only for the employees of the given company. Yet, in comparison, a school cafeteria is generally similarly only open for the students and staff of the given school. A public painting in a corporate lunch room suggests similar aims from the employer towards the worker as a painting in an office directs from the state or municipality towards a citizen. And often, in postwar Finland, these corporate paintings were “made public”, presented for a wider audience as public art, in the media.

In Finland, as elsewhere, the Church has also been an important patron of art, and church spaces are public in more ways than one. The Evangelic Lutheran Church and the Finnish Orthodox Church are institutionally connected to the public authorities, and their position is protected in legislation. Historically, the bond between the Finnish society and the Evangelic Lutheran Church has been even tighter than currently: a Freedom of Religion Act was established only in 1922. Even though the degree of membership has been declining, in 2010 nearly 80% of Finnish citizens were registered as members of the Evangelic Lutheran Church.⁴²

The public of a Finnish church painting cannot be defined merely as a religious one. As many rites of passage, such as baptisms, marriages, and funeral services have been and are conducted in churches, a large part of the population has attended these ceremonies and

used the church spaces, at least from time to time. In theory, churches welcome anyone who wants to enter. However, when entering, one must obey the rules of conduct dictated by the church. The church institution controls the space and defines the degree of its accessibility.

Church art is very much functional art: the church authorities, who generally also have commissioned church art, have defined its range of possibilities. As with secular locations, public painting may refer to two different phenomena within churches: altar paintings, seen as high art, and decorative paintings, often realised on the other surfaces of the church interiors. Altar paintings were acquired throughout the postwar decades, but the zeal for decorating Finnish Evangelic Lutheran churches in the 20th century did not follow exactly the same pace as the secular public painting. The high tide of painted church decorations was experienced between the 1920s and 1950s, a period which Heikki Hanka has called the era of “decorative church interiors”. During this time, inspiration was sought especially from the Finnish church interiors of the Middle Ages and the 17th and 18th century. In the early decades of independence, the reinventing of old traditions served to justify the existence of the nation of Finns.⁴³

The earliest church decorations have often been thought of as “the Bible for the illiterate people”. However, Markus Hiekkänen has attributed also other, identity functions for the Finnish church decorations in the Middle Ages. According to Hiekkänen, for the people of the Middle Ages, the high age of one’s church, and memories it carried in the form of monumental painting, were a basis of justifying one’s existence and superiority over others.⁴⁴

Church paintings have been important as decorations and in creating a devoted atmosphere to the church interiors—even though at times the lack of decoration has been considered most devoted. Art has contributed to the creation of a sacred space. The church decorations, as the church space on the whole, have intended to create awe in the viewer, and set the right state of mind for the visitor. Riikka Stewen has called the interiors of the Tampere Cathedral, decorated by Hugo Simberg and Magnus Enckell in 1907, “a dream world”, which takes over the viewer who enters the space.⁴⁵ Moreover, the commissioning of valuable art has manifested the age-old position of the church as a patron of art.

Besides the aspect of holiness, which is endemic to the church, the functions of church paintings have not radically differed from the functions of civic public paintings. Altar paintings and secular monumental paintings in Finland have also been executed largely by the same artists, and many ecclesiastic projects, such as the frescoes for the Turku Cathedral by R. W. Ekman in 1854—the first fresco paintings in Finland—and the decorations of the Tampere Cathedral, have been important milestones for Finnish monumental painting. During the early moments of the Finnish Art for Schools Association (*Taidetta kouluihin* -yhdistys), it used the decoration of the Tampere Cathedral to testify how overwhelming architectural decoration can be for the “simple uneducated people”.⁴⁶

Art commissioned by the commercial or ecclesiastic agents can be considered public on the basis of the accessibility of the works and the public status attributed to them in the media. In postwar Finland, private sector public paintings shared not only the compositional, but also many thematic aspects of municipal and state public paintings. In my research, I demonstrate a joint ideological basis on which the public and private commissioners justified their art acquisitions.

Public Art and Agency

How were Finnish postwar public paintings, then, produced? What were the conditions and contexts in which they were created? And what has happened after that? The production of public paintings is situated in my research in the macro context of the political and economic history of the country. Just as important were the micro level networks. I study the people that produced these paintings—behind politics, there were politicians. A variety of agents participated in the production of public paintings: artists, politicians, municipal administrators, art critics, and members of the audience. Often the same individuals took different positions, acting as jury members, critics, and artists. Important agents were and are the public paintings. Artworks were situated as important nodes in the networks of the artworld, and through them the relationship between the artistic field and the wider society was defined.⁴⁷

My research approach emphasises that artists were important agents in the production of public paintings, but not by any means the only ones. The used materials conditioned the outcomes, and artists could determine how their work was experienced or understood only up to a degree. Artists' intentions did not necessarily translate to the audience as intended—and this is further emphasised when the distance in time between the production and the viewing of a work grows. Moreover, due to the official participation in the production of public art, the artists' choices were often limited. Artists could rarely influence where their paintings were located, let alone how the locations changed afterwards. Artists could not control if their paintings were moved to different locations or sold to new owners.

To gain a public art commission, an artist needed to suggest to or negotiate with the commissioning body a suitable means of expression. The public funding justified, and the selection of the works, often via competition processes, enabled an official control on the subject matter and form—which were often inseparable. An artist's declared sympathies are not that which define a work's politics. Yet, they were not necessarily irrelevant for gaining a commission; artists were often easily recognised in anonymous competitions of the postwar years in Finland.

Artists did not work in isolation. All art is collectively produced, as Janet Wolff and Howard Becker, among others, have argued. Generally the creation of artworks demands institutions that have trained artists, artists' access to materials, technical innovations and tools, as well as financial possibilities for the execution. An artwork also requires audiences and mediators to be appreciated as art.⁴⁸ The execution of a public painting in postwar Finland demanded, essentially, an official commissioner. The painting of a large artwork was also collective work in a very explicit way. Artists needed practical help in building scaffolding, priming fresco walls, stretching canvas and preparing colours, and so forth. Many artists employed assistants also in the actual painting of large works. Indeed, there have been cases, where an artist himself did not even participate in the painting of "his" works—a famous case being that of Juho Rissanen in the National Theatre in Helsinki in 1928.⁴⁹ In art historical literature the names of the assistants often go unmentioned.

Important agents in the production were also those who Pierre Bourdieu identified as the gatekeepers of the artistic field. In the production of public art, the most central

positions were held by jury members and members of municipal and state art committees who had direct decision power over the executed works. In addition, newspaper critics, art teachers, museum curators and art historians participated in the field of production by defining and judging good public art, thus enabling or denying its possibilities of existence. What is noteworthy is that in dealing with public art, the opinions of others rather than art experts were often given more weight than in other struggles in the artistic field.⁵⁰ Politicians controlled the possibilities of the artworld with the regulation of art education and exhibiting, and essentially with funding. Through public art competitions, the politicians gained an even more explicit role in keeping the gates.

Public art has generally been defined as being made for the public, and not just any public but the “general public”, or “everyone”. In my research, I challenge the question of public, asking how the paintings defined their audiences, and what kind of agency the commissioning agents allocated for the members of the audience. The question of audience participation is not new but it has been addressed, for example, by Walter Benjamin in discussing the question of artists as producers and political agents in the 1930s. According to Benjamin, the successfulness of an artwork was judged on its ability to activate its audiences to participate in its cause.⁵¹ However, as Claire Bishop has stated, the model of participation Benjamin considered ideal, that of the Brechtian theatre, is by today’s standards a rather passive one, as the viewers’ participation took place through the distance of critical thinking.⁵² The participatory art since the 1960s has had the aim of activating the subject through the experience of physical or symbolic participation. Artworks have utilised collaborative creation rather than that of a single artist, and been concerned with the loss of communities. According to Bishop, “one of the main impetuses behind participatory art has [...] been a restoration of the social bond though a collective elaboration of meaning.”⁵³

In the 1990s, the demands for being ethical and political largely replaced the traditional aesthetics also outside of the realm of public art. In 1998, Nicolas Bourriaud introduced the term “relational aesthetics” in his influential endeavour to address the art of the 1990s. In relational aesthetics, artworks are judged by the inter-human relations they create. “The contemporary artwork’s form is spreading out from its material form: it is a linking element, a principle of dynamic agglutination. An artwork is a dot on a line.”⁵⁴ Following this impulse, artworks are considered in a continuing process of becoming, in relation not only to the place it is situated, but also people, sites, objects and processes. The people interacting with the works are “as much *producers* as consumers or recipients”, as Nicolas Whybrow has suggested.⁵⁵ This applies similarly to public and non-public art. The idea of the collaborative production of art questions the position of artwork as an individual, unchangeable object.

Besides the human agents—artists, assistants, commissioners and viewers—also public paintings were and are agents in the processes of production and in their environments. Essentially, to justify public art, it has to *do* something. Even if the artworks’ intrinsic values are recognised and not instrumentalised, there must be a belief that the presence of art is beneficial for its public in some way. Importantly, if we attribute social, public, or other functions for artworks, we must also indicate agency to them: they either fulfil or fail the aims and goals allocated to them by other agents.

In anonymous public painting competitions that were commonly employed in acquiring public paintings in postwar Finland, the sketches were important agents. A jury’s decision

was not based only on how good one sketch was, but how it compared to the other sketches in the competition. In these competitions, sketches were also evaluated in relation to the prior realised public paintings: how they employed the conventions, yet not repeating them as such. If the sketches in a competition failed to convince the jury of the talent of their makers, a public painting was not necessarily realised.

In his anthropological theory on art, Alfred Gell defined artworks as social agents. According to Gell, agency serves to distinguish “between ‘happenings’ (caused by physical laws) and ‘actions’ (caused by prior intentions).”⁵⁶ Social interaction does not have to happen between two human beings but it can happen between a person and another type of agent, be it a doll, a car, or an artwork. The agency of artworks does not mean intentional behaviour on their part but their agency emerges in specific social contexts, and always in conjunction with human associates. Gell describes artworks as indexes, which enable the *abduction of agency*.⁵⁷ Artists, viewers, and patrons of art can abduct agency in relation to artworks in different ways, and artworks function as agents in relation to them.

On the subject of public art, I am specifically interested in how the artworks functioned as agents in relation to their patrons—the commissioning bodies—and their audience. The relationship between an artwork and a member of the audience can function in different ways. The spectator may take a passive role, submitting to the power of the work, and not only as an intellectual endeavour but as a bodily experience. Or, in a more conscious way, the viewer may consider oneself as the one who can make something out of the material presented before her. In addition, besides the actual patrons, who can credit themselves as the “cause” of an artwork, the viewers may consider themselves as the motivators, believing the artwork was “made for them”.⁵⁸ Both the passive submission, as a target of the civilising and other well-intended aims, as well as the patron role as the motivators of the art production were suggested in the discussions on postwar public painting. The artworks were made *for* the public.

Furthermore, the Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), and Bruno Latour as one of its main contributors, have emphasised the agency of objects, of *non-humans*. According to ANT, material objects alter the cause of action of other agents, and hence, they participate in social networks.⁵⁹ Latour discusses, among other examples, the hotel key as a non-human agent altering the behaviour of humans. While a suggestion from the part of the hotel management for hotel guests to leave the key at the reception was ineffective and resulted in lost keys, adding a large bulky item to the key made the customers leave their key behind.⁶⁰ Eeva-Maija Viljo has applied ANT to the study of art, and suggested a transformation in the behaviour of the viewers as well as in the position of art within the society through a new material form applied in artworks. According to Viljo, with the advent of the non-figurative monument in Finland, the new material form translated the original program, the remembrance of the commemorated subject, to a new one, which is thinking about the author. Besides causing a change in the behaviour of the spectators, the new material form strengthened the position of the artworld within the society by emphasising the role of the artist.⁶¹ Viljo’s model is, in a way, tested by my research with the similar case of the non-figurative public painting in Finland in the 1960s, and its implications in the field of public painting.

The processes of production of an artwork must be deduced with caution in research. The process of commissioning a public artwork may have been one of trial and error and

the outcome not at all what the commissioner or the artist intended—it is nevertheless easy to read as a teleological process.⁶² In the scope of this research, the used materials had an important role in the making of artworks. Considering fresco technique, for example: if an artist did not master the technique or proper materials were not available, the outlook of a fresco may have differed significantly from the intended, or it may have failed to last the way it was hoped to.

Nevertheless, due to the large scope of this research, individual material processes of making the artworks are not discussed in detail. Instead, through selected case studies, which illustrate the production from differing viewpoints, and highlight the role of different kinds of agents, both material and human, I address the complexity of the networks of agents, reconstructing in a critical way the production of Finnish postwar public painting.

Monumental Memories: Art in Remembering and Forgetting

The time frame of my research is defined through wars. Despite a focus on war history, my intention is anything but to glorify wars. Finnish war history in the 20th century is a part of this study since these wars have been defined as key events for the Finnish national experience. In addition, wars have played an essential part in the history of public art, as monuments have often been used to glorify the military past of a country and show the justice of wars.

War commemoration has been an important tool for nation-states to present and establish their official narratives. Public artworks have been used to manifest the supposedly shared memories in a solid, visual form. “If part of the state’s aim,” James E. Young writes, “is to create a sense of shared values and ideals, then it will also be the state’s aim to create a sense of common memory as foundation for a unified polis.”⁶³ Art historical research has often concentrated on the memory function of art, the agency of public art in the formation and preservation of cultural memory. However, public art can also function as a vehicle of prescriptive forgetting and annulment in a society, as I suggest in my research.⁶⁴

The terms *common memory*, *collective memory*, and *social memory* refer to the cultural and social existence of human memory. Maurice Halbwachs, the influential theorist of the collective memory, suggested that individual memories can only exist within the framework of a collective memory of a society.⁶⁵ Creating a sense of common memory in the society has been one of the underlying intentions in the production of official, monumental public art in the 19th and 20th centuries. In Finland, two important moments in the history of public art, the establishing of the public art project in the late 19th century, as well as the high tide of public painting and memorial production during the decades following World War II, were marked by strong unifying tendencies: in the end of the 19th century in the name of the Finnish nationalist project, and in the postwar years under the flag of reuniting the nation after the rupture of the civil war.

In discussing the memories of a society, I do not wish to suggest the existence of a common memory shared by all the citizens, or a correct interpretation. In relation to

wars, I respect their complex and controversial nature, and concentrate on their public remembrance, the ways in which the memories of the war have been allowed expression in Finnish public space. Instead of private, individual memories of the members of a society, or a “common memory”, monumental production often suggests an *official memory*. And, while addressing the official memories, monuments reinforce them.

By official memory I refer to an authoritative interpretation in the society that guides, for example, history writing—and is often accompanied by either subtle or powerful coercion on how things should be remembered. Patrick H. Hutton has defined history as the “official memory a society chooses to honour.”⁶⁶ These official memories gain visual manifestations, among other things, in public art: what is depicted and what is left out, which places are marked and in what ways. During the past decades, the relationship between history and memory has been widely debated, and the discussion on memory has shifted the focus of research from the past to the present. As Andreas Huyssen reminds us, “the act of remembering is always in and of the present, while its referent is of the past and thus absent.”⁶⁷

In his famous project of *Les lieux de mémoire* (Realms of memory), Pierre Nora placed history and memory in “fundamental opposition”. According to Nora, memory is always living, and bound to the group it resides in, whereas history is a scholarly representation of the past. Nora considered that in the 1980s, the traditional communities were breaking up in France; real environments of memory had disappeared and had to be replaced by *realms of memory*. These realms, or sites, be it a building, an event, or the Revolutionary calendar, capture the memories of a society. Essential, according to Nora, was the will to remember.⁶⁸ Paul Ashton, Paula Hamilton, and Rose Searby have suggested that since Nora’s project, the scholarly study of memorials has become “one of the most prolific of these ‘sites of memory’.” As the writers remind us, memorials make only a part of the commemorative processes of a society.⁶⁹

Furthermore, the possibilities of a memorial to actually commemorate have been questioned. Remembrance at a memorial does not happen automatically, but demands articulated acts of remembering by the spectators and enough background knowledge to recognise what is being commemorated. It has also been argued that with monuments, the society outsources the burden of remembering. The memories are “stored” in monuments, which then remember for us, and we are allowed the luxury of forgetting.⁷⁰ From this criticism, and from the desire to separate from the sensed totalitarian history of the monument, the idea of counter-monument arose in the 1980s in Germany.⁷¹ A monument that destroys itself, or is not visible to the public, forces the task of remembering back to the audience.

It is often implied that remembering is essentially beneficial, while forgetting is a loss. As Paul Connerton has demonstrated, this is not necessarily the case. Instead, prescriptive forgetting may play an essential part in creating a peaceful society after an internal conflict, and forgetting may be necessary on a personal level for the creation of one’s identity. In the current era of massive floods of information, archival memory frees us from the task of remembering. In Connerton’s words, “to say that something has been stored, in an archive or a computer, is in effect to say that, though it is in principle always retrievable, we can afford to forget it.”⁷² Public art can function as a vehicle of forgetting by offering storage for an overload of memories, in the *annulment of memory*, but also in other ways. It can

be used as means of shifting the focus away from things not to remember, in *prescriptive forgetting*. Or, in a more brutal way, as a vehicle of *repressive erasure*, where wrong kinds of memories are banned altogether.⁷³

In Finland, as in many other countries, wars have had an important role in defining the nation-state and nationalism. However, both the civil war of 1918 and the series of wars within the course of World War II created difficult positions for national public art. Following the civil war, monuments had a visible role in showing the ruling power in Finnish society: the victors erected monuments to justify their cause, while the losing side was long denied public commemoration. In 1939, there were 370 memorials around the country for the victors, “the Whites”, and fifteen for “the Reds”, the losing side. The Reds were allowed to publicly commemorate their losses only after the Winter War (*talvisota*) against the Soviet Union in 1939–40. Over a hundred monuments for the Reds were erected between 1940 and 1958.⁷⁴ By the early 2000s, merely three monuments out of five hundred had been erected in commemoration of both sides of the civil war, suggesting that the agents involved in the creation of the memorials have, throughout decades, related to only one side of the war.⁷⁵ The commemoration of the wars against the Soviet Union during World War II have created problems for public remembrance especially due to the question of how to address a lost war.

The traditional materials of monuments, bronze and stone, signal a lasting presence, which is essential for commemoration. Consequently, sculpture has often been the preferred medium of national commemoration, and commemoration has been emphasised over other functions of monuments. Public paintings have more often been attributed didactic and propagandist, as well as decorative functions. Yet, examples of systematic use of commemorative public paintings are easy to find around the world: great numbers of commemorative murals have been painted, for example, in Northern Ireland for the Republican hunger-strike victims during the Troubles, on the walls of Tehran for Iranian martyrs during the Iran–Iraq war, and for different kinds of individuals within the tradition of community mural painting in the United States.⁷⁶ Official memorial paintings for indoor spaces have also been painted earlier, for example, in the United States following World War I.⁷⁷ In Finland, those who have served and died in the wars have most often been commemorated—besides in monuments—with metal or stone plaques on the walls of schools and other institutions. Public paintings have been assigned a commemorative function more rarely.

Nevertheless, public art does not need to be explicitly defined as commemorative to take part in the complex process of remembering and forgetting in the society. Public art production serves in creating a coherent historical narrative, which has been considered essential in justifying the existence of nation-states. While striving for a coherent history, regimes often wish to control and delimit the individual memories of many citizens.⁷⁸ In Finland, this tendency was apparent in the early years of independence. For decades after the civil war, the interpretation of the winning side of the war comprised the official memory. Following World War II, the official narratives suggested the unity of the nation and the mythical measures of the common endeavour against the much larger aggressor.

The continuing reinforcing of the memories of war has had a significant role in the maintaining and renewing of the Finnish national sentiment. The remembrance has, however, been very selective. What is to be remembered and which aspects are to be forgotten has also been visually suggested in the production of public art.

Setting the Framework

For historical analysis, a time frame is necessary. Yet, establishing one may prove difficult when “natural” borders of the studied phenomenon do not exist. Acknowledging that the phenomenon of producing public paintings had not been born in Finland in the postwar years, nor did it end in the 1960s, I have traced the production during the most part of the 20th century. In the process of locating and studying Finnish public paintings, tentative borders for periodisation of the production became visible.

Following World War II, the rapid growth of Finnish cities due to the industrialisation of the country, the relocation of a large population from the ceded Karelia, and the baby boomers, born between 1945–50, demanded fast creation of new infrastructure and public services. The vast municipal construction, connected to the urbanisation and the creation of the Finnish welfare society, together with the ideological discussion on the importance of public art, which had circulated especially since the 1930s, resulted in a dramatic increase in public painting commissions in the postwar decades, especially from the early years of the 1950s to the mid-1960s. While in the two first decades of Finnish independence, there had been a few public painting projects yearly, in the 1950s, the number was tenfold. At the turn of the 1960s, a new understanding of public painting was established in Finland, and during the decade, the production of non-figurative public paintings largely displaced that of figurative ones.

The postwar reconstruction created an ideological context for the postwar public painting production. The commissioning of paintings did not, however, coincide with the time frame of the physical reconstruction of the country. Instead, art participated in the “spiritual reconstruction” of the nation slightly later.⁷⁹ During the most urgent reconstruction in the immediate postwar, beginning already following the Winter War in 1940, public paintings were not commissioned. However, public art was produced in large numbers once the focus of construction moved on to the creating of educational and other municipal facilities in the 1950s.

I have labelled the phenomenon I study “postwar public painting”, which raises a demand for defining a time frame for the “postwar”. Even the beginning of the postwar is debatable, since the end of the war can be defined with varying criteria. A beginning for the process of returning to peacetime began at the end of the armed conflict in 1945, even though a peace treaty with the Soviet Union was signed only later. The definition for the end moment of the “postwar” is even more ambiguous. How can a moment be shown when society has moved on from the war? When does reconstruction become mere construction work? When are things “normalised”?

The year 1952 has often been considered as a turning point for the Finnish postwar experience.⁸⁰ Importantly, this was the year when the war reparations to the Soviet Union were paid off. The year had large symbolic weight in the spiritual reconstruction of the country: Finland was the focus of international attention because of the Olympic Games in Helsinki, and the Finnish candidate won the first Miss Universe competition. However, this year does not self-evidently mark the end of the “postwar time”. For example, the rationing of daily consumer goods continued until 1954, when the last regulated item, coffee, was freed.

Furthermore, the settling of the Karelian evacuees and the urbanisation infected housing conditions during a long time span.

Importantly, the mental landscape of the society was affected longer than economic corollaries of the war lasted.⁸¹ Osmo Jussila estimated in 1990 that Finland had lived in the aftermath of World War II at least until 1989.⁸² The moment of Jussila's statement correlated with the "fall of Communism", which was witnessed in several European countries. Indeed, the fall of the Soviet Union proved to be a turning point in the Finnish relationship with its eastern neighbour, and marked the end of an era.

Economically, a rapid period of growth, known even as the "Golden Age", was experienced in Western societies in the postwar years, especially until the oil crisis of the 1970s.⁸³ In Finland, this period frames also significant structural changes. Compared to Western Europe, Finland was until the postwar period a notably agrarian country, with 39% of the workforce in primary production in the year 1950. The peak in industrialisation was reached in 1970, after which the share of employment in manufacturing began to decline.⁸⁴ The same time frame also outlines the establishment of the Finnish welfare state—the social security and national pension systems were developed especially from the late 1940s to the 1960s. During this period, also the Finnish art policies were organised, and reorganised.

The time frame of this research is partly based on economic and political variables in Finnish society, but in addition on discussions within the artworld, and the public paintings themselves. The discussion on public paintings gained new tones in the 1960s, and the arranging of municipal competitions slowed down in various locations towards the end of the 1960s. Also, for example, the State Art Commission (*Valtion taideteostovikunta*), established in 1956, did not commission public paintings for ten years after 1964. However, the number of commissions grew again in the late 1970s.⁸⁵ In particular in the 1980s, questions of public painting and public art were again brought forward, and the postwar theoretical discussions on public painting were reintroduced to a wider public. In 1980, the Finnish Artists' Association published theoretical discussions by Fernand Léger and in 1982 by Unto Pusa.⁸⁶ In both, the question of mural plays an important part. Also the Percent for Art program gained new resonance in a number of Finnish cities in the 1980s.

Importantly, then, the framing of this research is not to suggest definite borders for Finnish public painting. Nonetheless, despite different trends within the monumental expression—and with exceptions within and outside the time frame—the figurative public paintings from the 1940s to mid-1960s create a rather coherent entity that is justified to place under scholarly attention.

The most important object for this research is composed of public paintings. In addition to the realised public paintings, I have studied competition sketches when available. The literary documentation consists of newspaper articles, art journals, and art historical literature, as well as the minutes and correspondence of art committees and other municipal bodies, the minutes and other materials in the archives of the State Art Commission, the Art for Schools Association, the Painters' Union (*Taidemaalariliitto*), Alfred Kordelin Foundation (*Alfred Kordelinin säätiö*), Finnish Cultural Foundation (*Suomen Kulttuurirahasto*), and other agents active in the field. Furthermore, despite considerable historical distance to the subject, I have been able to interview some of the artists who realised these projects in the 1950s and 1960s. Individual artists are not in the main focus of this research, but the interviews have given me valuable insight to the processes of production of the works.

In the literary documentation, the public paintings commissioned for southern Finnish larger cities and the works by more acclaimed artists play an emphasised role, as they have more likely been covered in the press and discussed in the art historical literature. I have located paintings from artists' biographies and other art surveys, such as corporate publications, and from the Register of the Artists' Association of Finland (*Kuvataiteilijamatrikkeli*).⁸⁷ I have been notified of public paintings by the helpful staff of different art museums and other informants, and I have encountered artworks by literally accidentally seeing them.

I criticise previous research for downplaying the number and significance of Finnish public paintings.⁸⁸ But how many paintings were, then, produced during these years? The count varies depending on the definitions of genre. When collecting the documentation, my definitions have been generous: I have included all large-scale paintings (and even mosaics), which have been understood as a "mural" or "monumental painting" by the commissioner or in the newspapers. I have not, for example, demanded an acclaimed status of the artist in the artworld—a general requirement for "high art". With these criteria, I have listed circa 300 paintings realised in 1945–70, churches excluded. Although I address also ecclesiastic public painting commissioning, I have not systematically mapped the production for churches. Due to the scattered information, as well as the disappearing and destruction of paintings belonging to this genre, the actual number of produced paintings must have been even larger.

I have preferred to see paintings in situ, observing them in relation to their site, architecture, and audience when possible. Therefore, I have performed fieldwork in several towns and municipalities in Finland.⁸⁹ I have also photographed the paintings in their locations, documenting their condition and environments at that moment. These photographs compose an important material for my research. It should be noted that since Finnish postwar public paintings were often not painted directly on the walls it has been possible to move them. In fact, a large part of the postwar public paintings are no more located in their original locations—or in those where I have seen them. If they are, the function of the building may have changed, not to mention the interior design. The relationship of a public painting with the interior architecture and its audience was considered crucial during the time of creating these works. Unfortunately, the original relationship of a painting with its environment is hard to assess from the contemporary perspective.

I have acknowledged the importance of the site also when photographing the paintings. The practice of picturing artworks in publications without references to their environments, paintings even without their frames, has often been applied also to public paintings. This severely hinders our perceptions of them, of their scale and placement. In my view, it distracts the reader much more than the occasional indoor plant you may see in front of a painting in my images. [See, for example, image 51.] Importantly, this plant is what the spectators of the artwork in question regularly see. In other words, I prefer to show public paintings in their everyday environments, at times risking the appearance of all the details of the paintings. Also, due to the abundant visual material of this research, not all the cases discussed in this volume have pictorial references.

This volume is divided into four parts: The introductory *Part I* presents the central concepts and theories of my research as well as prior research, binding the question of public art to its contexts in the society and in art history. *Part II* deals with Finnish public painting from the late 19th century to the late 1940s, demonstrating general lines of production and

the ideologies guiding it. The inclusion of this tradition is crucial as it defined the postwar public painting production up to a significant degree. *Part III* challenges the previous understanding of the significance of Finnish postwar public painting. The chapters in this section discuss the politics of production and the imagery created in the body of Finnish public paintings. The concluding *Part IV* sums up the findings of this research, addressing the agency of the paintings and their publics, the relationships between public painting and politics, intentions and their realisation, and forgetting and postwar nostalgia.

Chapter Two

PUBLIC PAINTING IN ART HISTORY

Mural, Monumental, or Public?

Why do I use the term public painting? Why not monumental painting? Or simply mural? The terms “mural”, referring to the technique, and “monumental painting”, referring to the size and functions of the monument, are widely used—often as synonyms—both in critical literature and in general usage. These terms are, however, imprecise: public paintings referred to as murals may or may not be painted directly on the walls, and they may or may not be “monumental” in content or size. The term public painting emphasises the most important aspects of a public artwork—a public site, public functions, and a relationship with its audience. For example, the paintings commissioned by the Finnish Art for Schools Association during the first half of the 20th century were often referred to as murals or monumental paintings. They were painted on canvas, and many of them were hardly monumental in their scale.¹ Nevertheless, they were public paintings: they differed from easel painting by their formal conventions, they were produced for a general audience, and they were understood as monumental, often site-specific works. They were laid out as public projects.

Mural painting (seinämaalaus) has a clear definition, meaning painted on a wall, whether as a fresco, secco, or oil painting. The term has often inaccurately been used as a synonym for monumental painting and public painting. The majority of postwar or earlier public paintings in Finland are not murals: they are oil or tempera paintings on canvas, at times glued to the wall but more often framed in a large wedged stretcher and then attached to the wall.

Fresco painting has historically been considered the highest form of mural technique. The paint literally integrates with the wall and, thus, creates a strong connection between the image and the architecture.² In fresco painting, the paint is applied on a wet chalk plastering, which demands expertise from the part of the artist. Any correction to the painting requires the removing and re-plastering the top layer of the wall. While the chalk dries, also the shade of the paint changes. Due to its demanding nature, few frescoes were painted in Finland in the 20th century. Attempts at fresco painting also failed, the most famous case being the frescos in the Jusélius mausoleum in Pori by Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1901–03).³ The celebrated frescoes deteriorated rapidly due to the failures in laying the base.⁴

Glass paintings and mosaics have often been discussed within the genre of mural painting and, indeed, they are closely related. During the time period of my research, the same artists who worked with public painting often took an interest also in mosaic and glass painting. Like monumental paintings, glass paintings and mosaics aimed for a flat picture plane, they often reduced excess details and emphasised the importance of colour, functioning with a deep and generally subordinate relation to architecture. However, these techniques demanded special technical skills and the pieces were frequently executed by others than the artist who signed the work.

Monumental painting (monumentaalimaalaus) is a parallel term to monumental sculpture, which indicates a connection to the definitions and functions of monuments and to a noble or elevated character. In addition, it has referred to a set of formal conventions, defined in different ways in different times, and, simply, to the large size of the painting. In 1891, Eliel Aspelin referred to the painting *Väinämöisen soitto* (Väinämöinen playing, 1866) by R. W. Ekman as “kolossimainen sommitus”, a colossal composition.⁵ [Image 7.] The term monumental painting was established in the Finnish language at the turn of the 20th century, as did the genre itself. In the 20th century discussions, monumentality was generally used in referring to a higher quality and deeper content of a painting, in contrast to the lesser-valued decorative painting.

The concepts of monumentality and memory have been coined inseparably, based on the translation of the word monument from its Latin roots as a “thing that reminds”.⁶ Monuments have been seen as bearers of a memory, erected to “preserve and erase time”.⁷ Thus, the basic function of monuments has been seen close to that of memory itself. They link the present with the past—and the future. However, the Latin word *moneo* has also other meanings, such as to advise and to instruct. Emphasising these aspects could be just as, if not even more, illuminating about the basic functions of monumental art, often established as projects of civilising the people.

The concept of monumentality has been scorned in the 20th century and after. Andreas Huyssen has found a point of consensus between modernist and postmodernist ideals in their “bellicose anti-monumentalism”. According to Huyssen, monuments carry the connotations of kitsch and mass culture, of the bad taste and banality of the 19th century “monumentomania”. Politically, monumental art has been connected to 19th century nationalisms and 20th century “totalitarianisms”.⁸ In 1938, Lewis Mumford stated the anti-monumental attitude of modernism in strict and much-quoted words: “If it is a monument it is not modern, and if it is modern, it cannot be a monument.”⁹ Writing in 1943, Sigfried Giedion, Fernand Léger and J. L. Sert lamented the lack of true monumentality. According to the writers, monuments were only possible in periods when a unifying culture existed—that is, not in their own time.¹⁰

Despite the reserved attitudes towards monumentality, the production of monumental art has not stopped, perhaps not even diminished. However, in the growingly heterogeneous societies of the turn of the 21st century, their unifying function is seen as reversed. According to James E. Young, a monument, instead of being seen as a visual manifestation of a shared experience, “attempts to assign a singular architectonic form to unify disparate and competing memories. [...] By creating common spaces of memory, monuments propagate the illusion of common memory.”¹¹ However, since monumentality as a concept has a lot of burden on it, the word monumental is often avoided in contemporary discussions.

Public painting (julkinen maalaus) does not have as established position as its parallel term public sculpture. In the Finnish research literature it has been very rarely used.¹² It does not refer to either the technique or the size of an artwork. However, as with sculpture, the term can be seen to incorporate many of the definitions of mural and monumental painting. Hence, for example portraits, owned by a public institution, and publicly displayed on its walls, are not in this context understood as public paintings.

Marie Jeannine Aquilino has rooted the definition of public painting in the 19th century France in mural aesthetics.¹³ Also Finnish artists showed interest towards the “decorative” and “monumental” aspects of art at the turn of the 20th century, but I do not see the aesthetic criteria alone as sufficient basis for defining public painting. Instead, I ground the definition on the public status of an artwork, the site and the agency attributed to the paintings.

Since the concept of public painting implies a certain understanding of “the public”, its history is much shorter than the history of monumental paintings and murals. Internationally, the French Revolution is considered a turning point also in the history of monuments and public art. Transforming the idea of the public sphere, it enabled the creation of a new type of public art. A new set of social functions for art, such as ennobling the masses, which had been outlined by the theorists of the Enlightenment, was put to abundant use in the French Revolution.¹⁴ Also the wide scale destruction of art and monuments during the revolution marked a historical change. Iconoclasm implied competition in the political and social spheres, and the destruction of monuments pointed to the symbolic weight they carried.¹⁵ In Finland, the creation of a genre of public art was connected to the nationalist movement of the late 19th century.

In sum, I find the terms monumental painting and mural vague, in addition to which mural is often also technically inaccurate. Instead, I prefer the term public painting. In the postwar Finnish context, I use the term as covering the paintings referred to as monumental paintings or murals, placed in public locations. Important for the definition are the conditions of production and the attribution of agency, which make the paintings “public”.

Between High Art and Decoration

In defining public painting, also the problematic issue of the “decorative” needs to be addressed. *Decoration* and *decorative* were deeply connected to the definitions of monumental painting throughout the 20th century and earlier. Nevertheless, the understanding of decorative shows great variation.

In the early 20th century, the term decorative painting was used more or less with the same meaning as monumental painting later, not as a pejorative term. But, in modernist art talk, decoration and decorative often referred to lesser value and non-art. According to Harri Kalha, being labelled “mere decorative art” was feared even within the field of applied arts in the mid-20th century Finland.¹⁶ Public paintings have often been divided into two categories, decorative paintings and high (monumental) art, which denote different value.

In *Suomen taiteen historia* (The history of Finnish art, 1945), the influential art historian Onni Okkonen placed monumental painting under the category of “decorative

arts”, and estimated that only a small number of “decorative monumental artworks” had been executed in the period after 1910.¹⁷ Earlier in the volume Okkonen argued that “endeavours aiming for monumentality and social ethicality have been rare”, mentioning the art of Lennart Segerstråle as an exception.¹⁸ Despite understanding monumental painting as belonging to the realm of decorative arts, Okkonen considered the “ideological enthusiasm” of Segerstråle that which separated his monumental production from that of other, also well acclaimed, artists.¹⁹

According to Okkonen, the ideological content distinguished a decorative painting from the realm of “mere” decoration. This line of thinking is detectable in the writings of many 20th century art critics and art historians, and employed when creating a canon of *national art*. Rakel Kallio has called the decorative in early Finnish modernism Janus-faced: as an extra ingredient, in clarity of line or choice of colour, it might have functioned as an embellishing element, but, when dominating the work, it “extinguished the sparkle of life in art”.²⁰ The flat surface implied superficiality also in content, for which reason the decorative style was best accepted when dealing with deeply national subjects, such as *Kalevala* themes.²¹

In the Finnish language *koristemaalaus* is different from *koristeellinen maalaus*, both of which can be translated as decorative painting. The first term refers both to the realm of applied arts and monumental painting, and the second to a painting that has decorative elements in it. Also words with foreign origin, *dekoratiivinen maalaus* (decorative painting) and *dekoraatio* (decoration), were frequently used in the 20th century in the context of monumental painting, and they may have sounded more elevated than the words derived from *koriste*. Ville Lukkarinen has resolved the terminological problem by referring to the ideal of decorative in painting in the early 20th century Finland with the French term, *peinture décorative*, thus avoiding some of the pejorative connotations of the Finnish vocabulary.²² The term cannot, however, be generalised but it is only applicable to a limited number of artists in the early century.

The pejorative understanding of decoration in modernist art theories has made the field of public painting problematic in the 20th century. The Austrian architect and theorist Adolf Loos, inspired by the functionalist Luis Sullivan, wrote in his polemical essay *Ornament and Crime* (1910) that, “the evolution of culture is synonymous with the removal of ornament from utilitarian objects.”²³ This applied also to architecture. Le Corbusier reformulated the statement in 1925: “The more cultivated a people becomes, the more decoration disappears.”²⁴

The functionalist ideals in architecture have been seen as the main enemy of painted decorations. Le Corbusier’s argument was that decoration is used to veil defects: “Trash is always abundantly decorated; the luxury object is well made, neat and clean, pure and healthy, and its bareness reveals the quality of its manufacture.”²⁵ Also monumentality was considered a banality belonging to the past century and mural painting a dead art form that had no place in modern buildings.²⁶ Nevertheless, despite the anti-monumental attitudes and despise for decoration from the part of many modernists, there was a wide interest towards mural painting in European countries in the 1920s–30s and, for example, Le Corbusier practiced mural painting.

The paradoxical situation cannot be completely explained away, but at least part of the explanation is found from the redefinitions of the concepts: the modernist public

painting was separated from its monumental past and the abstract mural from its figurative counterparts. Le Corbusier and Fernand Léger argued for polychrome murals that would not decorate but “explode the wall”. With murals, they would create a new kind of space.²⁷ Le Corbusier, Léger, and in Finland, Unto Pusa, saw mural painting as spiritual art, or auratic art. Without the spiritual dimension, public paintings remained mere decorations.

Pusa was one of the most important Finnish theorists of monumental painting in the postwar years, and argued that whereas *decoration* mainly remains as detached enlivening of surfaces, *monumental painting* “comes from the inside”. According to Pusa, monumental painting also decorates, but the “spiritual investment” of the artist raises the work to the level of art.²⁸ In Pusa’s writings in the 1950s and 1960s, monumental painting was defined in contrast to decoration, and surpassing it. Furthermore, Pusa separated monumental paintings from easel painting not merely by their size but also by their degree of intimacy—monumental paintings are not intimate.²⁹

Unto Pusa argued both for figurative and non-figurative monumental paintings, depending on the function of the building. Inspired by Léger, Pusa saw monumental paintings as a way of modifying the architecture and creating another dimension.³⁰ This could not be achieved without the spiritual content. The ideal, a synthesis of architecture, painting and sculpture was understood as best happening in the context of modern, non-figurative art, and was promoted in Finland especially by a group of concrete artists. The discussion, nevertheless, largely remained on a theoretical level.

In Finland, both “monumental” and “decorative” paintings were commissioned by municipalities during the postwar years. The Tampere City Art Committee, for example, separated monumental paintings from wall decorations, the first of which was considered more valuable than the latter. Decorative paintings were cheaper to realise, and had different requirements for artistic quality. [See images 5 and 135.]

In 1955, the Tampere City Art Committee commissioned a mural decoration for the Amuri School dental clinic, arguing that it would have “social-psychological importance”, and suggesting that the decoration should be “light, airy, and happy”, and not too expensive.³¹ These definitions imply that the wall decoration was considered a lighter version of monumental painting, not too heavy by its appearance or subject matter. Yet, it was thought to carry same benefits that were attributed to monumental paintings. A painting was commissioned from Pentti Toivonen, and later painted over, which often was the destiny of wall decorations as they fell into disrepair. In 1970, the Tampere City Art Committee pondered that such decorations were “use art”, and had been understood as temporary also during the time of their execution. Hence, they might as well be painted over.³²

One frequently used basis of categorisation has been, as in other divisions between high and low in art, the training of the artist: decorative artists made decorative paintings and trained artists monumental paintings. This categorisation was not, however, always followed in practise. The technique was also important: decorative paintings were painted directly on the wall but not with a fresco technique. Instead, even house paint was used, and sometimes housepainters, while an artist merely supervised the execution of the work. Often, decorative paintings depicted lighter subjects and had less complicated compositions—even though they may have included complex ornamental elements. On the contrary, monumental paintings were to fulfil the qualifications of “true art”, such as an original idea and high artistic quality.



Image 5. Matti Petäjä, *Omenankeruu* (Picking apples), 1956. Latex, 280 x 620. Koukkuniemi Retirement Home, Tampere. NYMU. Photo: JR 2006.

As a way of summarising: during a large part of the 20th century, decorative was seen as an intrinsic quality of public painting and, at the same time, something it was defined against. As Unto Pusa suggested, monumental paintings “also decorated”, they beautified and enlivened a space, which manifested as positive qualities.³³ As such, decorative may have referred to the functional aspect of monumental paintings. However, calling a painting decorative may also have referred to pejorative, often effeminated, qualities, and, “decorative painting” to applied arts and non-art. Postwar public painting was both decoration and beyond decoration.

National Art in an International Context

Monumental painting has been harnessed to the service of politics in various countries, often by means of centralised official funding. It has often flourished at times when memorialisation by means of monumental sculpture has been a central interest in a society. Public, monumental art has been used as an agent in the building of a new society, and in reinforcing a national identity of its members, regardless of the prevalent ideology or political order of the society. The French Revolution is an example of a moment in history when art was given important public functions, and artists took noteworthy political

positions. Similarly, art was employed in the 19th century national awakenings and in support of the 20th century fascist and communist regimes as well as in many democratic societies.

A first wave of nationally oriented public painting flourished in many European countries roughly between the 1890s and World War I. In France, a theoretical interest towards mural painting and its relation to architecture had risen already in the 1850s. Marie Jeannine Aquilino argues that by the 1870s, the construction of a specific mural aesthetics in France, “as distinctly separate and in conflict with the practice of easel painting, led [...] to the development of a new category of French painting that was intentionally civic, secular, and public.”³⁴ Especially Pierre Puvis de Chavannes’ mural aesthetics had an essential role in inspiring turn-of-the-century public painting in Europe and Northern America. In Germany, the Nazarene painters hoped to strengthen the national sentiment through a religious and nationally oriented monumental painting in the 19th century.³⁵

In the 1890s, the ideals of nationally oriented decorative painting touched the chords also in Scandinavia. Programmatically nationalist monumental projects were initiated in Finland during this decade. Importantly, many artists interested in monumental painting shared the national agenda of the Finnish nationalist *Fennoman* movement. Similarly, in Norway, the ideal of decorative was bound to both aesthetic and ideological questions.³⁶ In both not yet independent countries, the “national soul” was sought especially from the Medieval and folk culture. Edvard Munch, who later credited himself as the “initiator of modern decorative art in Norway”, showed, especially in the 1910s, an increasing interest in the decorative theory and the relationship between painting and architecture. Munch’s early projects in the field of public painting, such as the decoration of the Main Hall of the University of Oslo (1916), were significant for the development of the genre.³⁷

In Sweden, prominent public buildings, such as the National Bank, National Museum, and the Parliament House (*Riksdagshuset*) were decorated with large-scale paintings at the turn of the 20th century, often with historical subjects. The national romantic painters, Carl Larsson, Prins Eugen, and Bruno Liljefors, among others, painted monumental paintings also for Swedish schools, “educating a nation of patriots”.³⁸ At the turn of the 20th century, there were growing tendencies of linking art and architecture, and art and the society in a large number of countries. Governmental funding rarely existed, but public paintings were realised with funding from private patrons.

During the interwar period, the decades following World War I, public painting was again in a central focus in many countries. Romy Golan has argued that the mural revival in Central Europe in the late 1920s was connected to the stabilisation of the societies after the war. “The stability fostered a desire for a more permanent, monumental art form,” Golan suggests. Murals were seen to retrieve the communal role that art was believed to have had in past societies.³⁹ Interestingly, the particular political order of a society was not centrally important: public paintings were produced in large numbers, for example, in Fascist Italy, in the Soviet Union, in Norway that had recently gained independence, and outside Europe in Mexico and in the United States.

The use of art as a political tool was often explicitly articulated. Soon after the October Revolution, in April 1918, Lenin published a plan “On the Dismantling of Monuments Erected in Honor of the Czars and Their Servants and on the Formulation of Projects of Monuments to the Russian Socialist Revolution.”⁴⁰ In Italy, Mussolini understood and articulated the need of art and artists for governing a country, and in Germany, the National

Socialists employed the arts as one means for the “purification” of German public life and moral. “Degenerate art” was equalled with a degenerate society. For both the Fascists and the National Socialists, art was seen a means of forging the nation.⁴¹ As a counteract, in France in 1936, the Leftist art circles articulated—in the words of Réginald Schoedelin—mural painting as a part of a “militant cultural front against Fascism.”⁴²

Lenin’s plan of 1918 consisted of creating public monuments for the “Heroes of culture”, and was to be realised in a few months’ time. Due to the lack of qualified sculptors, time and resources, the original outcomes of the ambitious plan were disappointing.⁴³ Art was used also in other ways. The “agitprop” trains, painted with avant-garde imagery, toured the country, educating about the Socialist Revolution. Later, during the Stalin regime, monumental art forms were well exploited in the Soviet Union, and besides monuments, also mosaics and public paintings were produced in large numbers to celebrate the Socialist society. Outstanding examples of the architectural investment and artistic decoration are found in the Moscow Metro Stations—“Palaces of the People”, as they have been called, or a “living museum” as Lenin’s original plan had envisioned.⁴⁴

David Alfaro Siqueiros, one of the main figures for the Mexican mural movement, issued in the early 1920s a manifesto on behalf of a newly created artists union, proclaiming: “We *repudiate* so-called easel painting [...] because it is aristocratic, and we praise monumental art in all its forms, because it is public property.”⁴⁵ Siqueiros demanded that at the time of a social change, artists had to commit to producing ideological works for the people: art “should aim to become a fighting, educative art for all.”⁴⁶ Also Diego Rivera articulated mural painting as an inherently social—and socialist—art. Public painting was art for the proletariat in contraposition to the bourgeois art: “the easel picture is an object of luxury, quite beyond the means of the proletariat.”⁴⁷ Similarly, the Italian futurist painter Mario Sironi argued that “in the Fascist state art acquires a social function: an educative function” and that “mural painting is social painting par excellence.” Sironi considered the essence of public painting being in style, rather than in subject, for which he blamed the Communists. “From mural painting will arise the ‘Fascist style’ with which the new civilisation will be able to identify,” Sironi prophesied.⁴⁸

The Mexican mural movement was connected to the cultural renaissance of the country, which had begun before the revolution. The new tendencies in art included the reappraisal of a pre-Hispanic past as well as breaking free from academic realism. Since 1921, large painting series were commissioned from young Mexican artists to prominent governmental buildings. Desmond Rochfort estimates that by the end of the 1920s the production had been developed into what the movement has become associated with: series with didactic, political and populist content employing themes of revolution, land, and cultural traditions. In Rochfort’s words, by re-appropriating the national past in “ways both utopian and tragic”, these public paintings created the first “visual image of modern Mexican cultural identity.”⁴⁹

The Mexican public painting tradition was also connected to the European developments. Two key artists of the Mexican muralism, Diego Rivera and David Alfaro Siqueiros, both spent long time periods in Europe before the Mexican governmental public painting commissioning began in 1921. Rivera was especially interested in the work of the cubists, while Fernand Léger had an “enduring influence” on Siqueiros.⁵⁰ Rivera spent some time in the Soviet Union in 1928, and there is also a connection between Rivera and Alf Rolfsen, an important figure in Norwegian fresco painting; they met while both in Paris.⁵¹

The Mexican influence was particularly important for the country's northern neighbour. Despite the very different political take of the Mexican muralists compared to the Northern American politics, they were invited to work in the United States, and their example was essential for the creation of Federal bodies of public painting commissioning in the country.⁵² Indeed, in the depression that struck the United States in early 1930, the F. D. Roosevelt's government created one of the most comprehensive public art programs of the 20th century. The Federal art programs established by the Roosevelt government began as make-work programs for the artists, as the essence of the "New Deal" was putting everyone, also artists, to work.⁵³ As a result of the programs, thousands of public paintings and hundreds of thousands of smaller scale artworks were executed around the country, murals especially in post offices but also in other public buildings. The New Deal art commissioning is often seen as an entity, and categorised as a relief program for artists. In fact, four projects, each with a different agenda, were created, and not all of the programs were based on work-relief. The Treasury Department Section of Painting and Sculpture (also known as the Section, 1934–43), for example, organised anonymous public painting competitions on which it based its commissions.⁵⁴

The Federal programs had a deeply national agenda, and the realised art was tightly centrally governed. What was sought was national art. It was hoped that public painting would result, "for the first time in our history, in a vital national expression," as the artist George Biddle wrote in a much-quoted letter to Roosevelt in 1933.⁵⁵ According to Jonathan Harris "art was seen as having the capacity to unify both individuals and groups," not only because of the collective work effort, but "because art was the means by which one could imagine (literally, "give image to") a future society of social and political harmony." Therefore, by creating murals in housing projects, schools, and penal and medical facilities, art was incorporated in the operation of assisting also the slum-dwellers into citizens of the nation-state.⁵⁶

The Federal art programs slowed down in 1939 and even more after the US entered the war in 1941. The war was a defining factor for a change in public opinion towards the public painting projects. Marlene Park and Gerald Markowitz have detected a growing resistance towards federally funded art after the beginning of war. Nevertheless, they also question whether the war was also used as an excuse to reject unwanted works.⁵⁷ The programs were not returned to after the war. The New Deal politics were shown as failing in reviving the economy: military build-up revived the American industry and economy more than any of the New Deal programs.⁵⁸ In art, abstract expressionism was the new flagship and the focus of attention in the postwar years.

In Norway, the years 1918–50, from the Bergen Stock Market murals by Axel Revold to the massive decoration program of the Oslo City Hall, have been called the "Fresco epoch".⁵⁹ According to Patricia Berman, monumental expression dominated Norwegian art throughout the first half of the century.⁶⁰ The paintings of the "Fresco epoch" celebrated the common people in a free and democratic Norway.⁶¹ Their subjects were rooted to the everyday life and Norwegian landscape. However, unlike in Mexico or in the United States, the Norwegian fresco painters did not receive many official commissions. With few exceptions, the Norwegian public paintings were funded with private donations.

The decoration of the Oslo City Hall was an important example of governmental sponsorship, and practically all noted Norwegian monumental painters participated in the



Image 6. Alf Rolfsen, *Okkupasjons-frisen* (The occupation frieze), 1950. Fresco. Oslo City Hall, Norway. Photo: JR 2006.

large decorative program. The execution of the paintings spanned from the competition of 1936 to the opening of the building in 1950, but halted during the Nazi occupation of the country during World War II.⁶² The artists did not follow a specific iconographic program, yet the murals dealt with the same themes: Norwegian everyday life, freedom, communality, and labour. In several paintings, the resistance movement and the prisoners of war were remembered, and the recently liberated Norway celebrated. [See image 6.] The public painting program—along the building itself—stands as a monument of the Social Democratic society and national liberty.

After its completion, the City Hall was considered a national pride and it gathered wide attention, not only in Norway but also internationally. The Norwegian art critics participated in the national project by giving laudable evaluations.⁶³ However, the architect Paul Damaz, advocating a modernist viewpoint on public painting in 1956, saw as the main merit “their lack of timidity.”⁶⁴ In Finland, the project was lauded as an indication of the government’s commitment to sponsoring art, and considered an example for Finnish art policy and politicians.⁶⁵

In Sweden, Finland’s favourite point of comparison, the National Arts Council (*Statens konstråd*) was established in 1937 as an organisation responsible for the state’s art-promoting activities. With the establishing of the Arts Council, a percentage of the building costs were allocated to the artistic decoration of the building, but not with every public building project. In the early years, the number of projects was smaller but the investments bigger than later. However, there had been a significant tradition of privately funded public painting prior to this.⁶⁶ Besides the more clearly educative public paintings, that celebrated the Swedish society, a notable tradition of concretist public painting developed since the 1940s, distinct from other Nordic countries.

The Finnish artists were well aware of international trends in monumental art in the 19th and 20th centuries. Monumental painting was seen as a genre of its own, with specific

compositional requirements, and the international examples were important sources of inspiration for Finnish monumental painters. Nevertheless, especially during the interwar period, right-wing ideologies had a strong foothold in Finland, and inspiration had to be sought from proper sources. Uno Alanko, the director of the Art School of the Finnish Art Society (*Suomen taideyhdistyksen piirustuskoulu*, today known as the Academy of Fine Arts) and the chairman of the Art for Schools Association, articulated in 1935 that “all other civilised countries” had understood the importance of supporting the arts. Alanko mentions Italy as an example of a country where the arts can develop freely and the Soviet Union as “the only country where art is not free but tied to the service of politics.”⁶⁷

Many Finnish artists closely followed international art journals and literature. In the library of the Turku based artist couple Hilikka Toivola and Otso Karpakka, for example, there were volumes on Cézanne, Léger, Klee, Matisse, Marini, and Sironi; on Egyptian, Mexican, and Norwegian art; on Roman fresco painting, glass painting, icon painting, and so forth.⁶⁸ An important channel of information in Finland was the Swedish *Konstrevy*. The journal often presented Swedish, Norwegian and Danish public painting projects at length. In 1950, the journal dedicated a whole issue on “current Swedish decorative art”, and the next issue dedicated seventeen pages to the decoration of the Oslo City Hall.⁶⁹ Even Finnish cases were, at times, mentioned.⁷⁰

Following World War II, Finnish monumental painting was strongly influenced by the Norwegian tradition. Lennart Segerstråle, who was a highly influential figure in Finland, had close relationships with the Norwegian fresco circles. Also Hilikka Toivola and Otso Karpakka visited Norway as well as Italy and France. In 1947, they toured the fresco sites in Oslo, and met Alf Rolfsen who gave them advice on fresco painting.⁷¹ The Norwegian influences in Toivola’s work can already be seen in the frescoes for the Normal School for Girls in Helsinki from 1947 [image 97], predating her trip to Norway. Hilikka Toivola had seen the exhibition of Norwegian artists in Helsinki Kunsthalle (*Taidehalli*) in 1937, and she had also worked with Lennart Segerstråle in the preparation of the *Finlandia* frescoes [images 40–41], which explain her acquaintance with “rolfsenian” monumental language.⁷²

France was among the main travel destinations of Finnish artists, not only but also for those interested in monumental expression. Figures such as Cézanne, Matisse, Léger, and André Lhôte taught and inspired generations of painters in search of a monumental, public expression from Mexico to Finland. The Academy of Lhôte received a number of Finnish students between 1920 and 1960, many of whom were interested in public painting: for example Unto Pusa, Erkki Kulovesi, Erkki Koponen, Erik Enroth, Matti Petäjä, Uno Alanko, Anna Räsänen, and Eeli Aalto.⁷³ The classic cubism and the theories of composition offered by Lhôte fed the Finnish ideals of public painting. In particular Unto Pusa promoted in his art and writings the ideals of monumentality based on those of Léger and Lhôte.

A noteworthy pupil to Léger was the young Maire Ahlström (later Gullichsen) who studied in his academy in 1927. Married to the industrialist Harry Gullichsen, Maire Gullichsen became a notable figure in the Finnish artworld, not as an artist but as a patron of modern art. In 1937, Léger exhibited in Gallery Artek in Helsinki, the gallery of modern art founded by Gullichsen.⁷⁴ And, it can be postulated that Léger’s thinking of mural painting influenced the public painting projects initiated by Gullichsen. The most famed project was the painting competition for the Kauttua paper mills in 1946, since it took place at a moment when public funding for public painting was still very small in Finland. Notably,

it was arranged between front row modernists, suggesting that public painting relates to modern art.⁷⁵

Public painting was a global phenomenon during the 20th century. In China, peasant painters were educated to create mural paintings during the “Great Leap Forward” in the late 1950s. According to the Communist ideals, art was to be reached by everyone, and it was to “service production and socialist construction work”.⁷⁶ Since the 1960s, a practice of community mural painting spread in the United States as an agent of, for example, empowering minorities.⁷⁷ In post-independence Mozambique, since 1975, those who had earlier been labelled terrorists were “repositioned to their true dimension of heroes” in a large number of public paintings.⁷⁸ In Northern Ireland, the two sides of the conflict used mural painting in the 1980s–90s as vehicles of propaganda, commemoration, sign of commitment, and as battlefields.⁷⁹ In Iran in the 1980s, such outdoor public paintings were officially sponsored.⁸⁰

Similarly, public painting continues to be a global phenomenon. In contemporary Mozambique, outdoor mural painting is being used, among other issues, in the service of AIDS awareness propaganda. In Athens, the debt crisis of 2010 has fired a number of murals commenting on the economic policies on the walls of the neighbourhood of Exarcheia.⁸¹ Contemporary graffiti, born out of hiphop culture, is often political as an illegal guerrilla activity and it also often explicitly comments on the contemporary society.

Public painting has been instrumentalised in various historical situations in similar ways in the hope of having similar effects on the public—understood either as the nation or a smaller community. The brief overview on public painting since the late 19th century demonstrates the international nature of the nationally framed production. My investigation focuses on the local specificities of this global phenomenon.

The Uninteresting Public Painting

The above-discussed wide interest in public painting in the 20th century has not received as abundant critical attention among art historians. The 20th century art history writing has been directed by the modernist paradigm, tracing the development of the avant-garde art. The figurative, functional, often political and officially sponsored practice of public painting has found a place in this narrative with difficulties.

In the mid-20th century and early postwar period, public art and the integration of painting and sculpture were debated in the European modernist circles. Paul Damaz published two large volumes on the issue, in 1956 *Art in European Architecture = Synthèse des arts*, with a preface by Le Corbusier, and in 1963 *Art in Latin American Architecture* with a preface by Oscar Niemeyer. This ideal of a “synthesis of art” focused mainly on abstract art, the few examples of which have also been celebrated in Finnish art historical literature. The figurative public painting production during the postwar decades largely remains outside of this framework.

Romy Golan has investigated this discursive position, what she calls a crisis of mural painting in the mid-20th century Europe, within the European modernism. Focusing on

Italy and France, and the modernist not-quite-murals, mosaics, photomurals, and tapestry, Golan excludes the official, figurative monumental painting tradition, the kind I focus on. According to Golan, “In postwar murals and mural-size tapestries, propaganda [...] was largely forsaken in Western Europe and the United States for the would-be universal language of abstraction.”⁸² According to Golan, the modernist ideal of a synthesis of art encountered its “final demise” in 1957.⁸³

Art history has often been formulated as national history. Within the last two decades larger studies have been published on the monumental painting of a given country. Judith Ogonovszky-Steffens (1999) has studied Belgian monumental painting from 1830–1914, Clare A. P. Willsdon (2000) the British from 1840–1940, and Marilyn J. McKay (2002) the Canadian from 1830–1914. Per Hedström (2004) has investigated the artistic decorations in Swedish schools during the time period 1870–1940. These studies often begin with the lament of the neglected position of their subject in art history and are at least partly formulated as revaluation projects—my research making no exception. Clare A. P. Willsdon defines her agenda as follows:

“Mural painting in Britain since 1800 deserves to come of age in art history, and I hope very much that this book will be a first step in its recognition, providing a platform for its informed preservation as a rich and integral part of the national heritage.”⁸⁴

Ogonovszky-Steffens, Willsdon, McKay, and Hedström border their studies to a similar time frame, from roughly the mid-19th century to the beginning of World War I or II.⁸⁵ Jan Askeland has in his research *Freskoepoken* (The fresco epoch, 1966) defined the Norwegian public painting with a distinct periodisation, from 1918–50.

In the United States, the New Deal era (1933–43) public painting production has been studied since the 1980s at local, state, and federal levels by Karal Ann Marling (1982), Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz (1984), Jonathan Harris (1995), and others. With a more restricted case study of San Francisco, Anthony W. Lee (1999) has demonstrated the radically political nature of public painting, and its critical position in defining “the public”. Writing in 1984, Marlene Park and Gerald Markowitz argued that the New Deal public painting production had been largely ignored in the volumes on 20th century American art. In the grand narrative of art history, which was and is dominated by the advancement of abstract expressionism, the figurative art produced for the federal projects was “at first scorned, then ignored, and finally forgotten.”⁸⁶ Despite the publishing of independent volumes on the subject, its position in the grand narrative has not changed.

On the contrary, the Mexican muralists and public paintings of the 1920s have been celebrated as the greatest masters and masterpieces of the genre and formulated as the essential achievements of Mexican art. The democratic and revolutionary character of the public painting production has gained a mythological position. At the same time, as figurative art, they have had a contradictory position within the modernist art history writing. What is also often forgotten is that Mexican mural movement was not a unitary one, not even among its three most noted painters, and its scope expanded far beyond the revolution and the 1920s: “Los tres grandes” all painted monumental works until their last years, José Clemente Orozco until 1949, Diego Rivera until 1957 and David Alfaro Siqueiros until 1971.⁸⁷ This later production has largely been omitted.

Furthermore, contemporary public art has been the subject of critical literature since the 1990s—by W. J. T. Mitchell (1992), Harriet F. Senie and Sally Webster (1992), Suzanne Lacy (1995), Lucy Lippard (1997), Tom Finkelpearl (2001), Miwon Kwon (2004), Cher Krause Knight (2008), and others. In these approaches, the social and communal aspects of the functions of public art have been emphasised, while the interest of these scholars towards the “traditional”, monumental public art has often been mild.

Within the field of public painting, in particular the community mural painting has interested scholars inclined towards the social understanding of public art. A showcase example of such painting is the mural *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* (1974–), created by Judith Baca with groups of local teenagers, many of them gang members.⁸⁸ Outdoor public painting, both official and guerrilla, typically understood as manifestly “political art”, has been studied, for example, in Chile by David Kunzle (1980), in Mozambique by Albie Sachs (1984), in Northern Ireland by Bill Rolston (1991, 1998), in Nicaragua by David Kunzle (1995), and in Iran by C. J. Gruber (2008), among others.

The lack of scholarly interest towards the figurative public painting in the mid-20th century is at least partly explained by the contradictory positioning of public painting within modernism. In Finland, there was a tendency towards undervaluing public paintings already at the time of their production, and through a cumulated process of undervaluing the figurative public paintings have slowly fallen into oblivion.

Building a Tradition (of Ignoring Public Paintings)

In Finnish art history, the rare examples of the early 20th century monumental painting, executed by painters considered national masters have been highly appreciated. But, judging from the existing art historical literature, the tradition of monumental painting practically ended in Finland as soon as it had started. The tradition has been considered broken between the early 20th century masters and the postwar years. Public paintings from the interwar years (1918–39) have been omitted, and also the postwar production has often been considered being of secondary value—with the exception of a few abstract examples.

Art history as a discipline was born in Finland in the late 19th century out of the interest toward the nation’s past, inspired by nationalist thinking.⁸⁹ The aim was to justify the existence of the Finnish nation. During a large part of the 20th century, art history was written as a narrative of the heroic “progress” of European modernism. Also in Finland, the focus of many art historians has been on the development of the avant-garde. The “backwardness” of Finnish art has been a source of “collective embarrassment”, in the words of Tutta Palin, and many features of Finnish modernism have been hidden from the research.⁹⁰

In the first overview on Finnish art, *Suomalaisen taiteen historia pääpiirteissään* (Outlines of the history of Finnish art), published in 1891, Eliel Aspelin assessed that the practicing of *Finnish* art had begun in the 19th century—“supported by the spirit of the nation” and satisfying its need for beauty. All in all, Aspelin considered the history of Finnish art “poor and modest”.⁹¹ In later evaluations, Finnish art has been seen to fully blossom in the “Golden Age” of the 1890s, and such downplaying evaluations were no longer made in the 20th century.

For nationally oriented (art) history writing, a long time span is a necessity. The early major overviews on Finnish art, from 1912, 1927, and 1945, all begin the art historical continuum for the Finnish nation from the stone ages.⁹² Furthermore, art historians have sought the roots of the national art and spirit, among other sources, in medieval church painting. The medieval churches were defined as symbols of the ancient Finnish culture, which was considered essential for the promotion of a national spirit.⁹³ Ludvig Wennervirta and Onni Okkonen, the leading authorities in art history during the interwar period, had a strong nationalist emphasis in their writings. “All great periods in art history have always also had a strong national air”, wrote Wennervirta in 1933.⁹⁴ For Wennervirta, the relationship between art and nationalism was beneficial in both directions: the rise of the national sentiment raised the level of art, and the rise of art raised the general national sentiment.⁹⁵

During the interwar period, art in general and the monumental painting in particular were seen as being in a poor state. In 1931, Onni Okkonen wrote that Finnish art was in a “state of emergency”, and did not match the achievements of the Golden Age.⁹⁶ Ludvig Wennervirta argued for the promotion of monumental art with public funds in the 1930s. According to Wennervirta, artists, who had distanced themselves from the large audience, were partly to blame for the “drying up” of monumental painting, but especially the public and architects needed to recognise their responsibilities towards art.⁹⁷

In *Suomen taiteen historia* (The history of Finnish art, 1945), Onni Okkonen estimated that the functionalist architectural ideals and the lack of public commissions had led to a small number of “decorative monumental artworks”. Okkonen did not spare his words of praise when discussing Gallen-Kallela’s monumental art, for example the frescoes for the Jusélius Mausoleum in Pori (1901–03).⁹⁸ However, he assessed that neither the styles of *Septem* nor *November group* (Marraskuun ryhmä), the two defining Finnish artists’ groups in the 1910s and 1920s, had the potential to elevate the concept of mural painting.⁹⁹ Many painters associated with *Septem*, such as Magnus Enckell, Verner Thomé and Yrjö Ollila, shared an interest towards decorative painting, but their approach did not please Okkonen.¹⁰⁰ In the 1955 edition, “revised and extended” to include the art of the late 1940s and early 1950s, Okkonen did not modify the pages on monumental painting, and examples of postwar public painting are mentioned only in passing.¹⁰¹

In the later major overviews, *Konsten i Finland: från medeltid till nutid* (Art in Finland: From the middle ages to present day, 1978), and the series *Suomen ja maailman taide* (Art in Finland and the world, 1985) and *Ars: Suomen taide* (Ars: Art in Finland, 1990), there is a tendency of omitting and downplaying figurative monumental paintings both from the interwar and postwar periods. In *Konsten i Finland*, Rolf Nummelin assesses that the monumental painting of the interwar years “was rooted to the spot and completely eclipsed by sculpture”.¹⁰² In Nummelin’s art history, there is a visible shift in the political commitment from that of Wennervirta and Okkonen: the artist Nummelin discusses in biggest length is Yrjö Forsén, a “proletarian artist” that had been “ignored and forgotten” during the interwar period. According to Nummelin, the monumental art of Forsén was “the first attempt to create own art for the working class”, and as such significant.¹⁰³ [Image 23.] After Nummelin, Forsén was ignored and forgotten once again.

In *Suomen ja maailman taide* (1985), Olli and Markku Valkonen connect the lack of monumental paintings during the interwar period to economic as well as stylistic questions.¹⁰⁴

According to Olli Valkonen, Finnish sculpture had undergone less radical renewals, whereas the image produced in painting was not suitable for the public eye.¹⁰⁵ Writing in 1990, in *Ars: Suomen taide*, Aimo Reitala acknowledges that the lack of research in the field of monumental painting during the period of 1918–40 hindered reliable interpretations of it. Yet, he continues by stating that the advancement of monumental painting ended in the 1910s, and detects a lack of appreciation towards monumental painting in the early years of independence. According to Reitala, the dominant position of the architects in the society contributed to the fact that “monumental painting did not play a significant role in the era”.¹⁰⁶ Reitala presents a number of projects of the interwar years, but apparently they did not suffice to qualify the production as “significant”. In the same publication series, Erik Kruskopf estimates that monumental painting of the interwar years did not have a significant role in “paving the way” and did not interest the most significant artists. Kruskopf sees figurative monumental painting as a deviation from the main development in Finnish art, which was, according to Kruskopf, during the whole of 20th century, towards a “pure, painterly language”, free from all narrativity.¹⁰⁷

On the subject of postwar public painting, Markku Valkonen analyses the beginnings of the production, and discusses Unto Pusa as an important interpreter of the reconstruction and industrial development. However, Valkonen’s examples are limited to the few competitions of the 1940s, while the production from the 1950s is omitted.¹⁰⁸ Erik Kruskopf addresses the organising of the art policies and the unionisation of the artists during the 1950s, and recognises the growing tendency of commissioning art for both the public and the private sector. Yet, Kruskopf seems to lament the fact that art was mainly commissioned for the spaces of “artistically uneducated” audiences and the results being, thus, less experimental. As exceptions, he names the “bold choices, which significantly advanced the popularity of the new currents”, the abstract *Eteenpäin ja korkeammalle* (Onward and upward) by Arvid Broms (1957), and *Contrapunctus* by Sam Vanni (1960).¹⁰⁹ [Images 131 and 136.]

The latest large overview on Finnish art history, dedicated only to painting, *Pinx: maalaustaide Suomessa* (Pinx: Painting in Finland, 2001–03) does not aim at a chronological historical narrative. The perspective is partly larger and some public paintings that have not been discussed in earlier overviews have been included in it. Nevertheless, among the dozens of articles in the five volumes, public painting is only dedicated a pictorial overview.

The production of public paintings during the interwar period has often been considered small, but estimations on the actual scope of the production have rarely been made. Juha Ilvas (1989) has estimated that “only some fifteen major mural paintings were completed in Finland between the beginning of the century and the 1940s.”¹¹⁰ The time frame is vague, and the number can be justified by the fact that we do not know Ilvas’ definition for “a major mural painting”—whether it refers to the size or the importance of a painting, or both. Nevertheless, the number seems small, as I have listed over seventy public paintings or painting programs realised in 1900–39 and over twenty more in the 1940s, churches excluded. The majority of these commissions were made for the private sector whereas public commissions were rare.

From the body of postwar public paintings, the few more often showcased works in art historical literature are the rare abstract works, which have been presented as early, ground-breaking examples in line with the modernist paradigm. Such works are, for example, early works by Lars-Gunnar Nordström in the 1950s, by Arvid Broms in 1957, and by Sam Vanni

in 1960. For example Elina Vieru mentions the “pioneering” abstract works by Nordström (1953) and Vanni (1960) in the volume *1950-luku: Vapautumisen aika* (1950s: A time of emancipation, 2000).¹¹¹ The concept of pioneering has been placed in quotation marks by Vieru, suggesting that despite recognising the modernist discourse, it is hard to distance from it. Vieru does not articulate the existence of a figurative tradition but it is implied as something among which these works have pioneered. The rare cases from the figurative tradition, which have been recognised in art historical research, are the monumental artworks of Lennart Segerstråle and Unto Pusa. In particular the war-themed *Finlandia* frescoes by Segerstråle in the Bank of Finland from 1943 have often been included in art historical overviews as important depictions of the wartime experience.¹¹² [Images 40–41.] A note-worthy contribution to the study of the field is Kerttuli Wessman’s research on Unto Pusa’s career as a monumental painter (*Unto Pusa, monumentaalimaalari*, 1997).

In an article in *Taide* in 1983, the artist Erkki Hienonen addressed the body of Finnish postwar public painting as an entity, analysing the contents and spatial aspects of public painting since the *Finlandia* frescoes to the contemporary moment, and suggesting they created a barely visible afterimage of a “uniform objective”. Hienonen pinpointed Finnishness as an underlying common character: not necessarily consciously emphasised but manifested on a more abstract level through “colour combinations and forms”. Hienonen suggested a continuation from the “national idealism” of the 1940s into the abstract works of the 1960s and forward through a connection to “nature and life” in the paintings—as often has been put forward especially in relation to *art informel*.¹¹³

On the whole, Finnish public paintings may have been included in biographical surveys of particular artists—or they may have been excluded from them—but studies on the phenomenon as such have been rare.¹¹⁴ Much of the Finnish postwar public painting production concentrated on school localities, where they have remained, if possible, even less-known than in other locations. This may be explained by being out of reach for the customary art audience, and because of a lesser value given for the works due to their location. A fairly recent publication, *Koulujen taide* (Art in schools, 2007), edited by Sari Savikko, touches on the questions of public paintings in schools and the activities of the Finnish Art for Schools Association.¹¹⁵

Even in most recent evaluations, the postwar public painting production has often been considered uninteresting, if not plain boring. In discussing the position of Erik Enroth in the Finnish art field, the art critic Otso Kantokorpi sums up the postwar public painting as follows:

“In postwar Finland different kinds of public mural competitions were often arranged but, when browsing through, for example, *Suomen taiteen vuosikirja* (The yearbooks of Finnish art) and old *Taide* (Art) magazines, one can quickly see how many competitors were pursuing an anaemic and in a certain way nationalist-sententious style—seasoned with classicism—which in a way resembles even socialist realism.”¹¹⁶

Here, besides characterising Finnish public paintings as fairly unsuccessful, Kantokorpi suggests that this production can be evaluated by merely browsing through art journals.

Finnish public sculpture has been extensively studied by Liisa Lindgren (1996, 2000), and the war memorial production by, for example, Riitta Kormanen (2002). In addition,

public sculpture of various towns has been presented in unscholarly “City guides”, and more recently on the Internet, whereas indoor public paintings have generally not been included in these listings. The rare outdoor public paintings have, at times, been included, for example on the webpage of the Jyväskylä Art Museum. Also the painted artworks on metro stations appear on the listing of the Helsinki Art Museum.¹¹⁷ Even though not all indoor public paintings are accessible to the general public, the lack of listings also imply a lesser interest towards and lesser value attributed to public painting in comparison to public sculpture.¹¹⁸

The exclusion of the interwar as well as much of the postwar monumental painting production from Finnish art history is revealing about the hierarchical understanding about what is considered good art and worth documenting. Understandably, in comprehensive overviews, everything that has happened within the field of art cannot be discussed in detail. However, the discussion on figurative public painting, or the lack of it, often insinuates an air of undervaluation. It is noteworthy that while in the field of sculpture monumental works often receive most attention, and they are considered main works of their authors, this does not apply to monumental painting.

At the same time as the postwar public painting was allocated considerable public attention and funds, and individual paintings were lauded in the press by noted critics, the production has not convinced art historians. While the modernist architecture and design of the time were and are celebrated, the figurative monumental painting was and is not. Essentially, these paintings do not correspond with the grand narrative of Finnish art history, in which the 1950s has been defined as the moment of the “breakthrough” of abstract painting. Liisa Lindgren has discussed the same problematics in the field of sculpture. In Finnish sculpture, the 1940s and 1950s have been seen as a less interesting “transition period”, while the breakthrough of abstraction and, with it, a revitalisation of the genre has been located in the early 1960s.¹¹⁹

The language of art history is frequently explicitly evaluative, but it is also often evaluative when it does not seem to be. Furthermore, these evaluations have a tendency of cumulating. Harri Kalha calls the process the Darwinian choice of art history, where only the most “beautiful” objects are included in the canon.¹²⁰ Hence, what has been omitted in the earlier research is easily left out also of the following. The fact that the public painting production in the interwar decades was considered small and insignificant by the most authoritative critics of the time—who held their focus on the Golden Age—has contributed to a situation where it has not been seriously studied even in retrospect. It has been labelled insignificant without further investigation. Following this undervalued production, postwar public painting has largely faced the same destiny. In sum, prior overviews on Finnish public painting do not exist.

II

FORMULATING NATIONAL ART

Chapter Three

PICTURING IDEOLOGIES

Nationalism and the Early Finnish Public Painting

The public painting production that accelerated in Finland at the turn of the 1950s was a realisation of a much older ideological discussion. Besides contemporary international examples, which were of great importance, Finnish postwar public painting also built on its domestic tradition.

In Finland, churches housed the first examples of mural painting and church decorations were among first art located in spaces where the common people frequented. In Finnish stone churches mural paintings appeared between the 1270s and 1290s, and they had existed even earlier in wooden churches that have not survived through time.¹ The medieval churches and their decorations were given a high value in the nationally oriented art and art history since the end of the 19th century. Outside churches, public art was realised in Finland only in the 19th century, and even then in modest numbers.

In the late 19th century, public art developed in Finland as a part of the public sphere deeply connected to the development of Finnish nationalism. Public art can be seen as an arena of public life, a platform of public discussion comparable to, for example, the press or literature, and a vehicle of public education such as national celebrations or rituals. In Finland, public monuments and early monumental paintings were and have been defined as national projects by their commissioners and in art historical writing; they have been made a part of the national history writing.

The different arenas of *public* were created in Finland during the 19th century, when economy, religion, science, politics, and culture were distinguished into separate fields, which demanded different kinds of expertise. As Hannu Nieminen has demonstrated, on the one hand, public institutions such as public school, press, and literature—and public art—helped to create a national sentiment. On the other hand, they legitimised state level power structures. Furthermore, these public institutions, especially the nationwide school system, created a large reading public, one that could think of itself as a part of a larger network of people than local villages and townships, as a part of a nation.² According to the classical definition by Benedict Anderson, nations are “imagined political communities”; imagined because the members of a nation cannot know each other, “yet, in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”.³ According to Nieminen, this imagining became possible in Finland in the late 19th century. The basis of Finnish national identity was imposed on the

people largely from the top down, and the areas of public life created, Nieminen argues, on predefined patriarchal constructions.

The deliberate building of Finnish nationalism began in the 1820s–30s among the Swedish speaking upper class of the Grand Duchy of Finland. The nationalist “Fennoman” movement was formulated as a cultural project, which aimed to narrow the gap between the upper class and the Finnish speaking lower classes. The aim was not to create new elite but to change the language of the existing elite. Until the late 19th century all Finnish parties agreed on the most important political question: they aimed to strengthen Finnish autonomy within the Russian empire and not to separate from it.⁴ Finnishness was defined first and foremost through art and literature by institutionally well supported figures such as the writers J. L. Runeberg and Z. Topelius.⁵ The creation of monuments to the “national heroes” also participated in the process. As Liisa Lindgren has demonstrated, public art was justified with the idea that only a civilised nation is capable of producing these works of art—and the figures they commemorate.⁶ The production of public art *per se* functioned as a manifestation of high cultural standards of a nation.

In the context of public painting, especially the positions taken by the liberal fraction of the Fennoman movement in the late 19th century, the Young Finns (*nuorsuomalaiset*), was significant. The Young Finns differed from the conservative Fennomans, Old Finns (*vanhasuomalaiset*), in taking an interest in questions of social justice, such as equality and health care. According to Riitta Kontinen, they were, in the 1890s, also the first in Finland to fully understand and exploit the power of the picture in spreading their mission—which was reflected also in their newspaper *Päivälehti* (later *Helsingin Sanomat*).⁷ The networks among the two fractions of the Fennoman movement were tightly exclusive but both of them were active also in the field of culture: the Old Finns, for example, supported the Finnish Theatre (*Suomalainen teatteri*) and gathered funds for the building of the National Theatre (*Kansallisteatteri*). They also founded the publishing house Otava—whereas the Young Finns founded the publishing house WSOY.⁸

Many notable turn of the century artists shared the ideology of the Young Finns, and the cultural elite affiliated with the Young Finns was behind the establishing of the Art for Schools Association. *Karelianism*, the idealising of the Finnish national character, and justifying the national existence of the Finns with an inspiration sought from the eastern Karelia, was among the central themes of the art of the Young Finnish artists.⁹ Furthermore, many Young Finnish artists shared an interest towards decorative painting. From an early moment on, public painting was defined as national art: especially the monumental painting competition for the Great Hall of the Imperial University of Alexander (now the University of Helsinki) in 1890 and the ceiling paintings by Akseli Gallen-Kallela for the Finnish Pavilion in the Paris World Fair in 1900 were strongly coloured by and significant for the nationalist movement.

Earlier, 19th century public art, meaning mainly public sculpture, had laid a basis for the national interpretation of the genre. In 1813–16, Erik Cainberg, known as the first academically trained Finnish sculptor, executed a series of bas-reliefs for the main building of the Academy of Turku.¹⁰ The ideals behind the decorative program—dictated by the university—appear largely similar as the ones on which Finnish public art was built towards the end of the century: it emphasised the long existence of the Finnish nation and culture by incorporating Finnish mythology into the historical narrative. It also emphasised the



Image 7. Robert Wilhelm Ekman, *Väinämöisen soitto* (Väinämöinen playing), 1866. Oil on canvas, 390 x 283. Old Student House (Vanha ylioppilastalo), Helsinki. Photo: JR 2012.

importance of Lutheran Christianity to the history of Finnish civilisation. This decoration remained, nevertheless, an isolated case during the first half of the 19th century, also because the Finnish artworld was practically non-existent at that moment.¹¹

A few memorials were erected during the 19th century, but the monument for H. G. Porthan by Carl Eneas Sjöstrand, unveiled in 1864 in Turku, has generally been accepted as the first Finnish monument and public sculpture.¹² In 1866, Sjöstrand also realised a relief frieze with a *Kalevala* narrative for the vestibule of the main building of the University of Alexander in Helsinki.¹³ Towards the end of the century, monuments were erected in growing numbers, especially in the capital of Helsinki, but also in Viipuri, Jyväskylä, and Kuopio. The first monuments were typically memorial monuments to the great men in history, “fathers of the nation”, who, due to the political situation under the Russian rule, had to be chosen more from the realm of culture than of politics. Yet, Russian rulers were only rarely depicted, making public art also a tool of separation from the Russian rule.¹⁴

At the same time as Sjöstrand was working on his Väinämöinen frieze, and encouraged by his example, Robert Wilhelm Ekman prepared a monumental painting *Väinämöisen soitto* (Väinämöinen playing). [Image 7.] The work lasted from 1857 to 1866, and the outcome was savaged in the press.¹⁵ The Student House in Helsinki was being built at the time the



Image 8. Johannes Gebhard, a copy of Albert Edelfelt's *Turun Akatemian vihkiäiset 1640* (The dedication of the Academy of Turku in 1640), 1961. The original painting was destroyed in a bombing in 1944. Main Building of the University of Helsinki. Photo: JR 2012.

painting was completed and Ekman tried to promote the work to be placed there. The artist, who died in 1873, was not able to sell the work during his lifetime, but eventually the painting was bought for the Student House—not by the Students' Union as a whole, but by three Fennoman students' associations.¹⁶

The establishing of Finnish public painting as a specific aesthetic and public category can, thus, be dated to the late 19th century. The monumental painting competition for the Great Hall of the University of Alexander (now the University of Helsinki) was declared in 1890, marking one of the defining moments for Finnish public painting. Importantly, the competition was formulated as a *national, public* assignment. The topics were sought from the history of Finland and the university, and highly esteemed and nationally oriented artists, Albert Edelfelt, Eero Järnefelt and Akseli Gallen-Kallela, were selected for the closed competition.¹⁷ The commission positioned the university as a patron of the arts and suggested a strong cultural history of the Finnish nation. As the first stage of the execution, the central piece was commissioned from Albert Edelfelt, who completed the painting in 1905. The painting depicted the inauguration of the Academy of Turku in 1640 with the image of a procession on its way towards the Cathedral of Turku.¹⁸ [See image 8.] Eero Järnefelt realised the two other paintings later, in 1916 and 1920, with historical subjects defined by the university.¹⁹ History painting was a highly valued genre of painting in the 19th century. It was not, however, established as a popular genre in Finnish public painting in the 20th century.

Akseli Gallen-Kallela, who eventually did not participate in the decoration of the university, was commissioned several other frescoes for nationally significant locations: for the National Theatre in 1909 and for the National Museum in 1911. The plans for the



Image 9. The Finnish Pavilion at the Paris World Fair, 1900, with a view on Gallen-Kallela's fresco *Ilmarinen kyntää kyisen pellon* (Ilmarinen tilling the field of adders). Destroyed. (Ojanperä 2009, 70.)



Image 10. Akseli Gallen-Kallela, *Kullervon sotaanlähtiö* (Kullervo goes to war), 1901. Fresco, 355 x 687. Old Student House (Vanha ylioppilastalo), Helsinki. Photo: JR 2009.

National Theatre fell through and the ceiling paintings for the National Museum were realised only in 1928.²⁰ Despite the small number of realised frescoes, Gallen-Kallela has been positioned as the most important monumental painter of the early 20th century Finland. This is explained by the powerful, heroic themes of his paintings and the explicitly national subjects they incorporated. In addition to his public works, he realised decorative panneaus with the same themes. Janne Gallen-Kallela-Sirén goes as far as including only Gallen-Kallela and his son Jorma to the genre of “modern Finnish fresco painting”.²¹

From the point of view of nationalism, the ceiling frescoes Gallen-Kallela painted for the Finnish pavilion in the Paris World Fair in 1900 were especially important. The World Fair happened at a crucial moment when Finnish autonomy was felt threatened, and it offered a possibility to internationally propagate the separate nature of Finnishness from the Russian, as Finland had its own pavilion and own space in the art section.²² In addition to Gallen-Kallela’s decoration, fourteen decorative panneaus were commissioned for the pavilion, mainly from artists associated with the Young Finns, and their subjects incorporated ideals of the Finnish way of life.²³ The subjects of Gallen-Kallela’s ceiling frescoes welled from the tales of *Kalevala*, and they were bordered with ornamental decoration reminiscent of medieval vault decorations in Finnish churches. [Image 9.]

Soon after Paris, Gallen-Kallela realised his first public painting in his homeland: *Kullervon sotaanlähtö* (Kullervo goes to war, 1901) for the Students’ Union of the University of Alexander (now HYY, in “The Old Student House” in Helsinki), also with a *Kalevala* theme. [Image 10.] The fresco opposes the Finnish zither (*kantele*) playing Väinämöinen of R. V. Ekman. [Image 7.] An old school mate of Gallen-Kallela, Otto Donner jr., who belonged to the circles of Young Finns, commissioned the painting on the basis of Gallen-Kallela’s earlier sketches of Kullervo as a heroic warrior. The subject was, thus, specifically selected for this location.²⁴ The Young Finns shared with Ekman the interest towards *Kalevala*, but stylistically Ekman belonged to a different generation. Gallen-Kallela offered an update on national and *Kalevala* art.

In sum, outside churches, and in locations, which are public in the narrow meaning of the word, a production of public painting began in Finland at the turn of the 20th century. At this moment, well-established artists, acquainted with *peinture décorative*, realised their first monumental projects, often suggesting a nationalist commitment. Public painting participated, since the beginning, in the Finnish national project that had been established as a main focus for public sculpture slightly earlier.

Realising an Ideology

Judging by the existing art historical literature, following these early, widely recognised monumental paintings, there was very little activity in the field of public painting. In the following chapters I shall question this common presumption, beginning with a focus on the Finnish Art for Schools Association that systematically endorsed public painting in Finland during the first half of the 20th century. The association actively pursued the promotion of public paintings since 1906 and, for its part, contributed to the defining of genre as essentially educational and national project.

In the late 19th century, the questions of art education and the moral bettering of people through art rose in various European countries: these questions were also deeply connected to the “monumentomania” of the 19th century.²⁵ The ideology of art education was based on the ideas on aesthetic education by the 18th century German writer Friedrich Schiller, who argued that via an aesthetic upbringing, people could be freed from their natural state to morally self-controlling individuals, “beautiful souls”.²⁶ The English social critic John Ruskin was a strong proponent of public painting and founded together with Mary Christie an Art for Schools Association in England in 1883. As Schiller, Ruskin equated art with beauty, and considered art to be a force that can move people toward moral action.²⁷ According to Ruskin, mural painting was the definitive art form for the mission, and vice versa, there should be no decorative painting without an “intellectual intention”.²⁸

Public painting was advocated a double position in the moral uplifting of the people: it was considered educational art *par excellence* and essentially national. During the 19th and 20th centuries, a national school of mural painting was seen in many countries as an important tool for evoking national sentiment. Through mural painting, “a country becomes a nation”, validated the *National Society of Mural Painters* in the United States its field of action in 1916.²⁹ The art educational ideologies spread around the Western countries, and Art for Schools Associations were established between 1890–1910 in the United States, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and France.³⁰ In Norway, such association (*Landslaget Kunst i Skole*) was established in 1948. The late moment is rather surprising given the vivid public art scene in the country during the first half of the century.³¹ Or, perhaps an association dedicated for the cause was not needed, since other agents in the society were already realising these ideologies.

The Finnish Art for Schools Association gathered around painter Venny Soldan-Brofeldt, who was well connected with the Finnish artworld and Young Finnish cultural elite. She was, thus, able to raise enthusiasm and money for the founding of the association.³² Besides Venny Soldan-Brofeldt and her husband, writer Juhani Aho, among the people who participated in the founding of the association were many cultural figures affiliated with the Young Finns, such as the painter Eero Järnefelt, and the playwright and poet J. H. Erkko, brother to the founder of the newspaper *Päivälehti* Eero Erkko, who was also the leader of the Young Finns Party.³³

The founding of the association had been triggered off at the villa of the paper industry patrons Ahlströms in Noormarkku during the general strike of 1905.³⁴ While the working people were on strike for the general enfranchisement, members of an upper class created plans for civilising them. Venny Soldan-Brofeldt has been said to receive 6,000 marks (25,300 euros) from the Ahlströms for the founding of the association.³⁵ In its early years, the association received several smaller donations from private patrons. In 1906, the heirs of master mason Ärt donated 10,000 marks (circa 40,000 euros) to the City of Helsinki, the interests of which were to be allocated for the Art for Schools Association, and used to commission public paintings for Helsinki schools.³⁶

The association, named in both official languages (first in Swedish) *Konstverk till Skolan—Taidetta kouluihin*, was officially founded in February of 1906. Venny Soldan-Brofeldt was the chairwoman of the association for the first year, and then worked as the secretary apart from small breaks until 1920.³⁷ The aim of the association was, as in other countries, to make art available for all—starting from the children. Despite the national

scope ideologically, the most prominent activity of public painting commissioning was concentrated in Helsinki. The association's mission had nationalist tones, in line with the agenda of the Young Finns, in emphasising the Finnishness of the artists whose works were to be placed in schools. The ideological basis on which the association built was, nevertheless, imported from Sweden, Germany, and England.

The mission statement of the Finnish Art for Schools Association focused on providing art—and with it, beauty and moral bettering—to the reach of school children. According to its rules, the aim of the association was to provide Finnish schools with artworks by Finnish artists of the highest possible quality, designed for a specific location; provide schools with artistic copies, preferably of Finnish artworks; spread good picture collections to schools; and, to influence school construction and decoration so that also “an aspect of beauty would be considered besides practical, health related questions.” The association would, when possible, also financially support the realisation of this mission.³⁸ The practical commitment of the association was to donate a piece of art or artistic copy yearly to every member school.³⁹ From the point of view of public painting, it is noteworthy that the association hoped that the commissioned artworks were designed for a specific location, nurturing the ideal of site-specificity.

The association funded its activities by selling artistic copies, with modest membership fees, and with a small state subsidy since 1929.⁴⁰ At its highest, the subsidy did not reach the level of the early donations.⁴¹ The City of Helsinki and the Alfred Kordelin Foundation allocated a few grants for the association for arranging monumental competitions. Despite its noble goals, the Art for Schools Association suffered from continuing economic problems, which resulted in few commissions of original artworks: it produced ten public paintings between 1906 and 1948, eight of which to Helsinki.⁴² For the most part, the association gave out and sold reproductions, lithographs, and small plaster casts of mainly Finnish art.

To mark the end of its first year, the Finnish Art for Schools Association impressively donated a monumental painting *Huviretki* (Outing) by Pekka Halonen to Töölö School in Helsinki. [Image 11.] *Outing* depicts a seashore landscape: mothers sending their upright children aboard on a boat, about to sail on a clear blue sea. The title of the painting suggests the idea of pleasure, of fun, but the imagery implies a solemn atmosphere of a holy day. The ideal of civilising the people was clearly present in the commission. According to the art critic and secretary of the Art for Schools Association Torsten Stjernschantz, in the painting:

“the children of the worker class school can identify people of the same flesh and blood as themselves. And it will be refreshing for their senses to imagine being with the painting's inhabitants out in the islands on a beautiful summer day.”⁴³

Stjernschantz thus combines two elements that nurture the soul: outing in the beautiful Finnish nature, and art. Halonen's painting offered both. The harmony and balance of the composition and the uprightness of the featured people in Halonen's *Outing* supported the ideals of the commissioning association.

Pekka Halonen's art often suggested the ideal of modest and hard-working country life, and he is famous for his idealistic yet harsh depictions of Finnish people. He held an interest towards spatial, decorative art, and he painted several altarpieces and decorative panneaus, as well as a few secular monumental paintings, such as the decorations for

Jusélius mausoleum in Pori alongside Gallen-Kallela, which have been destroyed.⁴⁴ Halonen's only official commission was the painting *Tukinuitto* (Log floating, 1925), which was commissioned by the state to be donated to the *International Labour Organization* in Geneva and is currently located in the Finnish Parliament House.⁴⁵ [Image 12.]



Image 11. Pekka Halonen, *Huviretki* (Outing), 1906. Oil on canvas, 199 x 504. Töölö School. Currently in Helsinki Metropolia, University of Applied Sciences. HAM. Photo: JR 2006 [in Helsinki City Hall].



Image 12. Pekka Halonen, *Tukinuitto* (Log floating), 1925. Oil on canvas, 229 x 478. Commissioned by the state for the ILO Headquarters, Geneva. Currently in the Finnish Parliament House. Parliament's Art Collection. Photo: JR 2009.

The Art for Schools Association paid a considerable sum, 6,000 marks (circa 24,000 euros), for Halonen's *Outing*, which was possible because of the donations the association had received. The high price of a public artwork did not go by unnoticed. The pseudonym "en som nitälskar för skön konst" (a passionate for fine art) criticised in *Hufvudstadsbladet* not only the execution of Halonen's painting but also the high price and especially the misusing of money collected from the large audience via a lottery.⁴⁶ With the same money, the writer argues, 300 schools could have received a copy of a painting by Albert Edelfelt that would be "beautiful, ennobling, and national in the best meaning of the word".⁴⁷ Also the pseudonym "T" criticised the fulfilling of the mission of the association with using such a large sum for decorating only one school. In particular with such a painting that "will not develop children's sense of beauty nor inclination towards fine art".⁴⁸ The association replied by stating that lottery money was not used for this project, and that by commissioning original artworks it had the development of Finnish art in sight. By pointing out that the school in question was in one of "poorest neighbourhoods in the capital" (now much the contrary), the association suggested that the poorest children were in the greatest need of the presence of ennobling art.⁴⁹ The painting has later been moved several times.

The association also reminded that it did distribute copies.⁵⁰ Indeed, it donated and sold copies of such national artworks that were longed for in the above-cited commentaries. Among its first acquisitions in 1906 were a copy of Edelfelt's *The dedication of the Academy of Turku in 1640*, among other works by Edelfelt and Gallen-Kallela.⁵¹

Two letters to the editor cannot be taken as a general opinion, even though "T" claims to represent it, but the opposition towards the style of Halonen's painting suggests that its appearance seemed foreign or unusual—and not *national* in Edelfelt's way, as "en som nitälskar för skön konst" pointed out. Torsten Stjernschantz, however, applauds the work in *Hufvudstadsbladet*, and explains to the reader that the work is "not an easel painting but a decorative painting made for a specific location."⁵² He continues by stating that the figures have, more than anything else, a decorative function, in the same way as in Puvis de Chavannes' art. Nevertheless, in the modest appearance of the figures, Stjernschantz sees "healthy and powerful realism".⁵³ For later generations of critics, the art of Pekka Halonen has been seen as essentially national.

The art educational ideals propagated by the Art for Schools Association were shared by other agents in the society since the early years of the 20th century. Tehtaankatu School in Helsinki, built in 1908, was decorated with a large public painting, visible in a photograph from 1913.⁵⁴ The painting, whose author is not known, depicts an idyllic summer day, girls picking flowers in a field. The view behind the field opens into a landscape that translates as a national one, a vast horizon with pine tree forests and a lake. [Image 13.] It was painted on the wall of the large hall of the school, but the space has later been made into a classroom. In 1914, the Art for Schools Association arranged a public painting competition for the same school.

Furthermore, public paintings were commissioned for libraries, which similarly suggests a notion of art educational ideologies. Libraries offered possibilities for reading and self-educating even for the less wealthy members of the society.⁵⁵ In 1904, the City Board of Helsinki commissioned a fresco for the "folk library" (today known as Rikhardinkatu Library) from Juho Rissanen. Rissanen had planned the commission with Albert Edelfelt and J. J. Tikkanen, who functioned in the Finnish Art Society (*Suomen Taideyhdistys*),



Image 13. Unknown artist, “*Summer landscape*”, before 1913. Oil, 200 x 500. Tehtaankatu School, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2010.



Left: Image 14. Juho Rissanen, *Sepät* (Blacksmiths), 1909. Fresco, 275 x 280. Rikhardinkatu Library, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2010.



Right: Image 15. Juho Rissanen, *Työstä paluu* (Return from work), 1904. Fresco, 275 x 290. As above.

and he suggested the painting for the city himself. The Finnish Art Society supported the commission.⁵⁶ Five years later, a second fresco was realised for the same location.

Rissanen had studied fresco painting in Italy and he offered to realise frescoes, not only in Helsinki, but also in his hometown Kuopio. There, he painted a fresco for the newly built museum and library building (contemporary Kuopio Museum) in 1909. The two frescoes for the Helsinki folk library, *Työstä paluu* (Return from work, 1904) and *Seppiä* (Blacksmiths, 1909), as well as the Kuopio fresco *Rakentajia* (Builders, 1909) have work-related subjects. [Images 14–15.] The first in the series, *Return from work*, shares the atmosphere of Halonen's *Outing*, depicting two men and two women, with tools and a coffee pot, returning from work, walking calmly and solemnly by the lakeshore, the women with bowed heads. The scenery is markedly Finnish with the view of the lake, a birch and pines. The later frescoes have emphatically masculine subjects, all male crowds in heavy labour: blacksmiths in an industrial environment and more allegorical nude males in building a fortress. The thematic approach is national, ennobling, and solemn, suggesting the ideal of common work.

The Art for Schools Association was active in public and its spokespersons addressed the necessity of art in the society. It geared interest towards public art commissioning among those who it applied money from, and with the Årt bequest it tied the City of Helsinki to its production of public painting. The Tampere Board of Education consulted Venny Soldan-Brofeldt in its art acquisitions, and in 1913 it purchased a large oil-on-cardboard painting by Pekka Halonen, as suggested by Soldan-Brofeldt, to be placed in Johannes' School. It also purchased three large paintings for Tampere schools from local artists in the 1920s, clearly influenced by the Art for Schools Association's activities.⁵⁷ The founders of the Art for Schools Association cannot be credited for importing the art educational ideology to Finland but they actively supported its spreading and flourishing.

National and Foreign

National orientation was a common but not indispensable feature of early Finnish public painting projects. At the turn of the century, the popularity of free and unique decorations grew in decorating interiors, and the interest towards imitations of materials and ornamentation faded. True materials were appreciated instead of painted imitations.⁵⁸ The French ideals of *peinture décorative* interested Finnish artists, and especially Puvis de Chavannes' influence was significant.⁵⁹ Early Renaissance art was another important point of reference for the artists inclined towards decorative painting.

In 1904, Magnus Enckell realised the painting *Kulta-aika* (The golden age) in a lunette in the library of the University of Alexander (University of Helsinki), now the National Library, otherwise reserved for allegorical decorative painting. [Image 16.] The interiors of the library had been fully decorated with ornaments, imitations of materials as well as allegorical paintings. *The golden age* employed principles of *peinture décorative* with a flat scene, large colour fields, and distancing from illusionist realism. The calm composition and the meditative air of the painting create a contrast with the abundant decoration of the building. The decorative in Enckell's art meant reduction, instead of the crowdedness or



Image 16. Magnus Enckell, *Kulta-aika* (The golden age), 1904. Oil on canvas, 245 x 490. Library of the University of Alexander, now The National Library of Finland, Helsinki. Photo: JR 2009.

denseness of the rest of the decoration in the building. “Storyline—luckily—is none, the picture doesn’t tell or mean anything; it is painting, not an anecdote or lyrics,”⁶⁰ the art critic Sigurd Frosterus characterised Enckell’s painting, articulating radical new ideals of decorative painting.

The colourful post-impressionism that broke ground in Finland during the 1910s presented problems for many art critics due to its supposedly “un-national” character.⁶¹ As pointed out before, Okkonen considered the style unable to “elevate” the level of monumental painting. Nevertheless, the Finnish post-impressionist painters were interested in the French ideals of *peinture décorative* and public painting. Already in 1911, Eero Järnefelt, assisted by A. W. Finch and Ilmari Aalto, painted a monumental-sized pointillist landscape on Koli for an international exposition in Berlin. The Board of Railways bought the painting, and it was placed in the second-class waiting room of the newly built Helsinki Railway Station in the 1920s.⁶² [Image 17.] The painting was sketched, however, already in a drawing made by the architect Eliel Saarinen in 1911, which testifies that the painting was planned for this location at the time of its execution.⁶³ Also, the shaping of the wall and the painting suggests that the placing of the work was planned in cooperation of the architect and artist.

During the time when Venny Soldan-Brofeldt was active in the Art for Schools Association, the 1910s, the monumental paintings commissioned by the association employed these radical ideals. Halonen’s *Outing* applied “puvisian” ideals of *peinture décorative*, and the following commissions worked with French-influenced pointillism and post-impressionism and sought their subject matter from recreation and children’s play.

In 1912, the Art for Schools Association arranged its first monumental painting competition, for Ratakatu School in Helsinki. For the closed competition, the board of

the association listed artists who had realised monumental paintings also earlier, many of them working with the new colourist painting.⁶⁴ Four of the nine listed artists, Magnus Enckell, Yrjö Ollila, Juho Rissanen and Verner Thomé, had participated earlier that year in an exhibition in the Ateneum Art Museum in Helsinki, which had created wide interest—besides for being the first group exhibition in the country—by showing the “pure palette”, colourist painting.⁶⁵ With the exception of Juho Rissanen, who later became associated with the *November group*, these artists came to form the group *Septem* (exhibiting 1912–20), a synonym for Finnish post-impressionism. Their second exhibition in 1914 was named *Koristeellinen maalaus* (Decorative painting), and in it Magnus Enckell exhibited the large triptych *Veljesvala* (Oath of brothers), a monumental commission for the Nylands Nation, a student’s association in Helsinki. Sigurd Frosterus, an advocate for colourist painting, was one of the figures behind the commission.⁶⁶

Septem and *November group* (exhibiting 1917–24), with Tyko Sallinen as its leading figure, were since the 1920s considered largely antithetical: the first representing “international”, French-influenced post-impressionist use of colour, and the latter “national” expressionism due to its sombre colours and “honest” depictions of the Finnish people.⁶⁷ Of these two, the national style was more highly appreciated. As Onni Okkonen (1945) formulated it: “In comparison to the ‘flourishing’ colour culture of the *Septem*, this colouring [by Sallinen] seems in another way originally masculine and independent.”⁶⁸ Masculine and independent are, of course, positive values according to Okkonen, whereas “flourishing” interprets as effeminated and less valuable.

Only three artists returned a sketch for the Ratakatu School competition, and reasons for this were found in the small fee for commission, 2,460 marks (8,700 euros).⁶⁹ This sum was allocated to the association by the City of Helsinki from the *Ärt* bequest.⁷⁰ No additional awards were given out. The commission was given to Verner Thomé, whose *Leikkiviä lapsia hiekkarannalla* (Playing children on the beach, 1912) is painted in a pointillist fashion with a pure palette. [Image 18.] Thomé had developed the theme of nude boys on a beach, connected to the ideal of vitalism, in several paintings, for example in *Kylpeviä poikia* (Bathing boys, 1910, in Ateneum Art Collection). For a school painting, a more proper subject could not have been thought of, Heikki Tandefelt argued in *Dagens Tidning*.⁷¹

As a monumental composition, the work shares certain features with the painting *The golden age* by Magnus Enckell from 1904 [image 16]; the two artists shared an interest towards *peinture décorative*, and Thomé had assisted Enckell in his project.⁷² For both of the paintings, the positioning of the two nude figures on the foreground, not interacting with the spectator or each other, creates a rather meditative atmosphere; one that closes off the audience.⁷³ In Thomé’s painting, the two boys in the foreground have their backs to the spectator, looking at a group of three playing boys further off on the beach. The painting is divided into two parts: the red rocks and green bushes on the foreground make a contrast to the pale yellow and blue landscape of the seashore in the background. The artist was also able to influence the colour scheme of the gymnastic and festive hall, which communicates that the relationship between a painting and its environment was seriously taken into consideration.⁷⁴ The painting has later been located in a different location, in a hall.

Likewise for its next commission, to be placed in Tehtaankatu School in Helsinki in 1914, the Art for Schools Association approached two members of the *Septem* group, asking



Image 17. Eero Järnefelt, “Koli”, 1911. Oil on canvas. Helsinki Railway Station. Photo: JR 2009.



Image 18. Verner Thomé, *Leikkiviä lapsia hiekkarannalla* (Playing children on the beach), 1912. Oil on canvas, 217 x 374. Ratakatu School, now Cygnaeus Lägstadieskola, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2006.

them to submit a sketch, and the painting was commissioned from Yrjö Ollila.⁷⁵ [Image 19.] Ollila's painting, featuring playing girls, was realised according to the post-impressionist ideals, whereas his later public paintings in late 1920s and early 1930s employed classicist form language and allegorical content—suggesting the at times rapidly changing trends in the preferred language of public painting.

At this moment, also banks began the practice of commissioning monumental paintings for their customer spaces. Bank branches functioned in prominent locations, which, according to the new ideals, called for artistic decoration. Banks and insurance companies had employed decorative painting companies in the 1890s but at the turn of the new century these decorations were already being painted over.⁷⁶ The small Private Bank (*Privatbanken*), founded in 1896 and merged into the Nordic Union Bank (*Pohjoismaiden yhdyspankki*) in 1922, had only one branch in Helsinki, in a neoclassical building renovated by Lars Sonck in 1904. For this space, the bank arranged a monumental painting competition between Väinö Blomstedt, Pekka Halonen, Juho Rissanen, Verner Thomé, and Wilho Sjöström, who won the first award and was commissioned the work, completed in 1916.⁷⁷ A landscape in autumn colours was a successful solution for the curved vault with trees sweeping round the spectator. [Image 20.] According to Onni Okkonen the painting was “properly decorative”—that is, not too much—“while it creates a pleasant place of rest for the sight, and space for broadening the mind.”⁷⁸ Like Järnefelt in his pointillist Koli landscape in the Helsinki Railway Station, also Sjöström chose to depict Finnish landscape. In this way, the subject matter of the paintings belonged to the category of national, even though the handling of the works was “foreign”. Sjöström also connected his painting to its locality by making Helsinki a focal point with the silhouette of the Eteläsatama (South Harbour) and the cathedral in the middle of the work.

On the other hand, a more emphasised take on the national was suggested by the early art commissions of the KOP Bank (*Kansallisosakepankki*, National Joint-Stock Bank)—the roots of which were in the “Old Finnish” Fennoman movement.⁷⁹ Gallen-Kallela's World Fair frescoes inspired an early initiative of monumental painting in corporate premises. The Tampere artist Joseph Alanen painted a version of the fresco scene of *Ilmarinen kyntää kyisen pellon* (Ilmarinen tilling the field of adders) for the KOP Bank branch in Tampere before 1912.⁸⁰ [See images 9 and 21.] Alanen realised also other public paintings with mythological-historical subjects, for example for the Tampere Workers' Theatre (*Tampereen Työväen Teatteri*) in 1912.⁸¹

In 1917, Alanen painted another large mural, *Elonkorjaajia* (Harvesters), for the main banking hall of Tampere KOP. [Image 22.] According to Juha Ilvas, the two bank paintings were part of the same commission in which the artist was asked to do paintings containing “both nationalist message and local detail”.⁸² This was sought in *Harvesters* with a depiction of Finnish agricultural landscape, combined to a view of distant factory pipes of the industrial Tampere. The pairing of national and local, in fact, summarises many of the ideals of public painting throughout the century.

Typically, the national character of Finnish public paintings from the early 20th century until the postwar decades was articulated through references to the Finnish landscape. Also the post-impressionist painters suggested the theme of Finnish nature to connect to the realm of national. For example Onni Okkonen explicitly placed Finnish nature at the core of national art in his critics.⁸³ As Michelle Facos has pointed out, the native landscape has



Image 19. Yrjö Ollila, *Leikkiviä lapsia* (Playing children), 1914. Oil on canvas, 200 x 300. Tehtaankatu School, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2010.



Image 20. Wilho Sjöström, "*Autumn landscape*", 1916. Fresco. Private Bank (*Privatbanken*). Now a café, Pohjoisesplanadi 19, Helsinki. Photo: JR 2012.



Image 21. Joseph Alanen, *Ilmarinen kyntää kyisen pellon* (Ilmarinen tilling the field of adds), before 1912. KOP Bank Tampere. Wall demolished in the 1960s. (Ilvas 1989, 17.)



Image 22. Joseph Alanen: *Elonkorjaajia* (Harvesters), 1917. Oil on canvas, 400 x 500. KOP (now Nordea) Bank, Tampere. Photo: JR 2012.

been in a crucial focus in building national identity in many European countries. A special feature in the Nordic countries was that the national identity was, in the 19th century, built on the notion of the primitiveness of the country's nature, and, also to a certain degree, of the people.⁸⁴ In monuments, depictions of common people have mainly been included in the pedestal, looking up to the commemorated figure. On the contrary, in Finnish monumental painting, common people have played a main part, as in Halonen's or Rissanen's early monumental works or in Joseph Alanen's *Harvesters*. Common people have been depicted

as upright, hard-working, solemn, and modest individuals the spectator could try to identify oneself with or take example from.

In the 1910s, many Finnish artists began to work with post-impressionist colourism, which resonated with the current ideals of public painting. Even though the new style was shunned by many influential critics, a number of post-impressionist public paintings were realised during the decade. However, the ideal was soon replaced with another, and even the same artists employed a very different approach to monumental painting in the 1920s and 1930s. The number of public paintings from the 1910s, which are known today, is rather small, but already at this moment various agents utilised the protean nature of public painting.

Addressing a Divided Nation

During the interwar decades, the creation of memorial monuments for the victors of the Finnish civil war of 1918 was a main question on which public art commissioning focused. Also, the failure of the important monumental painting competition for the Finnish Parliament House (*Eduskuntatalo*) in 1929–30 reflected the difficult position public art had during this period.

Finnish society in the early 20th century was highly divided based on an earlier established class system: the gentry and the common people had markedly different economic, social, and political positions. The rising workers' movement showed its strength for the first time in the general strike of 1905. After gaining independence from Russia in December 1917, the tensions in Finnish society led to a full-blown civil war. Even though referred to as a civil war, the conflict was not merely internal, as Germany and Bolshevik Russia took an interest in supporting the two fighting sides, the right-wing White and the leftist Red. The division of the parties generally followed class lines: middle and upper class supported the White side while the Reds consisted mainly of members of the working class and peasantry.

In the civil war, the Whites represented official Finland and fought under the command of the Senate, whereas the Reds were revolutionary—and the victors blamed them for the revolt after the war. The battles lasted from January until May 1918, and the losses were great on many levels. The total number of deceased has in contemporary research been estimated as 35,000 people, of which 30,000 were Red. As victors, the Whites incarcerated tens of thousands of people in prison camps, where up to 13,500 people were killed, and both sides committed terrorist acts which deeply scarred Finnish society.⁸⁵

The interwar period was characterised with strong polarisation of the society, with active far right and left groups, weak governments and little political stability. The Poor Relief Act from 1922 was an initial step towards the Finnish welfare society, but it was only partly able to address the social problems and the division of the society. During the interwar years, a large part of the welfare system still relied on private companies and relief organisations.⁸⁶

The White side actively sought the unification of the nation already in the 1920s, despite the disappointment towards the people who had risen against them. The motive for wanting to integrate the left in the bourgeois society was the fear of a war against the Soviet Union, in which case all the manpower would be needed. For the same reason, those in power had to tolerate a degree of disagreement—too harsh a demand for unanimity would have compromised the readiness to counter foreign aggression.⁸⁷ The left was, however, excluded from the unanimity project. The spiritual reconstruction of the nation was pursued only from the perspective of the winning side, and the harmonisation of the society sought after excluding the losing side of the past war.⁸⁸ In 1937, the Social Democratic Party entered the Finnish government, which aided the position of the workers' movement, and brought the left into the national reconciliation project.⁸⁹ The enemy image of the losing side was not, however, deconstructed until the Winter War.

As Paloma Aguilar has shown in regards to the Spanish civil war, mourning is never a simple process, but after a civil war it is significantly easier for the victorious side. In Spain, the members of the winning side enjoyed official support, and were able to express their grief in various ways. From the shared experience, they could achieve some form of moral and psychological relief.⁹⁰ In Finland, the losing side was denied public mourning and shared manifestations of sorrow, and thus its members were deprived of this relief. The Reds could not build monuments to commemorate their losses but had to bury their dead without a Christian blessing, often in unmarked locations in the woods or swamps.⁹¹ Riitta Kormano has argued that the naming of the deceased Reds in memorials would have given the fallen a legitimate, individual value, which the Whites wanted to withhold. The Whites considered the Reds as having committed a crime, and, thus, they were buried as criminals.⁹²

In the social hierarchy of the early 20th century Finland, artists belonged to the bourgeois part of the society, and, during and after the civil war, they had largely White sympathies or remained passive.⁹³ After the war, the White side legitimised the war as a “war of independence”, and commemorated their cause with monuments, often named “statues of liberty”. The Association of Finnish Sculptors (*Suomen kuvanveistäjäliitto*) and individual artists eagerly took part in the production of these monuments: during the first decade after the civil war, before 1929, the White side erected 333 memorials around the country.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the execution of White monuments does not necessarily have to communicate strong personal sympathies, but can be seen as a matter of employment, as Eeva-Maija Viljo has pointed out.⁹⁵ The desires of the commissioners dictate the work opportunities for sculptors or painters with monumental aspirations. The sculptor Wäinö Aaltonen realised many important commissions during the interwar period, and his classicist figures were considered by many the best visual expressions of the national ideals of the moment.

Besides monuments for the Whites, public sculpture commissions were rare. The civil war put cultural monuments on hold for nearly a decade.⁹⁶ Official support for art was scarce and in the few public paintings commissioned by official agents in the 1920s, old masters were resorted to: Juho Rissanen was given the task of creating lobby frescoes for the National Theatre—after Gallen-Kallela had failed to deliver the paintings—and the state commissioned a painting from Pekka Halonen for the office of *International Labour Organization* in Geneva. [Image 12.] The most important competition in regards to the national prestige of the location, the mural competition for the new Parliament House, declared in 1929, failed as none of the competition sketches was realised.

Corporate public painting commissions were indeed more numerous than official ones, and had different possibilities to take sides. The art acquired by corporations may have shown partial values more directly than that of authorities as companies needed to please a more restricted public. Generally the aims of the acquired artworks were defined by the management in reference to the benefit of the employees and customers. And, differing from today's corporate world, the business world in the early and mid-20th century Finland was more openly politically affiliated. The choice of grocery store was also ideological.⁹⁷ On the contrary, official public art aimed at embracing the whole nation. Yet, who was included in the notion of "whole nation", is a different question.

The management of companies, such as banks and industrial enterprises, at times wanted to manifest right-wing patriotism through their art acquisitions. The Kymi Corporation commissioned frescoes depicting "War of Freedom" (a name for the civil war used by the Whites) for the lobby of the Vocational School in Kuusankoski. The fresco series was the only monumental work by the designer and decorative artist Eric O. W. Ehrström, a pupil and follower of Gallen-Kallela. The series consists of eight paintings with emphatically patriotic subject matters, such as children waving flags and flowers to a regiment of soldiers marching by in a Finnish landscape. The narrative recreates the civil war as a victorious battle of the White side.⁹⁸ Even though the Kymi Corporation acquired easel paintings for its collection also from leftist artists, such as Yrjö Forsén, the "White" decorative program displayed in the vocational school powerfully propagates a right-wing political affiliation.⁹⁹

Examples of monumental art showing commitment to the other side, the leftist ideologies or the workers' movement, were rarely realised. All in all, the workers' movement was not allowed much visibility in the society before World War II. According to Erkki Anttonen, Tapio Tapiovaara, who, among his other works, illustrated leftist journals, was a lonely artist in the leftist circles of cultural, mainly literary intellectuals.¹⁰⁰ Following World War II, Tapiovaara realised a considerable number of monumental projects, especially mosaics, often in locations associated with the workers' movement.

Another committed leftist artist from the interwar period, Yrjö Forsén, even got a public painting commission in the 1920s. Forsén participated in the civil war as a messenger for the Red side, later fleeing the country and returning from his voluntary exile in 1921. Forsén worked with monumental worker and factory themes in his art, and the Tampere Workers' Association (*Tampereen työväenyhdistys*) commissioned public paintings with these subjects for the Tampere Workers' Theatre. Tampere was an important centre for textile industries, and the first two paintings, realised in 1923 for the theatre hall, depicted assorting of linen and bleaching of linen fabrics. [Image 23.] A third painting was commissioned a few years later with the subject of construction. Forsén depicted workers as foot soldiers, without dramatic elements, but the motifs themselves made the paintings radical at the time of their execution.¹⁰¹

These paintings have not often been mentioned in art historical narratives but Rolf Nummelin mentions them as a pioneering effort in creating own art for the working class in Finland.¹⁰² At the time of their execution, the paintings received mixed opinions even within the worker movement as some considered their subject too everyday for the location. The paintings were removed already in 1942, partly because of their location near the stage, partly due to a lack of appreciation towards them.¹⁰³ Currently the two first paintings are hung in the lobby of the new theatre building of the Tampere Workers' Theatre.



Image 23. Yrjö Forsén, *Pellavan lajittelu* (The sorting of flax), 1923. Oil on canvas, 258 x 440. Tampere Workers' Theatre. Later removed and currently in the new theatre building. Photo: JR 2012.

The painting competition for the Parliament House, announced in 1929 and resolved in 1930, was a significant event in the Finnish artworld: a nationally prestigious location that was assigned for monumental painting offered a unique opportunity for painters.¹⁰⁴ The new Parliament House, designed by the architect J. S. Sirén and built in 1927–31, was to indicate the greatness of the young independent nation. Liisa-Maria Hakala-Zilliacus has considered the building a representation of a national reconciliation after the civil war, as the decorative program lacks symbols of the victors.¹⁰⁵ Hakala-Zilliacus describes Sirén as a moderate conservative, who had—along most of the architects—supported the White side in the civil war. Yet, the building does not celebrate the Whites, nor does it insult the Reds.¹⁰⁶

Sirén was responsible also for the decoration of the building, and in his plans, the Plenary Hall was reserved for sculpture. The decoration of the chamber was given to Wäinö Aaltonen on the basis of a competition, and the idealised content of his allegorical nudes has been much praised.¹⁰⁷ The Room of the Grand Committee, which was assigned for a public painting, was secondary in the hierarchy of the building and not especially well suited for this purpose. Or, more precisely, the size of the planned painting was unsuitable for the architecture of the room. In a fairly small chamber with high ceiling, the mural was

to cover the whole back wall (circa 7 x 14 metres) behind the chairman's platform. In the competition call it was stated that the "architecture of the room must not suffer, but on the contrary, the painting will in one way or another emphasise it and create a centre of focus in the chamber."¹⁰⁸ In the planned scale, a monumental painting would definitely have created a centre of focus and more—it would have overwhelmed the spectator.

The competition received 37 entries. However, as was lamented in the press, it seems that many of the painters, who had been accredited in the field of public painting earlier, did not participate. They would have been recognised "if they'd struck one stroke".¹⁰⁹ Five sketches were discarded, most due to not including a required detailed sketch. However, the proposition *Suomi* (Finland) was cast aside because it did not fill the wall space and "was not related to the architecture" as the competition rules required.¹¹⁰ As Liisa Lindgren has argued, there exists a possibility for censorship behind the argument of not following the rules of an art competition.¹¹¹

The first prize was not given out since the quality of the competition entries was considered too low. Even though the jury justified its decisions largely on formal questions, the subject matters of the sketches are also revealing.¹¹² For the place of legislation, various artists proposed paintings with the theme of law or justice. However, from the White perspective the civil war had been an illegal uprising, and the Whites used legality as a central term in judging the Reds. Thus, iconography referring to law plays a small part in the decoration of the Finnish Parliament House.¹¹³ Besides law, *Kalevala* themes were offered in the competition as a national subject. Also subjects referring to the past conflict or overcoming it were submitted.

In the short evaluations of the jury, also quoted in the press, the style and execution, as well as the subject matter of the sketches were addressed. The jury considered, for example, the conflict theme of *Kohtalon hetki* (Moment of destiny) and the *Kalevala* subject of *Väinämöinen*, "less appropriate" for the locality.¹¹⁴ Importantly, the jury could not reach an agreement, and the division line was mainly formed between the artist and architect members of the jury. The architect members—who had the majority of votes—preferred the more decorative and allegorical suggestions, which did not please the artist members of the jury.¹¹⁵

The second prize, the highest prize awarded, was given out to *Navis Reipublicae* (Latin for "State ship") by Lennart Segerstråle, which he proposed to carry out as a mosaic. [Image 24.] As the name suggests, the work depicts a ship as an allegory of the state, led by a monumental, bare breasted woman, identified by the artist as Mother Finland. She is accompanied by the allegorical figures of Law and Defence. The jury considered the subject appropriate, but saw problems in the scale of the composition.¹¹⁶ The work was widely criticised in the press; the muscular woman was considered "tasteless" and the positions of the figures "pathetically artificial".¹¹⁷

Also other awarded works suggested an allegorical language. *Oikeus ja työ* (Justice and labour), a joint proposal of Eino Rapp and Eino Fagerlund (later Kauria) embodied a monumental woman, Justice, as the central figure. [Image 25.] She is holding a torch on top of the supposed location of the mural, the Parliament House. In Yrjö Ollila's *Yhteiskunta ja kaaos* (Society and chaos), Justice is leading the organised society. [Image 26.]

The newspaper critics generally scorned the level of the competition. According to Onni Okkonen, writing in *Uusi Suomi*, the decoration of the building should have been



Image 24. Lennart Segerstråle, *Navis Reipublicae*, competition sketch, 1930. Gouache, 98 x 196. Parliament's Art Collection. Photo: Simo Rista, Parliament of Finland.

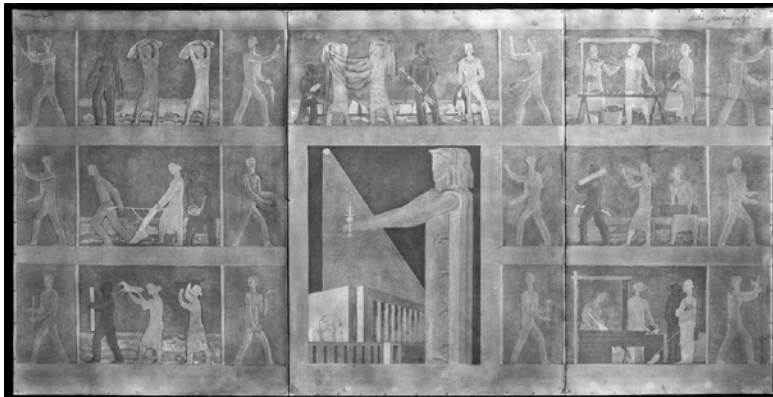


Image 25. Eino Rapp and Eino Fagerlund (Kauria), *Oikeus ja työ* (Justice and labour), competition sketch, 1930. Gouache, 100 x 198. Parliament's Art Collection. Photo: Tiina Tuukkanen, Parliament of Finland.



Image 26. Yrjö Ollila, *Yhteiskunta ja kaaos* (Society and chaos), competition sketch, 1930. Gouache, 112 x 212. Parliament's Art Collection. Photo: Simo Rista, Parliament of Finland.

allocated, without competitions, as honorary projects for the “true leaders” of their time, Wäinö Aaltonen and Akseli Gallen-Kallela. Okkonen also criticised the jury for not being acquainted with the spirit of monumental painting.¹¹⁸ Likewise, Edward Richter lamented in *Helsingin Sanomat* the fact that the “experienced men”, such as Gallen-Kallela, Järnefelt and Rissanen did not participate, and saw a general lack of both the sense of style and the selection of subject matter in sketches—many of which he calls even childish or comic.¹¹⁹

As a follow-up, a number of artists attacked the critics in *Uusi Suomi*, and the Painters’ Union suggested a second round of competition.¹²⁰ The artists argued that competitions were beneficial for the development of Finnish art: they offered a strong stimulus for the artists to “bury their heads in monumental tasks”.¹²¹ From the argumentation, it is to be understood that such tasks were considered more elevated than regular easel paintings. Also the art critic Edward Richter “warmly favoured” the arranging of another round of competition before the final decision.¹²²

None of the sketches was realised for the Parliament House, and the suggested further competition was not arranged until 1961, some months after the designer of the building, J. S. Sirén, had passed away. Besides the poor quality of the sketches, the dominance of architects in the jury was seen in the press as a main reason for the failing of the painting project.¹²³ Likely, the unrealistic expectations for the painting, combined with the sensitive political situation made the project impossible to realise. The fact that none of the paintings was realised suggests that the commissioning body considered monumental painting unable to express the values related to the building—a symbol for the national reconciliation and a monument for the independence, as Hakala-Zilliacus describes it.

During the interwar period, classicism gained an official, national position in the field of sculpture, but it was not widely employed in public painting. A main representative of the classicist form language in Finland was Yrjö Ollila, who executed allegorical murals for the Central Provincial Bank (*Maakuntain keskuspankki*) in Helsinki in 1927 and for the ceiling of the National Theatre in 1932. [Images 27 and 29.] However, also other kinds of interpretations have been made. Ulla Vihanta sees that “the aim of integrating the individual as a part of the nation and the state was reflected also in several classicist monumental paintings”, the interest towards which rose in the 1930s.¹²⁴ As an example of the trend, she mentions the *Navis Reipublicae* by Segerstråle, a sketch that was not realised. Erkki Anttonen bases his estimation on the popularity of classicism on Vihanta. Anttonen argues that in classicism, the stylistic interests of the “official body” and various artists met.¹²⁵ In sculpture, this argument holds more tightly.

Monumental paintings were, at times, used to strengthen the narratives of the Whites during the interwar period, but generally public painting dealt with lighter subjects. Paintings were commissioned for schools and for environments of leisure, but not for nationally more prestigious spaces. The genre struggled for the position of national art, which sculpture had already adopted.



Image 27. Yrjö Ollila, “*Commerce*”, 1927. Fresco, 110 x 800. Central Provincial Bank (*Maakuntain keskuspankki*). Currently a Furniture Shop, Laivurinkatu 43, Helsinki. Photo: JR 2010.

On a Lighter Tone

From an early moment in the history of Finnish public painting, also locations of leisure were decorated with public paintings. These paintings often dealt with foreign or historical subjects, adding a touch of luxury and, perhaps, a chance for escapism. They have often been understood as “decorative paintings” and not monumental, but the division between the two categories is anything but clear. The decorated venues were designed especially for the upper classes: among these premises were cafés, restaurants, banquet halls and theatre buildings since the late 19th century, and also cinemas in the early 20th century. As in other locations, the emphasis shifted towards more unique decorations in the 20th century.

With cinemas, there was a deliberate effort to raise its status with the architectural investment, from the airless and uncomfortable small theatres that had been established since 1904 to locations suited also for the upper classes. For example, the Cinema Maxim in Helsinki from 1911 had a lushly decorated interior with comfortable red plush seats, chandeliers, reliefs by Gunnar Finne and painted decorations by Carl Slotte.¹²⁶ In Hyvinkää in 1914, Jalmari Ruokokoski and assistants decorated the interiors of the cinema *Elävien kuvien teatteri* (Theatre of living pictures, later Arena), one of the first cinemas outside Helsinki. The large painting series (3 metres high and 22 metres long), painted on cardboard, playfully combined architectural elements, a frieze, and landscapes of foreign places. The landscapes opened up from between painted columns that support the frieze. [Image 28.]

These paintings were omitted in the early biographical accounts of Ruokokoski, and in the more recent ones they have been associated with fields of illustration, decorative



Image 28. Jalmari Ruokokoski, part of a decoration, 1914. Oil on cardboard, 320 x 475. Movie Theatre Arena, Hyvinkää. Currently in the Hyvinkää City Hall. Photo: Ella Tommila, Hyvinkää Art Museum.

painting or stage sets.¹²⁷ They were covered up around the 1930s, and the cinema was closed down in 1985. In 2010, the damaged paintings were restored and a part of them were relocated to the new Hyvinkää town hall, signaling a new kind of appreciation towards the previously downplayed decorations.¹²⁸

With the acquiring of public paintings, cinemas imitated the more upscale theatre venues, which had a long history of artistic decorations in Finland. The ceiling paintings of the Helsinki Swedish Theatre (*Svenska Teatern*) date from 1866 and those of the Turku Swedish Theatre (*Åbo Svenska Teatern*) from 1897.¹²⁹ The National Theatre was built in Helsinki in 1902, and a fresco painting was planned for the lobby of the building since its construction. Formulated as an important task, it was negotiated with Akseli Gallen-Kallela and a commission from him was pending until 1926. Once the project with Gallen-Kallela was cancelled, the frescoes were commissioned from Juho Rissanen, and realised in 1928. The fresco series illustrate Whitsuntide festivals (*Helkajuhlat*), a festival connected to Finnish folklore, which was considered as an origin of Finnish theatre. Rissanen did not participate in the painting of the frescoes, and the group of artists who did ended in a non-uniform result.¹³⁰

In 1932, a ceiling painting competition was arranged for the National Theatre. This was the next notable public painting competition following the one for the Parliament House. The timetable was extremely tight, as the competition was open for less than a month and there was only three months to execute the final painting. The winning sketch, *Thalian peili* (Thalia's mirror) by Yrjö Ollila was an allegorical presentation of theatre as

a mirror of life, featuring scenes of love, deception, and passion, as well as youth, family life and construction. [Image 29.] Similar to Rissanen's paintings in the lobby of the building, Ollila included portraits of famed actors to the final painting, likely based on a suggestion of the theatre.¹³¹ The employment of portraits distances the painting from a purely allegorical nature.

Eva Törnvall-Collin, who received the fourth prize in the competition for the National Theatre, was commissioned two lunette paintings for the upper lobby of the Swedish Theatre in 1937. The awarding of a woman in the field, which had been defined as an essentially masculine one, was noted in the press in 1932. Sigrid Schauman argued it would be a shame if the "inspired work" would not find use somewhere.¹³² For the Swedish Theatre, Törnvall-Collin further developed two of the themes she had employed in the competition sketch for the National Theatre, Euripides' *Medea* representing tragedy and a scene of Molière representing comedy. [Image 30.] The subjects of the major theatre paintings in Helsinki were, thus, tightly connected to the world of theatre. By contrast, the slightly earlier paintings by Yrjö Forsén for the Tampere Workers' Theatre followed more closely the ideology of the commissioning institution than the function of the building. [Image 23.]

Both the ceiling painting for the National Theatre as well as the pair of paintings for the Swedish Theatre were donated by the same patron, Salomo Wuorio. In fact, it was Wuorio's 75th birthday alongside the performance seasons of the theatre that dictated the tight timetable for the painting project of the National Theatre. Supporting public painting seems like a natural point of interest for Wuorio, who had made his wealth with decorative painting. His company had been responsible for the interior decoration of, for example, the National Theatre.¹³³

In particular during the interwar period, the café culture developed in Helsinki with the new town identity as the thriving capital of a newly independent country. Henry Ericsson decorated restaurants in Helsinki in the late 1920s according to the contemporary fashion: the "Indian Room" of the restaurant Fennia with tales of *One Thousand and One Nights*, and the "Spanish Room" with a stagnant moment on a balcony with a view of a Southern European town in the background.¹³⁴ The interior design of Café Chat Doré by Birger Carlstedt from 1929 presented European constructivism in Finland. The café did not have public paintings but, instead, a constructivist carpet and unique colour scheme.¹³⁵ Another exceptional decorative project from the same time was the painting *Tanssiva Pariisi* (Dancing Paris) by Yrjö Saarinen for the restaurant Hanhi in Hyvinkää in 1930. [Image 31.] This work has in retrospect been appreciated for its radical nature but did not meet the definitions of high art at the time of its realisation.¹³⁶

Public paintings were frequently realised by artists with training as decorative artists. For example Eino Kauria (born Fagerlund) was a productive public artist, who painted murals for schools, commercial venues and restaurants from the late 1920s to 1950s.¹³⁷ [Image 32.] He worked with various architects in designing colour schemes, and executed decorative paintings for emphatically modern buildings: golden eagles for the *Lasipalatsi* ("Glass Palace", 1935) complex by Viljo Revell, and together with Alvar Aalto an abstract mural painting to the mortuary, "The Rose Cellar", of the Paimio Sanatorium (1933).¹³⁸ Also Henry Ericsson executed painted decorations, besides for restaurants, for private residences, and, notably, for the *International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts* in Paris in 1925. He was awarded in the public painting competitions for the Parliament



Left: Image 29. Yrjö Ollila, *Thalian peili* (Thalia's mirror), 1932. Ceiling painting, diameter 950. The National Theatre, Helsinki. Photo: JR 2006.

Right: Image 30. Eva Törnqvist-Collin, *Euripides Medea* (Euripides' Medea), 1937. Oil on cardboard. The Swedish Theatre, Helsinki. Photo: JR 2010.



Image 31. Yrjö Saari, *Tanssiva Pariisi* (Dancing Paris), 1930. Distemper on canvas, 122 x 292. Restaurant Hanhi, Hyvinkää. Currently in Karin and Carl-Eric Sonck Collection, Hyvinkää Art Museum. Photo: Hannu Salmi, Hyvinkää Art Museum.



Image 32. Eino Kauria, “*Underwater*”, 1936. Mural painting, 350 x 590. Aleksis Kivi School, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2010.

House and the National Theatre.¹³⁹ Despite recognition in public competitions or works in prestigious locations, the public works by artists educated as decorative painters have had little recognition in art history.

Often the environments created for leisure called for lighter subjects, and expression that lingered closer to applied arts than heavy monumentality. Depending on their position towards new artistic trends, they have, at times, later been included in Finnish art historical narratives: *Dancing Paris* by Yrjö Saارينen is seen as a key work of Finnish expressionism, and Ruokokoski’s cinema decorations have been relocated in the Hyvinkää City Hall. As an avant-garde project, the interior design of Chat Doré has been recognised in Finnish art history as a part of the narrative of the development of Finnish modernism. These are, nevertheless, exceptions to the rule, while a majority of the public painting production has had very little recognition.

In locations of leisure, public paintings as well as other architectural investments were used to elevate the status of the location. On the other hand, some locations of leisure had and have even national importance, such as the National Theatre, which was among the most prestigious buildings in which public paintings were realised during the interwar period. For such premises, paintings were sought from valued artists, and the artworks have been addressed as high art in art historical discourses. The dual position of public painting in locations of leisure exemplifies the wavering position of the genre on the border of high art and decoration. Not only the artworks themselves, but especially the prestige of the locations as well as the position of the executing artists in art history have determined the categorisation and evaluation of Finnish public paintings.

National Character for Art

The “national character” has often been seen as a crucial feature in defining the high status of a public painting. The national character of art, however, has referred to different things, also within the Finnish context, depending on the current political situation and who has defined the “national”. Typically, national has been defined as a separation of others through negation. In the late 19th and early 20th century, national art in Finland depicted subjects emphasising and justifying the national existence, separate from Russia; in the newly independent country, national art was understood as supposedly independent from foreign influences. The juxtaposition of the colourist post-impressionism of the *Septem* group and the sombre expressionism of the *November group* as “international” and “national” art, well serviced this goal. From the late 19th to the mid-20th century, public art was one of the arenas, which was to explicitly manifest the national character, and it was for this reason a very charged field.

The interwar period in Finland has often been examined from the point of view of division between “national” and “international” tendencies in art. Indeed, the polarisation of the society did not escape the artworld, and the “other side” was easy to blame for what was wrong in contemporary art. Onni Okkonen and Ludvig Wennervirta, the leading authorities in the Finnish interwar artworld, shared a nationalist, right-wing ideology with slightly different emphases. “Bolshevist” was a commonly used derogatory label for international modernism.¹⁴⁰ The art critics associated with the left, such as Antero Rinne, and also the Swedish speaking art critics were more inclined to accept the “international” modernism, and not as interested in the question of national in art as Okkonen and Wennervirta.¹⁴¹ Both the Swedish speaking liberal circles and leftists considered foreign influences necessary for the development of art, while the right-wing was afraid they would destroy the distinctive national character of Finnish art.¹⁴² Nevertheless, the ideal of national art was an international trend in itself, and the means for creating national art were very similar in different countries.

In the early 1930s, Finland was going through a harsh economic crisis, as the global recession was felt severely also in Finland. The whole interwar period was characterised by instability in the economy and labour market. Paradoxically, it was also a period of notably high economic growth.¹⁴³ The recession was felt most brutally in the daily lives of the people, since during the depression, the economic policy measures were geared more towards promoting export or investment than supporting private households.¹⁴⁴ In the United States, artists were employed also on relief basis during the Depression of the 1930s. In Finland, the “state of emergency” among the artists was recognised in public discussions, but the authorities took few actions towards supporting artists.¹⁴⁵

The National Council for Visual Arts (*Valtion kuvaamataidelausakunta*), which was responsible for state art acquisitions, considered the financial status of artists a priority of action. However, it functioned as an advisory committee for the Ministry of Education and had no budget of its own and, thus, acted with limited possibilities. The council suggested in the early 1930s that the state acquisitions should be justified with both the artistic quality of an artwork and the poor financial status of the artist.¹⁴⁶ In 1932, a special committee was composed with the mission of acquiring art for the state.

During the interwar period, the activities of the Art for Schools Association continued, but the awards in the painting competitions as well as the size of the realised paintings were rather small. Venny Soldan-Brofeldt had left the association in 1920, as she thought it had not fulfilled its mission.¹⁴⁷ The chairman of the association changed every few years until Uno Alanko took charge in 1930 and continued in the position until 1957.¹⁴⁸

During Alanko's presidency, a closer attention was paid to the national character of monumental paintings. In February 1935, Alanko expressed his visions of art's role in the society in a radio speech. He claimed that the Finnish nation suffered from the lack of spirituality, as well as humbleness and modesty, the greatest of virtues. This could be corrected, however, with the presence of art, especially in schools, through which the aesthetic abilities of the nation would rise. According to Alanko,

“contemporary materialism, that is, trust only in external success and power, produces only growing greed and dissatisfaction, whereas the cultivation of inner aesthetic values creates peace and happiness.”¹⁴⁹

Alanko encouraged municipalities and the state to allocate money for art, and suggested that the board of the Art for Schools Association could function as a board of expertise governing the use of this money. Besides original artworks, Alanko pleaded for copies of classical artworks, which would not only enhance the understanding of art among the public and school children, but also encourage artists to develop to “a more spiritual direction”.¹⁵⁰

The first competition during Alanko's presidency was arranged for the Finnish Normal Lyceum (*Suomalainen Normaalityseo*) in Helsinki in 1932. In the competition call, the Art for Schools Association established the subject as “otherwise free, except that it should be national and proper for youth in school age.”¹⁵¹ The competition attracted 106 entries and two paintings were realised: *Meren viljaa* (Crop of the sea) by Anton Lindfors and *Sukset* (Skis) by Alvar Cawén. [Images 33–34.] Only the commissioning of Lindfors's painting has been recorded in the annual report of the association, and the documents do not reveal the procedure of the second commission from Cawén.¹⁵²

Lindfors's painting is an image of a fishing community, arranged as a monumental composition with the angular forms created by sails, fishing nets, and islets. Cawén's work shows boys preparing their skis on a frozen lake or sea; a large group of youngsters in rather vacant surroundings, similar to *Laulavat lapset* (Singing children, 1929), an earlier commission he had received from the association for Kaisaniemi School in Helsinki.¹⁵³

The art critic Edvard Richter applauded Lindfors's composition and considered it more developed than that of the second-prize winning Cawén. However, in his view, Cawén's subject, boys outing in a winter landscape, was even more pleasing for the school youth.¹⁵⁴ In the final painting, Lindfors developed the work towards more “monumental”, clearer composition and more reduced background. He also added a new element to the painting: to the middle of an all-male crowd a mother carrying a child—the emblematic pair in public art with a laden symbolic content. At the unveiling of Lindfors's painting, Uno Alanko emphasised the long-time commitment of the artist in studying the herring fishing communities on the Finnish coastline, thus, rooting the work in Finnish reality.¹⁵⁵

The Alfred Kordelin Foundation had donated 10,000 marks (circa 12,000 euros) in 1932 for the Normal Lyceum painting project, but on discovering that the Art for



Image 33. Anton Lindfors, *Meren viljaa* (Crop of the sea), 1934. Oil on canvas, 180 x 246. The Normal Lyceum of Helsinki. Photo: Timo Huvilinna, Helsinki University Museum.



Image 34. Alvar Cawén, *Sukset* (Skis), 1934. Oil on canvas, 179 x 246. The Normal Lyceum of Helsinki. Photo: Timo Huvilinna, Helsinki University Museum.

Schools Association had received 35,000 marks (circa 42,000 euros) from the Ministry of Education, the foundation pondered on cancelling the grant. The foundation had named its own representatives for the jury of the competition but their inclusion had not been in the plans of the association.¹⁵⁶ The grant was not, in the end, cancelled, but when the Art for Schools Association applied a grant from the Kordelin Foundation in 1933, it did not receive one. Instead, the Kordelin Foundation decided to arrange its own competition for the same location that the Art for Schools Association had suggested in its grant application: the Finnish Lyceum (*Suomalainen lyseo*) in Helsinki.

Alvar Cawén was a member of the art division of the Kordelin Foundation and given the task to prepare rules for this competition.¹⁵⁷ And, as the Art for Schools Association justly criticised, their competition rules were copied almost word for word. Thus, also the Kordelin competition, held in 1935, sought for works that were “national and proper for youth in school age.”¹⁵⁸

Kordelin Foundation was an important agent in distributing grants to artists in the interwar period. It had also arranged three art competitions between 1926 and 1928. The establishing of the practice was justified, among other factors, with the claim that since “no one executed larger commissions”, artists did not “venture” to make larger works, for which reason the Finnish art suffered.¹⁵⁹ Competitions were created specifically for supporting artists, as the winning artworks remained in artists’ possession and were not taken in exchange of the award.¹⁶⁰ Already in 1929, however, the foundation considered that the competitions had not fulfilled the expectations, and the arranging of competitions was stopped.¹⁶¹ The competition of 1935 differed from the earlier competitions as a site-specific monumental project, the practice of which was copied from the Art for Schools Association. In 1936, the Alfred Kordelin Foundation arranged a competition for outdoor sculpture for the yard of Käpylä School, and in 1938, a monumental painting competition for the SYK School in Helsinki (*Helsingin suomalainen yhteiskoulu*).¹⁶²

Tyko Sallinen, “the noble savage” of the Finnish artworld, won the Finnish Lyceum competition of 1935 with the sketch *X–Z*, and got to execute the work. The painting, referred to with more descriptive titles *Lepoheti* (Rest) and *Nuotion ääressä* (By the fire), was completed in 1936.¹⁶³ [Image 35.] The same year, Sallinen executed a public painting for the Women’s Hospital in Helsinki (*Naistenklinikka*), funded by the Ministry of Education.¹⁶⁴ [Image 36.] Tyko Sallinen was an expressionist who had in the 1910s painted a fierce and rough image of Finnishness. But, despite controversies, Sallinen was by the 1920s generally accepted as the new national painter after Gallen-Kallela.¹⁶⁵

In 1929, when the esteemed artist had turned fifty, the National Council of Visual Art had approached the Ministry of Education with a plea for granting 50,000 marks (circa 14,400 euros) to commission a monumental painting from Sallinen to the Helsinki Railway Station. The plea was signed by the Finnish Artists’ Association (*Suomen taiteilijaseura*) and the Art School of the Finnish Art Society, and validated by referring to the current lean times and the high importance of monumental painting. The council argued that since it is not easy for artists to gain work during “present conditions” and Sallinen had never gained a public monumental commission, to which his talents closely suggested, the commission was one of a high priority.¹⁶⁶ The project fell through, but was returned to in 1934, with the new location of the Women’s Hospital. Now, besides the earlier mentioned agents of the artworld, also the architect of the building as well as the chief doctor of the hospital explicated a desire for a painting by Sallinen.¹⁶⁷



Image 35. Tyko Sallinen, *Lepohetki (Rest)*, 1936. Oil on canvas, 172 x 250. Finnish Lyceum, now Ressu School, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2010.



Image 36. Tyko Sallinen, "By the fire", 1936. Oil, 165 x 225. Women's Hospital, HUS, Helsinki. Photo: JR 2009.

The two public paintings by Sallinen are only slightly reformulated versions of the same theme. Both paintings depict a moment of lighting a campfire in a waterfront landscape. The figures are modestly dressed and they are emphatically solemn, creating a sombre atmosphere for the event of outing. The landscape is close to identical in both paintings, and so is one of the figures, a seated young man. Yet, while the painting for the boys' school featured a group of seven boys, in the painting for the Women's Hospital, four girls, or young women, replace five of the boys. The composition is similar, but in the Women's Hospital painting, the figures are slightly larger and the composition more condensed. Also the colours are brighter.

In addition to the national landscape, the depiction of the people can be seen as nationally oriented—the modest and solemn figures suggesting national virtues. And whereas Sallinen had earlier in his career created controversies with his depictions of the Finnish people with “Mongol-features”, these individuals imagined the “Finnish race” in a more pleasing way: they are blond, well proportioned, and all identical.

In *Suomen ja maailman taide* (Art in Finland and the world, 1985), Markku Valkonen explains the supposed lack of interest towards public painting in the interwar years referring also to stylistic reasons: Valkonen considers the purity of race in Wäinö Aaltonen's sculpture distant enough from the “Mongol-features” presented in painting and, thus, more appropriate for public art.¹⁶⁸ Sallinen's public paintings are, however, not discussed in this context. As the approach in Sallinen's public paintings in the 1930s was, indeed, very different from the “wildness” he gained his reputation with, these paintings have most often been excluded even from his biographical narratives.¹⁶⁹ In his biography on Sallinen from 1960, Sakari Saarikivi does mention a triptych Sallinen painted for the Freemasons in 1927 (mistakenly as being from 1930s) and later religious monumental works, and states that “while the strong passion of colour does not support them, their weakness stands out easily.”¹⁷⁰ The later years of Sallinen, public commissions included, have been omitted as conventional and they have been seen to manifest the artist losing his strength.

In Oulu, a fresco project for the new elementary school, initiated in 1934 and realised by Juho Mäkelä in 1936, created wide local attention, laden with national sentiment and local pride. An article in the local *Kaleva* newspaper on the unveiling of the painting opened with the flying of the blue-cross flag, and ended with the singing of the national anthem.¹⁷¹ The commission was initiated by the Superintendent of Elementary Schools Aarno Saarensivu, with this very artist, Oulu's “own boy” in mind. The Art for Schools Association was approached for funding, with a favourable answer, but the condition of opening the commission for “outsiders” through a national competition seemed unbearable for the commissioners. Eventually, the City Board of Oulu decided to fund the painting, testifying, according to Saarensivu, to the cultural will in the town.¹⁷²

The subject of the painting *Koivu ja tähti* (The birch and the star), is from a famous tale by Zachris Topelius, first published in Swedish in 1852. The superintendent Saarensivu, emphasising the historical connections to Oulu within the story, suggested this motif for the artist.¹⁷³ In the story, two Finnish children, a sister and brother, are kidnapped and taken to Russia during the Russian occupation of Finland in the 1710s. They decide to return home, of which they only remember a birch in the yard, and a star, which shines above it. They are guided home by two little birds, which turn out to be their dead siblings. The narrative emphasises homesickness, love of Fatherland, and trust in God. In Mäkelä's painting, the



Image 37. Juho Mäkelä, *Koivu ja tähti* (The birch and the star), 1936. Fresco, 237 x 301. Oulu Central School, now the Central Health Centre. Oulu Art Museum. Photo: JR 2010.

modestly clothed children have arrived at their home yard, and look up to the two little birds on the branches of the birch. The two white crosses in front refer to the dead sisters. The hut in the background is humble but impeccably neat, as is the yard, and a bright star shines above the hut. [Image 37.]

The local press lauded the beauty of the painting: “its romantically mysterious atmosphere could not help but to enchant the viewers.”¹⁷⁴ It was seen as “effective for children,” and to create a “genuine effect” also for the adult audiences, who would “out of necessity” remember the story from their childhood. The widely known character of the story—and its continuing position as such—was taken for granted. In the story, the parents are overjoyed to receive two of their children back alive. However, the fact that one writer interpreted the two white crosses as the tombs of the parents did not hinder him/her to see the children as “thankfully humble”.¹⁷⁵

Above all, the symbolic content of the painting was highly appreciated: it was seen to fix to the minds of children, “the two basic guidelines in life, love of Fatherland, and fear of God”. It was hoped that the painting would guide the school children “to the right path in life”.¹⁷⁶ Saarensivu articulated the relation between local and national (and even global) in his speech for the association of teachers in Oulu in 1936. He hoped that the image would

“educate the rising generation to understand the beauty and greatness of the home locality and deepen that sentiment to grasp our whole great Fatherland and through it, the whole humankind. Thus shall the noble ideals, allegories of which the birch and the star in the story are, be fulfilled.”¹⁷⁷

The generational procession and the “eternal” character of the work were emphasised: “tens and hundreds of thousands little ones of Oulu” would see the painting, “hopefully as long as the sun revolves.”¹⁷⁸

In the 1930s, the hope of creating national art through monumental painting was articulated in art critics and in competition calls, and schools were also at this moment important locations for public paintings. National art was typically strived for with conventional measures such as depictions of familiar landscapes, customary character of people, and local, familiar activities. These paintings have not been considered interesting from the point of view of the development of Finnish art, and they have most often been omitted from the art historical literature. Interestingly, even the works by acclaimed artists have been neglected in art historical literature: the not-so-radical monumental paintings by the “noble savage” Tyko Sallinen have not been included in his biographical narratives or in those of public art. By the 1920s, the official narratives had fixed the position of Sallinen, and monumental commissions did not fit to his oeuvre, nor did they qualify for the overviews of Finnish art history. Therefore, it must be concluded that public painting of the 1930s has largely failed in one of its main objectives: it did not create national art, since it has not been accepted as high art by the art historians.

“Art for the People”

The national importance of monumental commissions was articulated in art discussions in the 1930s, and examples for supporting art were found in the neighbouring Sweden and Norway. A significant event for the Finnish public painting enthusiasm was an exhibition of contemporary Norwegian monumental painting in April 1937 in Kunsthalle (*Taidehalli*), Helsinki. The exhibition inspired wishes that similar measures on promoting public art as in Norway could and should be taken also in Finland.

The exhibition showed photos and sketches for monumental paintings by eight artists, with the emphasis on the production of the “fresco-brothers”, Alf Rolfsen, Axel Revold, and Per Krogh. In Norway, there had been numerous large-scale public painting commissions since the early 1920s, and in Finland, the Norwegian example was taken up as an example of how high artistic achievements can be reached via public art commissioning.¹⁷⁹ The Finnish painter Lennart Segerstråle had close connections to the Norwegian mural painters and his monumental expression resonated especially with that of Rolfsen. His personal connections to the Norwegian painters have been credited for making the 1937 exhibition possible.¹⁸⁰

Lennart Segerstråle was one of the central figures of mid-20th century public painting; an artist with a specific interest towards the genre. Segerstråle worked with glass painting especially during his early career, and executed a large number of public paintings, often as frescoes, until the 1970s. He specialised, in particular, to altar paintings.¹⁸¹ He had studied with the lead of the Danish master Joakim Skovgaard, and visited Italy several times, finding inspiration in the works of masters of the early Renaissance.¹⁸²

Segerstråle received several significant commissions in the 1930s. An important contact was the sawmill industrialist Gösta Serlachius, a notable patron for the arts, who

commissioned a secco for the library of his home, the Joenniemi Manor, and three frescoes for the G. A. Serlachius Company's Head Office in Mänttä in 1935–37. Serlachius exhibited the works to visitors who might be interested in commissioning public paintings, and actively lobbied Segerstråle also to Risto Ryti, the then president of the Bank of Finland.¹⁸³ Serlachius can, then, be at least partly credited for the commission of a fresco work from Segerstråle to the Bank of Finland in 1938, realised in 1943, which significantly defined the genre of public painting in the mid-century.

The Serlachius series incorporated a number of themes: for the library, Segerstråle created a large ceiling painting under the title *Kirjallisuuden synty* (The birth of literature) and for the corporate spaces a forest scene with elks and, as its pair, a scene where a man is tilling the earth with a large shovel. The last mentioned painting is also a family scene, with a mother taking care of both children and infant sheep. A long frieze depicting the history of the company, realised in 1937, is placed above these paintings.¹⁸⁴

At the time, in the summer of 1937, mural painting was at the centre of focus in Paris, at the International Exhibition. *Guernica* by Picasso, painted for the Spanish pavilion, is the best known and one of the few surviving examples of public painting from the exhibition, but also the Italian, Soviet, French, and German pavilions featured large-scale murals and mosaics. Even more dominant was the abundant use of photomurals.¹⁸⁵ In Finland, however, it was not the modernist mural, let alone photomontage, which caused discussion, but the Norwegian national monumental painting project, which could be adapted to Finland.

In January 1938, a large article dealing with monumental painting was published in the newspaper *Karjalainen*. The article referred to the Norwegian example and asked artists and leading authorities on art, such as Onni Okkonen, Ludvig Wennervirta, Torsten Stjernschantz and Uuno Alanko, whether the revival of monumental painting was necessary in Finland, whether it was possible, and what measures should be taken to achieve this. The experts seemed unanimous that there was potential among the artists but not enough opportunities; especially the state and the Church were demanded to take action in commissioning monumental paintings for their premises. “Mere easel painting means degeneracy in art, monumentality the rise of art,” declaimed Wennervirta.¹⁸⁶ Bertel Hintze, the director of Kunsthalle, offered practical solutions: a percentage of building costs should be allocated to art—as had recently been laid down in Sweden—as well as a yearly budget of 200,000 marks (65,700 euros).¹⁸⁷

In November of the same year, the newspaper *Uusi Suomi* published a petition, signed by the then president of Finland, Kyösti Kallio, alongside the Prime Minister A. K. Cajander and 33 other political, cultural and economic leaders of the country. In the petition, they pleaded economic leaders of the country to offer work opportunities for artists when constructing new buildings. In this way, the petition stated, they could “guarantee the full-bodied decoration of the buildings, and at the same time give Finnish art the possibility to fulfil its greatest social function,” which was the moral uplifting of the people. According to the petition, Finnish art must “belong to the whole nation,” and artists should be allowed to participate in “patriotic creation work.”¹⁸⁸ The petition, which was signed by several government ministers, stated that “following the example of other civilised countries,” the government had left the parliament a proposal on the establishing of a Percent for Art program.¹⁸⁹ The Finnish Parliament accepted the proposal in 1939, and the government reinforced it in 1949.¹⁹⁰ It has, however, never been put to effect on a national level.

The petition in *Uusi Suomi* was directed especially to the corporate world, asking them to participate in the joint cause of “patriotic creation work”. Among those who signed were important industrial and corporate patrons, such as the industrialist Gösta Serlachius and Risto Ryti, the head of the Bank of Finland; Mauri Honkajuuri, the chief executive of KOP Bank, Amos Anderson, the newspaper and publishing house owner, Hans von Rettig, the Turku based tobacco and shipping company owner, Frithjof Tikanoja, the wholesale business owner from Vaasa, and Emil Aaltonen, the Tampere based industrialist. These patrons showed commitment to supporting art and culture also otherwise: for example Serlachius, Andersson, Tikanoja, and Aaltonen were significant art collectors whose collections are currently shown in art museums bearing their names. Gösta Serlachius established a foundation bearing his name already in 1933 to look after his extensive art collection.¹⁹¹

It is noteworthy that among those political figures, who signed the petition, were both right-wing and Social Democratic politicians, as Social Democrats had entered into the Finnish Government the year before.¹⁹² However, twelve of those who signed the petition participated also in the markedly right-wing committee established for the erection of an equestrian statue for C. G. E. Mannerheim, the commander of the White forces in the civil war, at the “20th memorial year of the Freedom War” in 1938.¹⁹³ The statue was to depict the White General riding his horse into Helsinki as a celebration of the victory in the civil war, and honour the man “who could bring together all the patriotic circles”.¹⁹⁴ According to *Ilta-Sanomat*, the monument celebrating the “victorious Commander-in-Chief” would, at the same time, be a monument for independence.¹⁹⁵ In the used terminology, there is little that would refer to the unification project of the nation. The monument was not realised then, but the project was re-launched in 1951.

In May 1938, the National Council of Visual Arts addressed the Ministry of Education with a lament of the poor state of the official public art in Finland. It demanded actions in arranging opportunities for artists, which would educate the “senses and style” of the public. The National Council defended the national importance of art:

“Without efforts, sacrifices and endeavours we will remain in artistic backwaters. However, a small nation cannot afford to neglect its civilising missions, which give it the only possibility to compete with the mightier nations.”¹⁹⁶

In the matter of competing nations, the National Council did not fail to mention the Norwegian exhibition, or the legislative actions taken in Sweden and Denmark. As a practical matter, it suggested the allocation of 100,000 marks (32,900 euros) to the decoration of the new Post Office Building in Helsinki.¹⁹⁷

In the last years of the 1930s, various public painting projects were started and partly completed. In 1938, Lennart Segerstråle executed two large paintings for a clubhouse in Fiskars as a commission of the Fiskars Factories, and received the commission from the Bank of Finland.¹⁹⁸ Also in 1938, the City of Helsinki declared a competition for the Kivelä Hospital, attracting over a hundred proposals.¹⁹⁹ Lassi Tokkola won the competition and got to realise the painting, which stands out in the field of Finnish public painting as a rather serious religious subject, or, as the pseudonym “E” calls it in *Uusi Suomi*, a “mural for a



Image 38. Lassi Tokkola, *Kristus parantaa ramman* (The Christ healing a crippled), 1939. Oil on canvas, 149 x 220. Kivelä Hospital, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2009.



Image 39. Aino von Boehm, *Nuoruuden aika* (The age of youth), 1939. SYK School, Helsinki.²⁰¹ Photo: JR 2010.

burial chapel”.²⁰⁰ [Image 38.] The arranging of the competition was a notable act but the end result disappointing.

Some projects were stopped as the war began. Aino von Boehm, who won the competition of the Alfred Kordelin Foundation for the SYK School in 1938, died in the first bombings of Helsinki in 1939. Petja Hovinheimo suggests that the painting was not entirely finished at that time.²⁰² The painting was nevertheless hung in the school. [Image 39.] Arne Niinivirta, who died young on the front, has been recorded in the canon of Finnish art as “one of the most talented monumental painters” of the time.²⁰³ He had won the painting competition for the new cemetery chapel by Erik Bryggman in Turku in 1939, but did not live to realise the project.

It is safe to assume that these projects were influenced by the Norwegian exhibition and the on-going discussion about the importance of public art in the society, but the war slowed down the commissions. Some projects were initiated also during the war years, and the commissioning accelerated in the latter half of the 1940s. Importantly, an ideological basis was laid at this moment.

Public paintings were created in a variety of locations throughout the first half of the 20th century but a large part of this production has not been included in art historical narratives. From the isolated public commissions with historical subjects in the early 19th century to the monuments to the “fathers of the nation” and the high tide of heroic Young Finnish public painting, Finnish public art was emphatically defined as a national project. In the early 20th century, corporations as well as the Art for Schools Association held the national public painting project dear, and it was continued with new enthusiasm during the postwar years.

The “national” in public art is not manifested through a specific style, but in different times, different means of expression have been considered national—from the heroic symbolism of Gallen-Kallela to the expressionism of the *November group*. Often, the national has been the dominating trend in opposition to the new waves.²⁰⁴ Public art was created in Finland in the late 19th and early 20th century as a genre, which carries national values, and through which these national values can be justified. The role of the public was that of the passive recipients, targets of the civilising process.

As a consequence of the national orientation of the Finnish artworld and art history, experimenting with new styles was not necessarily well received among the most influential art critics. It is not coincidental that the part of public painting production, which most thoroughly has been omitted from art historical writing, is the part that does not support the national narrative of public art—such as the post-impressionist public paintings, and the more decorative, “lighter” works in environments of leisure.

The low appreciation of much of the interwar public painting is further contrasted with the celebration of the early public works of the national masters. These artists were generally referred to in the 1920s and 1930s when more significant public commissions were discussed. As late as in 1928 Akseli Gallen-Kallela and his son Jorma reproduced with small revisions the Paris World Fair frescoes from 1900 for the entrance hall of the Finnish National Museum in Helsinki.

The Finnish postwar public painting was created on a basis that had been laid in the 19th century. Both the ideologies on which the production built on, and the practices of commissioning were established in the early 20th century. These paintings had the possibility

of becoming great art—to which they were compared—but they were also in danger of falling into the category of decoration, non-art. And, importantly, they had the possibility of cultivating the nation.

Chapter Four

PUBLIC PAINTING IN THE RECONSTRUCTION

The Creation of National Unity

A major dividing line in the 20th century European history writing has been World War II. For Finland, the warfaring began with a devastating war against the Soviet Union, and ended with a battle against the former ally, Germany. Furthermore, following the war, the efforts continued with the industrial production shipped to the Soviet Union as war reparation payments. The wars created a vast demand of memorial monuments, and a more indirect call for public painting.

When the Winter War against the Soviet Union broke out in 1939, only twenty years had passed since the civil war, and the memories of the civil war blended in many ways to the new narratives of war. From the Whites' perspective, the Winter War was considered the second war of independence. The earlier fight for freedom was now completed, since the aggressor was the country from which Finland had gained its independence. However, during the Winter War, the Reds were fighting alongside the Whites and needed to be included in the society; from this perspective, the victims of war were translated as redeemers of the earlier division of the nation.¹

The White side had sought for a unification of the nation since the 1920s, but on their own terms. In the end, what was needed for the creation of a new understanding of national unification was a war against foreign aggressor. The so-called "Spirit of the Winter War" is still used to refer to the Finnish nation as united and uncompromising.² The narrative on how the nation united has been extensively written into Finnish history, and formulated as a basis for Finnish national sentiment. The art historian Aimo Reitala has seen in the depiction of work in Finnish art evidence on how the nation grew together in the war years.³ The theme of unification is also suggested in a number of postwar public paintings.

In the Finnish national narratives, the Winter War (*talvisota*, 1939–40) has been reminisced as a heroic war, in which the small but persevering nation defended itself gloriously against its great aggressor. The weary Continuation War (*jatkosota*, 1941–44) has created more troubled narratives due to the German alliance and invasion of the Finnish army on the Soviet soil. The remembrance of the War of Lapland (*Lapin sota*, 1944–45) has been problematic especially since the Finnish troops had to fight against the former ally, Germany.⁴ The Continuation War and the War of Lapland have, thus, in public remembrance

often been grouped together with the heroic narratives of the Winter War. Also, despite losing both the Winter and Continuation Wars against the Soviet Union, the end of the war has in the Finnish national discourse been formulated into a “successful defence”.⁵

The emphasising of the separate nature of Finnish struggle in World War II and the noble character of Finnish warfare has served an explicit national agenda in creating a heroic national image—similarly to other countries. In the Soviet Union, World War II is known as the Great Patriotic War, which started from Hitler’s Operation Barbarossa in 1941. The Winter War and its dead have been completely absent from the official Soviet narrative.⁶

To signal the newly found national unity after the end of the Winter War, the annual celebration for the White victory ceased in 1940. Instead, a commemorative day for all Finnish war victims was established. The moment also marked the first time that the Reds were allowed to commemorate their losses in the civil war with monuments. Allowing the erection of monuments was a gesture of giving the Reds back their legitimacy as citizens. In return, at the moment of external threat, they needed to put the past behind them; the unanimity speech was the new official narrative for the nation.⁷

However, the process of commemorating the Reds proved to be complicated. The terminology and iconography used in White monuments could not be used. As the Whites had claimed terms such as “fatherland” and “liberty” in their memorials, the phrase “fallen for their conviction” was introduced in reference to civil war victims from the Reds.⁸ Furthermore, as Liisa Lindgren has argued, most Finnish sculptors had participated in the production of White monuments and could not be convincingly employed in designing monuments for the Reds. As a result of this, and also of economic issues, much of the Red memorial production was executed at commercial workshops. The common iconography included flags and a tree cut in two by lightning. In more complex memorials, mothers and children were depicted with men carrying torches and flags.⁹

Memorial art may be the most obvious, but it is not the only means of using art in the service of a war-faring nation. Artists were employed as “Information troops’ drawers” (*TK-piirtäjä*) with the task of documenting the front. During the Continuation War, as a part of the ceded Karelia was occupied by the Finnish Army, officers were recruited to study, document and protect the cultural heritage of the area. The aim was to familiarise the Finns with the heritage, and to justify the occupation; to position the Finnish army as a protector of cultural heritage.¹⁰ In this project, Karelian icon paintings were made agents in justifying a nationalist agenda much in the same way as medieval churches earlier. Bertel Hintze, art historian and the director of Helsinki Kunsthalle, participated in the Karelian project, and found in local icon paintings evidence of a tradition distinct from the Russian already since the 16th century.¹¹

The most prominent icons collected from Karelia were gathered to an exhibition in Kunsthalle under the title *Taiteensuojelua sodan aikana* (Protecting art during war). Four days before the scheduled opening, in January 1944, the Finnish Commander-in-Chief C. G. Mannerheim and the Foreign Minister Henrik Ramsay ordered the cancelling of the exhibition, as the peace negotiations with the Soviet Union had already begun. The catalogue had already been printed in Finnish, Swedish, and German, and, as Kari Kotkavaara has shown, the exhibition was nevertheless opened, but in silence.¹²

In the preface of the exhibition catalogue, the young art historian Lars Pettersson suggested a high significance for the icons in the Finnish art history, and promised their future return to their original locations.¹³ The outcome of the war being what it was, the icons were returned to the Soviet Union, where they were musealised.¹⁴ As a consequence of the failed project, the subject of icons was met with an official silence in Finland. Their study did not become “the greatest task of the history of the Finnish civilisation,” as Bertel Hintze had estimated in 1942.¹⁵

Following the war, many troubled issues faced official silence. However, despite the widely spread unanimity speech, the earlier memories of division did not suddenly disappear. In 1954, the monumental history painting *Mannerheim esikuntineen Vehmaisissa 1918* (Mannerheim and his headquarters in Vehmainen in 1918) by the Finnish artist Antti Favén was bought from Sweden to Finland by a banking company, which formulated the acquisition as a “patriotic act”.¹⁶ The bank donated the painting to the Finnish Union of Officers, who then placed it in the Officers’ Club in Helsinki, now housing the restaurant Katajanokan Kasino.

The painting features Mannerheim in a fur coat inspecting the scenery after a battle in Vehmainen, Tampere, during the civil war. The industrial town of Tampere was, during the civil war, a markedly “Red city”, and the location for some of its bloodiest battles.¹⁷ Showing Mannerheim as a victorious leader in Tampere was and is, thus, a laden image. Despite the position of Mannerheim as the Commander-in-Chief of the Finnish army during the Winter and Continuation Wars, and the President of the Republic in 1944–46, the discussion around this painting suggests how the memory of Mannerheim as the leader of the White forces did not wear off.¹⁸

The painting is dated 1918–40, and according to the newspaper *Uusi Suomi*, it was “lost to Sweden” during the war—as the artist Favén lived there. In many newspaper articles, the painting was treated as national property, which was now returned to Finland according to the “last wishes” of the artist who had passed away in 1948.¹⁹ At the unveiling ceremony of the painting, members of the government and military, as well as those of Mannerheim’s headquarters were present, illustrating the continuing reinforcement of the White memories even in the 1950s.

Likewise the equestrian monument for Mannerheim by Aimo Tukiainen, unveiled in 1960, suggested the controversial position of Mannerheim. At the end of the 1930s, an equestrian monument had been planned for the “White General”. In the postwar discussion, the monument was presented as a national, unifying symbol, and White terminology was avoided. Nevertheless, it was placed at a site, which connects it to the celebration of the White victory in 1918, between the main post office and the Parliament House (and, since 1996, Kiasma Art Museum). Even though officially commemorating Mannerheim as the Commander-in-Chief and the head of the nation, the monument also celebrates Mannerheim as the White General.²⁰

In the war memorial production during the postwar years, a noticeable turn was made away from the White monuments. Classicism, which had been employed in the White war memorials, was abandoned, and more realist approach was seen to fit the new democratic ideals. Since the Finnish fallen in World War II were transported to and buried in the graveyards of their own home parishes, war memorials were needed even in the smallest municipalities. The lost war created, however, difficult positions for commemorative art:

artists had to resolve how to create a monument that is not victorious, yet maintaining its glorifying nature.²¹ Also, importantly, a monument by the losing side must not offend the victors.

The Finnish World War II memorial monuments often featured heavily built common people on a low pedestal; they are easily accessible both symbolically and literally. The pietà motif was frequently used. In addition, soldiers were often depicted in groups of two or three, emphasising the common struggle, “brothers in arms”, and creating a contrast to the sole allegorical soldier of the White monuments.²² Riitta Kormano has suggested that the language developed for the Red memorials set an example for the commemoration of the lost wars against the Soviet Union: the lack of uniforms and the depiction of children, commonly used in this tradition, were first introduced in Red monuments.²³

The theme of brothers-in-arms, comradeship, is tied to the narrative of the “Spirit of the Winter War”, referring to the uniting of the Finnish nation in the war struggle. Important images referring to the “Spirit of the Winter War” in the painted format are the *Finlandia* frescoes by Lennart Segerstråle, executed for the Bank of Finland during the Continuation War, in 1943.²⁴ Painted in the middle of the war, they do not go as far as suggesting victory, but the justice of the Finnish cause is clearly shown in the heavenly light that is cast upon the Finnish people. The two large frescoes, *Suomi herää* (Finland awakens) and *Suomi rakentaa* (Finland builds) are positioned on opposite sides of a staircase that had been decorated with Juho Rissanen’s stained glass windows in 1933. [Images 40–41.]

The *Finlandia* frescoes depict wartime turmoil and anticipate reconstruction with a strong religious undertone, employing familiar imagery from both religious art and memorial monuments, such as the pietà motif. The preparation of the frescoes spanned over five years, and Segerstråle approached the project with great respect. Segerstråle’s sketch for the Parliament House competition, *Navis Reipublicae* [image 24], had been an allegory of the state, and in *Finlandia* Segerstråle returned to the theme. This time, the allegorical figure was depicted in a more realist and complex manner, and significantly, as a mother figure.²⁵

A central element in both of the *Finlandia* frescoes is a pair of mother and son, referring to the Christian iconography, and commonly used in Finnish war memorials. In *Finland awakens*, the pair is positioned as a pietà: a woman dangles a lifeless man from the armpits. Behind them, a group of Finnish soldiers in the white winter uniforms are kneeling down, praying to Heaven. Differing from the classicist soldier with helmet, sword, and shield Segerstråle had depicted in *Navis Reipublicae*, the Finnish soldier was now depicted in a more realistic manner and dressed in contemporary uniform. In *Finland builds*, the mother, dressed in white and holding a child on her shoulders, has turned her back to the viewer, while a heavenly ray of light is cast upon her and the child. Thus, in the first painting, the mother is grieving for her lost son(s), and in the second, she is leading the nation towards a new, brighter future. In both paintings, the women are haloed, underlining the religious interpretation in addition to the national one.

In both of the frescoes, chaos and sorrow are depicted on the right side of the painting. According to Segerstråle, the reading of the paintings from the right to the left was planned in relation to the route of the spectator in ascending and descending the staircase.²⁶ At the same time, it locates the sorrow and destruction as coming from the East, the Soviet Union. In the upper right part of *Finland builds*, a gloomy female figure in dark robe stands beside a



Image 40. Lennart Segerstråle, *Suomi herää* (Finland awakens), 1943. Fresco, 350 x 750. Bank of Finland, Helsinki. Photo: JR 2004.



Image 41. Lennart Segerstråle, *Suomi rakentaa* (Finland builds), 1943. As above.

struck down tree stump—an element widely used in the Red monuments. Aimo Reitala has noted that the conflict, where the motif of the painting rose from, was in fact the civil war.²⁷ *Finland builds* had, indeed, been sketched before the Winter War, and Segerstråle saw a frightful omen in the theme of painting, which seemed to have become reality as the war began.²⁸ Afterwards, the frescoes have been translated as a depiction of World War II, even by Segerstråle himself.²⁹ The reapplying of the same subject to the new theme is a fitting example of how the narratives of the civil war and World War II were easily intertwined in Finland.

The building of new dominates the left side of the paintings: in *Finland awakens*, two men work side by side, and in *Finland builds*, the reconstructing unit is a family. A man is laying bricks, and a shirtless boy is working on the construction site. A woman sits with a girl in her lap, and has her hand protectively around another child. The youngest child, a boy, is sleeping on the ground. The father is building a fireplace, and the mother with children sit inside the low walls of their future home. Far behind them, a larger construction takes place. While the imagery of soldiers has not often been repeated in Finnish public painting, the reconstructing family unit was a widely used theme during the postwar decades.

In the book *Finlandia-freskojen vuodet* (The years of the *Finlandia* frescoes, 1944) Segerstråle links the preparation of the paintings and the experience of war, with touching personal memories and in deeply patriotic words. He frequently refers to the abolition of the division of the nation—from the point of view of a bourgeois member of the society. Segerstråle tells how he delivered canvas that he had received as a gift from Sweden for “red” small farmers, who could then sew camouflage uniforms for the local men on the front. At that point Segerstråle felt that “all the possible ideological obstacles that supposedly could have complicated collaboration for the common cause were disappearing for good.”³⁰

Already in 1945 the frescoes were seen “like documents of the war-time ethos” by Onni Okkonen.³¹ This evaluation has been repeated in different words: Rolf Nummelin (1978) has assessed that no other monumental painting of the century had had such a dramatic background so close to its subject as the *Finlandia* frescoes.³² Aimo Reitala (1993) has considered the frescoes “the most important visual document of the war-time atmosphere and prospects for the future.”³³ Erik Kruskopf (1990) has suggested that the frescoes were interpreted at the time of their execution as an “appeal for patriotism, which very likely was the intention of the artist.” He continues: “even the posterity has found it difficult to evaluate the frescoes without taking into consideration their idealising content.”³⁴ Their idealising content is, indeed, extremely significant.

Based on these repeated evaluations, the *Finlandia* frescoes have captured something essential of the way the posterity has wanted to see the Finnish war experience. In the context of the public painting production that followed them, the essential character of the frescoes is the air of optimism, and the implication of the unity of the nation. Despite the heavy losses, a new day will dawn for the Finnish nation, the paintings suggest. Compared to *Navis Reipublicae* from 1930, *Finlandia* series correlates with the changes in memorial art, advocating the new democratic ideals instead of the White remembrance: a unity of nation, born out of the traumatic experience of war.

From War to Reconstruction

The Continuation War against the Soviet Union ended in 1944, and the conditions of the armistice were dictated by the Soviet Union. Importantly, Finland had to empty the country from German troops—a requirement, which led into the last act of the Finnish war effort. The Soviet Union had two main aims: first, to tie up and weaken the German forces in Northern Finland without having to allocate its own forces to the task, and second, to break the ties of sympathy and alliance between Finland and Germany.³⁵ In the War of Lapland, the Finnish troops advanced from the south and the German troops retreated towards the north, the Norwegian border. On their way, they set towns on fire, exploded bridges, and planted mines on roads and off-road. At the end of April 1945, the last German troops retreated to Norwegian soil, ending the war for the Finnish troops.

Just as wars are complex and controversial political nexuses, the situations that follow them are equally complicated: As Petri Karonen has shown, “the peace” that follows “the war” is not a return to a time before the conflict. Instead, the problems caused by war seem to be greatest after the war.³⁶ A war creates a large number of issues for the state to deal with, such as demobilisation, solving economic problems, integrating the veterans, and minimising the spiritual (mental) damages of the society. The concerns are obviously interconnected; some need to be most urgently addressed in the immediate postwar time whereas dealing with others spans over decades. According to Karonen, the minimising of the spiritual damages following a war is achieved by improving the spiritual state of the nation, and remembering the war in all its forms but especially as honourable.³⁷ This issue—to which all of the other tasks are also connected—is the most relevant in the context of art, and the one in which art can be most directly used.

“Spiritual reconstruction” was a concept used already in the postwar years in referring to cultural projects. In 1953, *Pohjolan Sanomat* estimated that the yearly exhibitions of art of Lapland and the new tradition of “culture weeks” manifest “the spiritual forces seeing the light of day, and a will to perform both spiritual and material reconstruction side by side.”³⁸ Monuments and memorials were designed explicitly for the remembering of the war, “especially as honourable.” Also public painting, with its national agenda, can be seen as an officially constructed means to minimise the spiritual damages of the nation.

The construction of buildings and infrastructure was, then, only one aspect of the postwar reconstruction. The school system, national celebrations and commemoration had central roles in the spiritual reconstruction of the nation, and art functioned as an important vehicle in the process. Furthermore, biological reconstruction of the nation took place in the form of growing birth rates. The growth of the population was seen as a question of the survival of the nation following the war, and the Family Federation (*Väestöliitto*) was founded in 1941 to promote the growth and advance the health of the population.³⁹

In the course of the wars Finland was not occupied, but the losses were great on many levels: the loss of life amounts to 84,000 people, in addition to which Finland lost large territories of land in the eastern border, Karelia. Over a tenth of the Finnish population had to leave their homes in Karelia and be settled in what was left of Finland. Also the burden caused by the war reparations was harsh, yet it boosted the Finnish industry, accelerated the

structural change and the rise of the standard of living in the postwar era. The amount of war reparations for the German allies in Eastern Europe was defined as 300 million dollars. Divided per capita, the burden was, by far, heaviest on Finland.⁴⁰

The reconstruction of the damages caused by the war started already in 1940, following the Winter War. However, the term “interim peace” (*välirauha*), referring to the period between the Winter and Continuation Wars, is not a latter invention but used at the time. The longevity of peace was not, thus, believed in.⁴¹ During and after the Continuation War, what was most urgently needed was housing.⁴²

Reconstruction meant very different things for different parts of the country, its scope and nature varied. The Soviet air raids during the Winter War damaged several towns up to a degree, and in the Continuation War the bombings concentrated on selected locations. In Helsinki, 824 buildings were damaged in the bombings in the Winter and Continuation Wars, and 156 of these were destroyed completely. In the county of Lapland close to half of buildings (40–47%) were destroyed, and in strategic points and larger towns the destruction was nearly complete. In Rovaniemi, a town of circa 8,000 inhabitants, some 1,200 buildings were destroyed during the wars, meaning up to 90% of buildings. Also railroads, roads, bridges, and other parts of infrastructure were severely damaged.⁴³ The civilian population had been evacuated to Southern Finland and Sweden immediately after the armistice with the Soviet Union.

Along with the destroyed buildings, also artworks were destroyed in the bombings and fires.⁴⁴ Yet, the number of destroyed monumental paintings in the country remained comparably small. In Northern Finland, where the destruction had been most comprehensive, there had been few public paintings before the war. Churches possessed some art but, for example, the altarpiece (1824) of the Kuusamo Church had been evacuated from the church, and it was thus saved when the church was destroyed by the Germans. Antti Salmenlinna, who had decorated the old church in 1935, also decorated the new church interiors.⁴⁵ The large painting by Unto Pusa at the Kaartinkasarmi barracks in Helsinki was destroyed in a bombing in 1944, and so was the large secco *Uusmaalainen laulu* (The song of Uusimaa), painted by Lennart Segerstråle for the Porvoo Svenska Gården clubhouse in 1935. Segerstråle realised a new version of this painting in 1950.⁴⁶

The most notable loss of art was the decoration of the Main Building of the University of Helsinki, which was severely damaged in a bombing in February 1944. In a massive fire caused by the bombing, the monumental paintings the assembly hall of the building housed, *Turun Akatemian vihkiäiset 1640* (The inauguration of the Academy of Turku 1640) by Edelfelt and the two paintings by Järnefelt were completely destroyed. The relief *Vapauden jumalatar seppelöi nuoruuden* (The goddess of freedom wreaths the youth, 1941) by Wäinö Aaltonen was severely damaged. Much of the valuable movables of the building had already been evacuated earlier, and even after the fire had started, portraits and pieces of furniture were saved from the building. The destruction of the monumental paintings could possibly have been avoided, but allegedly they were mistaken for frescoes and, thus, not removed from their locations.⁴⁷

Architect J. S. Sirén designed the restoration of the building. In the new design, windows replaced the locations of Järnefelt’s paintings but the one of Edelfelt remained intact. Once the restorations were completed in 1948, the question of (re)decorating the auditorium was debated. The discussion shows doubts towards painted decoration and

the talent of current generations of painters. “On no account murals, at the most, a relief decoration might do,” was presented as the general opinion in *Ilta-Sanomat*.⁴⁸

In 1959, Wäinö Aaltonen presented a new version of his destroyed relief, which was then located in the assembly hall. Yet, also the splintered original version is at display in the building. Around the same time, the university raised again the question of copying Edelfelt’s work. The Painters’ Union, who was consulted, considered the repainting of the destroyed work hugely undesirable. If a copy was wanted, it should be placed in a more modest location, and the space of Edelfelt’s destroyed work should be occupied with an original artwork commissioned via competition, the union opined.⁴⁹ As an interest group for the artists, the Painters’ Union naturally supported the acquiring of an original artwork from a contemporary artist. Furthermore, it argued that “every copy of art, no matter how praised, firmly lowers the value of an interior outside of what goes under the name of culture.”⁵⁰ Despite the objections, a copy was commissioned, and executed by Johannes Gebhard in 1961. [Image 8.] The university preferred a copy of the work of a national master in comparison to a unique piece from a contemporary artist.

The time of reconstruction offered a fruitful setting for commissioning public painting as much construction work was carried out. Importantly, the spiritual reconstruction of the nation created a demand for art. A majority of the reconstruction work concentrated on residential buildings, with little interest from the point of view of public painting. Nevertheless, public paintings were commissioned for public buildings from an early point of reconstruction on, for example in Rovaniemi already in the 1940s. During the postwar decades, public paintings were realised both for new buildings, and for existing ones of prestige.

Raising the Destroyed North

In the context of the postwar reconstruction, Northern Finland was a case of its own. The destruction was enormous but the reconstruction fast. While in other parts of Finland, many aspects of daily life could be continued as before, in Lapland, towns had to be reconstructed almost from nothing. As a consequence, one might assume that the artistic decoration of buildings would not have been a priority. On the contrary, public and commercial spaces, which had to be created at a fast pace, were even at an early stage of reconstruction artistically decorated.

“Everywhere one could notice brisk reconstruction work, and a stubborn faith in that everything will be fine. And in some curious way one felt proud for seeing so much will to work and faith in future.”⁵¹

In these words the botanist and geographer Ilmari Hustich described the reconstruction work in Rovaniemi, the capital of the County of Lapland, a few months after the end of the War of Lapland. In May 1945 Hustich recorded carloads of people bringing construction materials returning to the town of Rovaniemi. A wait of 24 hours to board the car ferry (as most bridges in the county had been destroyed) testified to the rush of the returning evacuees.⁵²



Image 42. County Administration Building, Rovaniemi. Decoration later painted over. Photo: Pekka Kyytinen in the 1950s. Regional Museum of Lapland.



Image 43. Eino Kauria, "Forest", 1952. Etelä-Kymenlaakso Vocational College, Kotka. Photo: JR 2009.

The pace of the reconstruction in Lapland was, indeed, fast. The evacuated people quickly returned to the sites of their homes, and relief measures—state compensation, loans and tax relieves—were established to financially aid the reconstruction. Even foreign help was received.⁵³ By the end of 1945, 406 buildings were completed in Rovaniemi, comprising 30% of the demand for reconstruction.⁵⁴ During the postwar reconstruction, Rovaniemi grew fast; yet, the population remained relatively small. In 1946–52 the population of Rovaniemi nearly doubled to 14,000 inhabitants.⁵⁵

The task of reconstruction burdened the residents, the municipalities, the state, as well as the Church. In the governmental reconstruction plan of 1945 hospitals, the Lapland County Administration Building (*Lääninhallitus*) in Rovaniemi, and apartments for the most important civil servants were classified as first priorities. The costs of the plan were estimated at 509 million marks (59 million euros).⁵⁶ Noteworthy from the point of view of public art is that a mural decoration was painted to the lobby of the County Administration Building, completed among the first official buildings following the war, in 1947.⁵⁷

The painting was a large composition of repeated elements, featuring reindeer and sledges, Laplanders in traditional costumes, and a larger Sami hut (*kota*) in the middle of the wall. Unfortunately, the painting has later been painted over.⁵⁸ The artist behind the work has not been recorded, but possibly it was Eino Kauria, who also answered for the colour scheme of the building. Kauria often realised public paintings for buildings he designed colour schemes for, and he was at the time in Rovaniemi, since he painted other murals in town in 1948. The visual evidence on the work is a mere black and white photograph of the lobby space; yet, it does indicate a dotted pattern similar to Kauria's other public paintings. [See images 42–43.]

In 1948 Eino Kauria realised three paintings depicting northern landscape and livelihood to the new business and residential complex *Lapinmaa* in Rovaniemi, designed by Niilo Pulkka. The painting in the more modest “folk restaurant”, *Haarikka*, with a rustic interior decoration, featured snow covered logging lodges. The painting in the more upscale restaurant *Koskikulma* featured a fjeld landscape with reindeer. The third painting, which was located in the staircase leading to the second floor, depicted high rapids, and a man fishing salmon.⁵⁹ Also these paintings have been later covered.

Furthermore, a public painting was commissioned for the newly built Municipal Hall of Sodankylä, designed by Yrjö Lindegren and built in 1948. The idea of a public painting had originated from the building contractor, who then approached Onni Oja, a Helsinki based monumental painter, for the job. The contractor, however, did not have an official mandate. According to Oja, he asked a “truly low price”, 200,000 marks (8,100 euros), for the job, and the municipal board of Sodankylä accepted the proposal.⁶⁰ The municipal council, however, who had the final ruling power, considered 200,000 marks too high a price.⁶¹ Aarne Hamara, who was then approached, offered to realise the painting for half the price, 100,000 marks, and was given the job in September 1949.⁶²

Hamara was a mainly self-educated artist from Kemijärvi who focused on landscape subjects. The Sodankylä painting, *Elinkeinon rakenteen kehitys Lapissa* (The development of the structure of livelihood in Lapland), creates a view of a fjeld landscape in autumn colours, with reindeer and Sami people on one side of the river, and clearing of a field on the other. [Image 44.] Around 1950, Hamara realised a mural with reindeer and driver subject to the restaurant *Pohjanpirtti* in Kemijärvi and in 1952 *Rakovalkealla* (By the fire) for the



Image 44. Aarne Hamara, *Elinkeino rakenteen kehitys Lapissa* (The development of the structure of livelihood in Lapland), 1949. Municipal Hall of Sodankylä. Photo: Päivi Rahikainen, Regional Museum of Lapland.



Image 45. Aarne Hamara, *Rakovalkealla* (By the fire), 1952. Oil on canvas, 195 x 285. Restaurant *Sallansuu*, Salla. Currently in Veitsiluoto “People’s House” (*työväentalo*), Kemi. Photo: Petja Hovinheimo.

restaurant *Sallansuu* in Salla [image 45], both connecting integrally to the northern locality.⁶³ The paintings by Hamara do not, however, comply with the conventions of monumentality of the time but they are laid out with a linear perspective.

Imagery with a strong focus on the northern specificities—or exoticism—was repeated in various northern public painting projects, most often realised by artists from Southern Finland. For the Rovaniemi Church, inaugurated in August 1950, Antti Salmenlinna realised glass paintings and a series of sixteen biblical scenes in the window recesses of the nave, in which reindeer and Sami people are also depicted, and also the altar painting by Lennart Segerstråle is tightly connected to its northern location. [Images 48 and 63.]

Northern livelihood was also the subject of the contemporary public paintings for banks: the painting for the Nordic Union Bank in Rovaniemi by Tauno Hämeranta (1950) featured logging, reindeer herding, and gold washing with the figures of five working men, and it was described as “light and optimistic”.⁶⁴ Also tourism was included in the spectrum of livelihoods with a young couple contemplating the bare hill landscape. [Image 46.] A central element in Yngve Bäck’s painting for the Nordic Union Bank in Kemi (1950) was the view of a bridge, dam and rapids; the Isohaara hydroelectric power plant, built in 1948 in River Kemi, was a locally very significant project. [Image 47.] In the painting, logs are being floated in the river, and there is also a man building a log house, which can be seen as a reconstruction motif. These works, thus, connect closely to their locations, and also refer to the theme of rising economics.

The formal qualities of these two bank commissions bear little similarities. Hämeranta’s composition is based on the interplay between the patched soil, standing and fallen trunks, and blue-clad men in stiff, stable positions. In contrast, Bäck’s bright palette and form language were markedly modernist and the composition more dynamic with the central element of falling water. These were the first public commissions for both artists: later, the Tampere artist Hämeranta realised the monumental *Sillanrakentaja* (Bridge builders, 1960) for Saukonpuisto School in Tampere, and Bäck realised, among other public works, two large commissions for the City of Helsinki at the turn of the 1960s, for the Hanasaari power plant (1960) and for the festivity location “White hall” (1963). [Image 3.]

The large mural in Rantavitikka School in Rovaniemi, *Ihmisen elämä* (The life of man) from 1951, lacks as pointed local references as many of the above mentioned commissions, including the Rovaniemi Church decorations by Antti Salmenlinna, one of the two painters of the work. [Image 49.] Instead, the painting connects closely to the genre of Finnish school paintings. Along other public buildings, schools had to be rebuilt in large numbers in Lapland following the war. In the Rural Municipality of Rovaniemi (Rovaniemen maalaiskunta, now part of Rovaniemi), seventeen out of thirty-four schools had been destroyed, along with them the 70-years-old Rantavitikka School building.⁶⁵ The new school building was completed in 1951, and a mural was realised for the entrance hall by Salmenlinna and Paavo Leinonen.⁶⁶

The painting is located in a corner space, and the scene extends on two walls. Swans, salmon in the river and a cut down tree can be seen as referring to the northern livelihood but the landscape could also be from another location in Finland. The figures are depicted in conventional roles and in close relationship to the nature. The only vague reference to the man-built environment is a trail of smoke far in the background. The small size of the trail, however, hints more as being caused by a campfire than by a factory. The atmosphere



Image 46. Tauno Hämeranta, *Lapin elinkeinoelämää* (Economic life in Lapland), 1950. Oil, 138 x 300. Nordic Union Bank, Rovaniemi. Photo: JR 2012 [in Nordea, Tampere].



Image 47. Yngve Bäck, *Maataloutta, metsätöitä, teollisuutta* (Agriculture, forestry, industry), 1950. Oil, 138 x 299. Nordic Union (now Nordea) Bank, Kemi. Art Foundation Merita. Photo: JR 2010.

of the painting is notably soft and sweet—the two young men walking to the woods are not rough lumberjacks but rather a couple reaching for each other’s hands. All in all, the imagery creates an optimistic panorama, with the lineage of generations gearing the focus towards the future.

Before the war, Lapland had become the most important tourist destination in Finland, as tourism to Lapland had grown immensely in the 1930s. The romanticised view of the wilderness of Lapland, as well as the gold-digger, hunter, and log-driver heroes became popular in Finland in the 1930s and they frequently were employed in popular music, film, literature, and art.⁶⁷ Reindeer, bears and swans, fjeld and river landscapes, as well as northern livelihood create the encyclopaedia of subjects also for public art in Lapland and suggest a romantic and nostalgic ideal of the northern identity. Even architecture in Rovaniemi was inspired by the romantic image of Lapland; a fjeld landscape is drawn with the forms of the roofs of the Rovaniemi bus station (1959) and the theatre building *Lappia* (designed in 1961 and completed in 1975).⁶⁸

Artists from Southern Finland often realised these public projects, which may explain the unsurprising set of motifs used for the creation of the local colour. Aarne Hamara was an exception as a Lappish monumental painter, and Aale Hakava, who painted the Kemijärvi Church altarpiece in 1950 among other reconstruction era northern altarpieces, was born in Rovaniemi but the family moved to Southern Finland in 1922. Hakava, however, visited Northern Finland and painted Lapp motifs on a regular basis.⁶⁹ Much of the also earlier Lapland-oriented art had been painted by visitors, as there had been few local artists before World War II. According to Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja, artists were drawn to the North, as other visitors, inspired by Finnish nationalism and healthy outdoor living.⁷⁰ Consequently, Lapland was defined from a southern perspective, and the outsider view was also imposed on the local inhabitants in public paintings.

The number of public paintings produced for the urban areas of Lapland is not large but the production is noteworthy. The fact that art was commissioned already at the first stages of the reconstruction after the massive destruction, in the late 1940s, indicates the significance attributed to the genre. Furthermore, even the basic construction materials were hard to acquire and expensive to transport to Lapland, and labour force was notably more expensive in Lapland than elsewhere in Finland.⁷¹ Since in most cases artists were invited from Southern Finland, the commissioning of public paintings may have been more difficult than elsewhere in the country. The commissioning of public paintings should be proportioned to these facts.

Expectedly, the price of art was also protested against. The commissioning of a fresco from Lennart Segerstråle for the new Rovaniemi Church was objected among locals on the basis that the money was more importantly needed in other projects.⁷² Yet, the work by Segerstråle has been later lauded.⁷³ [Image 63.] In Sodankylä, the local artist Aarne Hamara was employed for the explicit reason of being cheaper.

Various agents paid attention to public painting in Northern Finland. The municipality and corporations in Rovaniemi were exemplary in their art commissions in the 1940s. Reconstructed churches were commissioned altarpieces from prominent monumental painters, and the Rovaniemi and Kemi branches of the Nordic Union Bank were among the first bank branches where public paintings were commissioned in the postwar years. Monumental painting was made a part of the raising of the destroyed North with a significant investment.



Image 48. Antti Salmenlinna, “Matt 5:25”, 1950. Rovaniemi Church. Photo: JR 2010.



Image 49. Antti Salmenlinna and Paavo Leinonen, *Ihmisen elämä* (The life of man), 1951. Fresco, 282 x 371. Rantavitikka School, Rovaniemi. Rovaniemi Art Museum. Photo: JR 2010.

Continuing Earlier Practices

Despite the relatively small size of Finland, the war was felt in different ways in different parts of the country. The schedule and the demanded measures of the reconstruction work differed significantly. The war had socially equalising effects; yet, it also enhanced the difference between the South and the North. In Lapland, there was demand for all types of buildings, and public buildings were artistically decorated already at the first stages of the reconstruction. In other parts of the country, public painting production continued the earlier established practices, and private commissioners were responsible for the largest part of the public painting production. Official, municipal production of public paintings accelerated once the reconstruction advanced to social construction, and especially to the building of schools, in the 1950s.

Many kinds of agents commissioned public paintings in the late 1940s. The electricity company Strömberg commissioned public paintings for their factories in Pitäjänmäki from Tove Jansson [image 109] and Bruno Tuukkanen 1945–48. Jansson also received a rare municipal commission, in 1947 for Kaupunginkellari (“City cellar”), a restaurant for the employees of the City of Helsinki [images 104–105], and realised a painting for a privately owned nursery in Kotka in 1949. Onni Oja painted a large work *Kesäpäivä* (Summer day) for Elanto cooperative shop in 1946. [Image 107.] The following year, Harry Henriksson painted a mural for the headquarters of the Huhtamäki Corporation in Turku [image 4], and Tuomas von Boehm painted *Saimaan rantaa* (Shores of Saimaa) for the dance hall of the cooperative society in Imatra. [Image 106.] Also in 1947, Hilikka Toivola painted a large fresco cycle for the Normal School for Girls in Helsinki (*Tyttönormaalilyseo*, currently the *Chydenia* building of the Helsinki School of Economics). [Image 97.]

The fresco for the Normal School for Girls was commissioned by the publishing house WSOY to honour the memory of the painter Venny Soldan-Brofeldt, who had passed away in 1945. The massive fresco triptych by Toivola was an unusually large-scale project, and also the gender of the painter was widely noted—more widely than the subject of commemoration. According to Edward Richter, an article by Sakari Saarikivi in *Suomen taiteen vuosikirja* in 1945 had inspired giving the job to a “young female artist”.⁷⁴ Likely, the selection of a woman artist was seen appropriate for a girls’ school, and in commemoration of a woman artist. The large work was realised in three months, and critics also saw flaws in the work caused by the hurry.⁷⁵

The economic problems or difficulties in acquiring artistic materials during the postwar years were not limited to the northern parts of Finland. In preparing for her fresco work, Hilikka Toivola received advice from Lennart Segerstråle on how to manage hydrated lime, needed for the priming of the wall: she should ask Tove Jansson whether she had any left over from the recently executed frescoes for Kaupunginkellari, or ask a certain Mr. Bognanow in Leppävaara, or write to the Swedish artist Sven Eriksson and inquire whether it would be possible to acquire hydrated lime from Sweden.⁸³ Whether this advice paid off, is unknown. However, the letter indicates the need for networking in order to execute an artistic career on a very practical level.



Image 50. Birger Carlstedt, *Aamusta iltaan* (From morning until night), 1950. Oil on canvas, 250 x 1250. Kauttua paper mills. Photo: Museum of Public Art, Lund, Sweden.

Most of the public painting projects of the time were direct commissions but at least three larger competitions were arranged in the mid-1940s, during or shortly after the war. The first of these was arranged by the Students' Union of the Helsinki School of Economics in 1944, while the Continuation War was still on-going, for its festivity hall on Pohjoinen Rautatiekatu (currently known as KY-talo, KY-building). The painting was to “symbolise youth and entrepreneurship, especially related to business life”—as was fitting to the area of specialty of the school. The competition received 79 entries, and in *Suomen taiteen vuosikirja* (The yearbook of Finnish art) it was considered significant for the Finnish art life.⁷⁶ Aarre Heinonen won the competition with the sketch *Työ ja vienti* (Work and export), which was realised and unveiled in its location in 1947. Later, during a renovation of the location, the painting was moved, and its current location is unknown.⁷⁷ Heinonen's sketch depicted different areas of physical labour as well as a shipping yard. The jury commended the subject but criticised the colour scale, pointing out the use of green. On a general level, the jury concluded that the Finnish artists “so far do not make enough distinction between the special requirements of mural painting and ordinary easel painting.”⁷⁸ This criticism was repeated throughout the 1950s.

In 1946, the Ahlström Paper Company arranged a monumental painting competition for the Kauttua paper mills. Maire Gullichsen had a central role in planning the competition, which was unique as a closed competition between artists oriented towards international modernism: Birger Carlstedt, Unto Pusa, Sam Vanni, Yngve Bäck, Olli Miettinen, Torger Enckell, and Sven Grönvall.⁷⁹ The work was commissioned from the third-prize-winning Carlstedt, who completed the large painting *Aamusta iltaan* (From morning until night) in 1950. [Image 50.] The painting in a factory canteen is figurative, but it developed towards

further abstraction in its preparation. In the 1950s, Carlstedt became one of the leading figures of Finnish concretism, propagating for a new integration of art in architecture.⁸⁰

Due to its noted patron as well as its particular formulation, this competition has been exceptionally well remembered in Finnish art history, and *From morning until night* has been seen as a pioneering work in Finnish modernism. As Erkki Hienonen has suggested, it was “the first clearly executed cubist mural in Finland.”⁸¹ Filtered through the Norwegian fresco tradition, and through the academies of Léger and Lhôte, the compositional ideals of cubism became commonly used within the Finnish public painting. The prior unseen character in Carlstedt’s painting was the clarity of form and the bold geometrisation of the composition.

An open competition was declared by the Art for Schools Association in 1947 for the Swedish Lyceum (*Svenska Lyseum*, currently Lönkan School) in Helsinki. As the association struggled with financial problems, there had been fifteen years since its previous competition, and this one became its last. The competition attracted 127 entries from 60 artists, but the quality of the sketches was considered so low that the first prize was not given out. Instead, the jury gave out two second place awards to Erkki Koponen and Erik Enroth, and used the rest of the prize money to commission new sketches from the two awarded artists. The small awards (40,000 marks, 2,200 euros for the first prize) and inadequate fee for commission were—again—seen as reasons for the low quality of the entries.⁸² In the end, Enroth gained the commission with his work *Jousimies* (Archer).

The final painting, realised in 1949–50, depicts an all-male crowd, symbols of education and civilisation as well as sporting and shipping industry. As a central element, a teacher and two students are studying chemistry. Their positions behind the high desks, as well as the high arched windows behind them, through which the water is reflected as if a mosaic glass painting, create a religious reading to the situation, suggesting a holy character of education. With this painting, the public painting commissioning of the Art for Schools Association ended, and the career of Erik Enroth as a monumental painter began.

Towards the end of the 1940s, large-scale works were commissioned with accelerating speed by different kinds of agents, rarely even by municipal bodies. Thematically, many of the features that would dominate the public painting production of the 1950s are already seen in these works. However, a theme, which is present in many of these 1940s paintings and much less common in the following years, is that of joyful pastime, of celebrating.⁸⁴ The paintings from the actual reconstruction period did not address reconstruction but took a noticeable distance to the war. The theme of building a new society became more common later, in the 1950s.

The war accelerated economic growth and resulted in dramatic structural changes in the Finnish society. The basis of the welfare society was established in the postwar years, and also the art policies were structured in new ways, both on municipal and on governmental levels. As a consequence of these developments, public painting became popular in ways that had not been experienced earlier in Finland.

III

PUBLIC PAINTINGS OF THE FINNISH WELFARE STATE

Chapter Five

A JOINT EFFORT

Constructing Finnish Art Policies

Finnish art policies were advanced after World War II on various levels: municipal art committees and art museums were established in early 1950s, and the State Art Commission (*Valtion taideteostoimikunta*) was founded in 1956. At the time, the public sector started to allocate more funds and direct attention even to public art. Also the number of private sector commissions grew, even though the proportion of corporate commissions of all public painting production decreased.

The development of systematic Finnish art policies took place simultaneously with the creation of the Finnish welfare state. According to Ilkka Nummela the war was financially a heavy burden on Finland but also “socially purifying”. The development of the modern welfare state owed much to the new values that arose during the war, a growing sense of common responsibility. Even the distribution of income evened out from the end of 1930s to the end of 1940s.¹

The country also experienced rapid economic growth during the postwar decades. The economic growth, together with structural changes of the society, stable governmental organisations and the ideological popularity of “moderate socialism” offered a basis for the creation of the Finnish welfare state.² The economic growth of Finland has been considered a success story: the country rose from “rags to riches” in roughly a hundred years.³ Industrialisation and structural change occurred in Finland later than in other Western European countries, but the development was faster. From a poor, agricultural country, with a Gross Domestic Production per capita equalling half of the Western European level in 1860, Finland rose to the European level in the 1970s and even exceeded it in the 1980s.⁴

Following World War II, Finnish government spending grew significantly, and its focus shifted to social spending. The growth in social spending was felt especially in municipal economics.⁵ According to Jari Eloranta and Jari Kauppila, Finland offers an example of rapid transformation from a warfare state to a welfare state, both from economic and political perspectives.⁶ A comprehensive social insurance system was sought and largely created after the wars, following international, especially Nordic developments.

The Finnish welfare state grew together with the baby boomers, the children born between 1945–50. In the late 1940s, a comprehensive child health care system was created and maternity allowance was granted to all mothers. In 1952, when the first postwar children reached school age, municipalities were obliged to hire a school doctor.⁷ Health and dental

care centres, as well as libraries and other public services, were often created in connection to the new schools complexes. A national pension system was developed slightly later, during the 1950s and 1960s.⁸ The designing of the Finnish welfare state created a demand for different kinds of public buildings, to which, in particular in the 1950s, public paintings were often placed.

Since the early postwar years, there was an increasing interest towards art and to making it more widely accessible. The democratisation of art served the ideal of social justice and taking care of the wellbeing of the citizens on a wide range. Besides memorials, attention was paid to monumental art in general, and to the integration of art into architecture and public life. In 1945, the architecture critic Kyösti Ålander called for architects to arrange work opportunities to artists by including public and monumental artworks in their plans. According to Ålander, a closer union of architects and artists would benefit both, and the Finnish culture in general.⁹ Unto Pusa, on the other hand, emphasised the social mission of artists in 1945. Now was the time for artists to show their social necessity: “[the artist] moulds the views of life of people [...] In a word, he/she may infect a whole era with him/herself.”¹⁰ Artists could function as moral leaders of the society.

The founding of Finnish language art magazines in the mid-1940s suggested a widely spread interest towards art in the society. Many of these magazines were, however, short-lived, and their publishing terminated in the mid-1950s.¹¹ Public, monumental art was presented and debated on the pages of the newly founded art magazines and journals as well as in newspapers.

The beneficial character of art was not only recognised within the artworld. The Mayor of Turku Eero Mantere, for example, actively argued for the society’s responsibility for supporting art. According to Mantere, the basic mission of the municipal administration is to take care of the wellbeing of the inhabitants. The taking care of the everyday needs of the citizens incorporated the “quenching of the thirst for art of the inhabitants”.¹² Leisure is a part of modern life, Mantere argued in 1946.

“A modern, democratic city or municipality should take pride in artistic creations decorating the city in public places. [...] Surely, the performing arts do not bother the peace of a sleeping city, but a vivid art scene testifies to the living pulse of the city and a will to follow healthy, go-ahead development.”¹³

Following these ideals, the City of Turku arranged its first public painting competition in 1949, during Mantere’s term as the mayor.

In the discussions of the time, the diminishing resources of the private sector were frequently referred to. For this reason, the artworld called out for the state to take responsibility for the wellbeing of art and artists. At the same time, artists could work to benefit the whole society. In March 1949, *Turun Sanomat* estimated that while in the immediate postwar years affluent individuals had purchased art in great numbers, also due to the lack of other investments, by 1949, this trend had already ended. The painter Kalle Rautiainen suggested that besides public commissions and grants, which were needed to enable artists’ work, also commercial and industrial agents could support artists by commissioning art for their premises—as they had been and were doing in growing numbers.¹⁴ The same year, the Finnish government accepted the proposal made by the Ministry of Education that the

resolution on the Percent for Art program was to be enforced.¹⁵ The Finnish Parliament had accepted the resolution already in 1939, but despite the renewal, it was never enforced on a national level.

During the 1950s, the ideal of making art more accessible guided the forming of the municipal art policies. An important step in the democratisation of art was the establishing of municipal art museums in the early 1950s. In Vaasa, the local businessman Frithjof Tikanoja donated his extensive art collections to the city in 1951, on the condition that it should be permanently on view.¹⁶ In 1952, an art museum was established in Hämeenlinna, to give a new home to the collections of the Art Museum of Viipuri, as the City of Viipuri had been lost to the Soviet Union in the war.¹⁷ In 1953, museums were founded in Jyväskylä and Varkaus, and the network of municipal art museums grew fast.

The establishing of municipal art museums was based on the same principle as the production of public art: making art more accessible under public patronage. In public discussions, it was emphasised how public art museums gave also those who were not able to purchase art for themselves, a possibility to satisfy their “hunger for art”, or “spiritual hunger”.¹⁸ The Member of the Parliament Eino Kilpi, speaking at the opening of the Hämeenlinna Art Museum, hoped that a museum would bring “joy and refreshment to the often harsh everyday life” of the people.¹⁹

Through the participation in artists’ associations Finnish artists took active positions in defining art policies in the country. Local and national artists’ associations actively propagated for public art on both local and national levels. Based on their demand, their members were included in the municipal art committees. The Finnish Artists’ Association (established in 1864) and its subdivision for painters, the Painters’ Union (established in 1929), functioned as interest groups for artists, as well as boards of expertise that were approached by different agents around the country—also with issues regarding public painting.

In Tampere in 1946, the local artists’ association reminded the city of the lack of an organisation responsible for art acquisitions. Without an art committee, the practices remained inconsistent, the association argued.²⁰ The association also suggested the first public painting competitions for Tampere in 1949, and outlined competition rules for them.²¹ In Jyväskylä in 1948, the local artists’ association lamented the “cold” attitudes towards the artworld from the part of the city, and decided to “work by all possible means” to improve the situation. The association made initiatives for art acquisitions and collaborated in the arranging of competitions throughout the 1950s. In 1956 it also suggested the establishing of a municipal art committee. This body was established in 1961.²² In Turku, an art committee had been founded already in 1939 to manage art acquisitions, but it was composed merely of politicians, which raised discussion among local artists in the early 1950s. Following the suggestion of the local artists’ association, in 1952, its composition was changed to include also members of the artists’ associations.²³

In 1954, the Finnish Artists’ Association began propagating the establishing of municipal art committees. It suggested the establishing of one to the City of Helsinki in October 1954, arguing that as the capital of the country, Helsinki should have one, “especially since some other towns already have such an organisation.”²⁴ These pioneering towns were Turku and Tampere, where art committees had been established in 1939 and 1953 respectively. Helsinki founded an Art Committee in late 1954, and it assembled for the first time in

March 1955. In its first meeting, the committee decided to find out about the situation on the city's construction of public buildings, approach the Finnish Artists' Association with a question of how to arrange art purchases, and inquire from the city whether its budget could be increased with possibly unused funds from previous years.²⁵ The Finnish Artists' Association also approached other municipalities with a letter suggesting the applying of a Percent for Art program and the establishing of an art committee to govern the beautification of public buildings and the municipal art acquisitions.²⁶ The missions of the Helsinki City Art Committee were stated in this order: the beautification of public buildings first.²⁷

With the founding of municipal and state art committees in the 1950s the public authorities embraced the mission propagated by the Art for Schools Association during the early century. Ironically, this contributed to the termination of public funding for the association in 1958. The previous year, the National Council for Visual Arts had pondered that the recently founded State Art Commission had, along with the municipalities, begun to take responsibility over the activities the association had performed. The termination of the funding was also justified by the fact that the association mainly distributed copies, and thus did not support the work of living artists, which had been a requirement for the subsidy. Struggling with continuing financial problems, the association had made its last public painting commission in 1947.²⁸ After the establishment of the official organisation, the state no longer needed to support a private agent in the same field—especially one which was not considered successful in its activities. During the 1950s, the production of public paintings was taken more closely into official control.

Supporting artists and democratising art were central ideals behind the new art policies. In the postwar Finnish context, the democratisation of art must be understood as the democratisation of the physical access to art, not the production of art or the defining of art. Important acts were the establishing of municipal art museums and the commissioning of public artworks. The production of public art was tied to the ideals of the postwar welfare state: public art was considered important for the public and the development of the society at large.

A large variety of agents were interested in commissioning public paintings following World War II: besides municipalities, the state, and the Evangelic Lutheran Church, also corporations, associations, foundations, and even individual citizens funded monumental paintings for public or private spaces. Despite the large number of parties involved, the commissioning bodies were interconnected in many ways: on an institutional level, and through the networks of people.

A New Task for Municipalities

Municipalities and the state are two main levels of public authorities in Finland: they are political organisations, planners and realisers of public policies. Through legislation, the state executes power over municipalities, and limits their possibilities of action. In Finland, municipalities have had a fairly large degree of independence, also in deciding how to arrange their statutory tasks. Especially in Helsinki, municipal politicians have acted in

central positions also in national politics, and the networks of politicians have embraced commerce, media, as well as the academe.²⁹

Following World War II, the Finnish State imposed larger controls than before on the municipal policies, with demands on equality and fairness of treatment between citizens, as well as access to social and cultural services.³⁰ The creation of the welfare state was realised largely at the municipal level, as municipalities were to offer many of the daily services of a citizen, such as schooling, health care, and social services. The creation of municipal art committees was not centrally imposed on municipalities; yet, they were organised on a similar basis during the 1950s. In commissioning public paintings, the state followed practises first carried out in municipalities.

Art policies, like other policies, have not been uniformly arranged in all Finnish municipalities. In particular in the 1950s, when the art policies and practices were being formed, they showed great variation in different municipalities. It should be noted that municipalities were not only administrative units but also local communities with their distinct values and traditions.³¹ The capital status of Helsinki has made it unique among Finnish municipalities, as it is the main centre of governmental power, and a nexus of traffic, communication, and commerce, as well as national and international interaction.³² Importantly, Helsinki was during the 20th century also the most important centre of artistic life in Finland, with major art schools and museums, galleries and networks of artists.

In Helsinki, public paintings had been commissioned by different agents before the 1950s, but only about one in every ten years by the City of Helsinki. In the early 1950s, an important effort to involve the City of Helsinki in the production of public paintings and to raise interest towards monumental painting among authorities and artists was a fresco course arranged by the Painters' Union, for which is sought and received funding from the city. At that moment, the technique of fresco painting was not widely practiced—years had passed since the latest fresco paintings in Helsinki.

In a letter to its members in February 1953, the Painters' Union articulated that the

“most important thing is, of course, the learning of fresco technique, but the board [of the Union] wishes that the artists would consider the importance and far-reaching effects of the matter and try one's best in making the proposals. Since, if the architect and the sponsor are satisfied with the achievements of the course, new possibilities shall open for visual arts.”³³

In this way, artists were persuaded to take part in the project without a financial reward. The Painters' Union hoped to create job opportunities for artists, and show the talent for monumental painting in Helsinki.

All the participants of the course were to make a sketch for a fresco, after which a committee would select the realised sketches. After the painting of the frescoes, the same committee would decide whether the works were artistically qualified enough to permanently decorate the wall. The instructions, thus, suggest that what goes under the name of fresco course, in fact resembles a fresco competition—in which the winner gets to realise one's work for free. A fee was promised only if funds remained after the course.³⁴

The course did create wide interest: fifty artists were enrolled and thirty were present. However, only six of them presented sketches for the fresco, and Onni Oja was the only who was allowed to realise his work, a painting entitled *Viimeinen koulupäivä* (Last day of



Image 51. Onni Oja, *Viimeinen koulupäivä* (Last day of school), 1953. Fresco, 300 x 500. Meilahti School, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2006.

school), on the wall of the newly built Meilahti Elementary School. [Image 51.] The rest of the participants practised fresco painting on plates.³⁵

In applying for funding for the course, the Painters' Union argued that fresco technique was "perfectly dominated" by one man in Finland, Lennart Segerstråle, who had promised to teach the course. In addition, only one person, Tauno Vaahtera from Rovaniemi, was said to know the proper plastering technique.³⁶ Discussions on the matter of fresco courses suggested an understanding that fresco painting was an important field of art, which was not known well enough in Finland. The course was, in the end, taught by Niilo Suihko. Another course was arranged in 1957, with Aale Hakava as the teacher.³⁷ Suihko was a noted art conservator, who had assisted, for example, Tove Jansson in the *Kaupunginkellari* frescoes in 1947. The artist Aale Hakava had learned fresco painting in Italy. During the 1950s, fresco courses were arranged also in Tampere and Turku by the local artists' associations.³⁸

In retrospect, Oja's painting closely relates to the postwar municipal public painting production by the City of Helsinki, since it was placed in a school, partly enabled by the funding from the city, and the official commissioning began soon after. Two years after the Meilahti fresco course, in 1955, the Helsinki City Art Committee began functioning, and it started to commission public artworks for municipal buildings. In 1955–56, the committee announced three public painting competitions, one sculpture and one relief competition, most of them for school premises.³⁹ Onni Oja was among the invited artists to the first public painting competition, arranged for the Aurora children's hospital in 1955.

By the mid-1950s, the idea of the useful nature of public art had been well established in public discussions. A number of cities in Finland were commissioning public paintings, and the capital status of Helsinki demanded exemplary activities in integrating art and civic life. In 1956, *Helsingin Sanomat* reported that Helsinki was starting to beautify public

buildings “in earnest”. The newly established City Art Committee was allocated a budget of 900,000 marks (24,700 euros) for acquiring art to beautify public spaces.⁴⁰ This sum was spent on smaller scale art. Several public sculpture competitions were arranged in the 1950s, as well as further public painting competitions for the Hanasaari power plant in 1958 and the Finnish Adult Education Centre, “Workers’ Institute” (*Työväenopisto*) in 1959.

In the 1960s, the public art production for the city slowed down and direct commissioning became a preferred means of acquiring public art. Indeed, the competition processes in Helsinki were often complicated: in the competitions arranged in the 1950s, juries were rarely unanimous, second rounds were often arranged, and first prizes were not given out. The architect of the building to which a painting was planned was present in the competition jury when possible, which sometimes created disagreement. Not all architects favoured the idea of having public paintings in their buildings, or shared the understanding of a good public painting with the other jury members.

In plain numbers, the City of Tampere was the biggest municipal commissioner of public paintings in the postwar decades. Also, more than in other cities, Tampere promoted large-scale decorative programs. For example for Amuri School, the art committee commissioned a monumental painting, a façade relief, and an “artistic decoration”—a mural—for the dental clinic of the school in 1954–55. The City of Tampere had initiated public paintings projects in 1933 for the Chamber of the City Council and in 1940 for Kaupinoja Sanatorium, but both had fallen through without being realised. In 1949, the Tampere Artists’ Association suggested competitions for Kaleva School and Nekala Kindergarten, both of which were arranged the next year.⁴¹

In 1953, the City of Tampere established an Art Committee, as had been demanded by the local artists’ association. In its first month of action, a public painting competition for Amuri School was initiated, and the decoration project for Kaupinoja Sanatorium was relaunched.⁴² In 1956, a national mosaic competition for the new swimming pool in Pyynikki led to a quarrel with the Painters’ Union about the fees of the jury members. As a result of the disagreement the City of Tampere announced to refrain from arranging competitions for the time being.⁴³ Instead, public paintings continued to be realised as direct commissions. The Tampere City Art Committee also encouraged artists to offer finished monumental paintings for the committee, and acquired public paintings for municipal premises in this way.⁴⁴ The following public painting competition was arranged in 1959 for Saukonpuisto School, and, in addition to direct commissions, competitions were arranged for two schools and an retirement home in the 1960s.⁴⁵ The Tesomajärvi School competition (1966–67) ended the series of competitions, but the commissioning of public paintings has continued in Tampere until the present without major breaks.⁴⁶

Turku, with an important art school and museum, was a significant artistic centre in the country, but it did not reach Tampere’s output of public painting. The first postwar competition was arranged in 1949 for the new vocational school on Aninkaistenmäki. None of the competition entries were realised, and the Turku Artists’ Association criticised the competition for too short an opening time—only one and a half months—and poor advertising.⁴⁷ Presumably, the notice of competition had nevertheless reached the local circles of artists, as the awarded artists were well acclaimed local artists, and many of them were awarded also in later competitions.

Between 1952 and 1966, the City of Turku arranged seven competitions as a result of which ten public paintings were realised.⁴⁸ In addition, Turku received two public paintings for the Concert Hall as donations in the 1950s. A competition in 1965 led to three monumental paintings due to an innovative competition formulation. The competition was organised for a building that housed the Workers' Institute and the School of Economics. The artists were to participate with full-size (150 x 300 cm) monumental works and not sketches, and the awarded pieces were then located in other public buildings as monumental paintings.⁴⁹

In provincial centres, a varying number of public paintings were produced in the postwar decades. The City of Jyväskylä commissioned public paintings for three schools and two kindergartens between 1948 and 1963—and received one school painting as a donation from a local society.⁵⁰ In Kuopio, the city arranged two national public painting competitions for schools in the mid-1950s, and further commissions were made from local artists in the 1960s.⁵¹ In addition, Lauri Ahlgrén realised a large *informel* secco painting for the new theatre building in 1963. [Image 143.] In Oulu, private agents commissioned public paintings, and one was donated to Tuira School in 1955, but the municipal commissioning was more limited. Public paintings were commissioned in 1959 for Teuvo Pakkala School, and in 1969 for the Oulu Vocational College.⁵²

In particular in smaller towns, the acquiring of public art was considered an evidence of urban life: in 1959, when the first public artwork—a mosaic to a restaurant—was acquired in the small township of Jämsä, the local newspaper deemed it surprising that it had happened so late, considering the “vivid and prosperous centre of commerce” the township was.⁵³

During the 1950s, as the municipal art policies were being formed, also the public funding for art varied significantly in Finnish municipalities. According to inquiries sent by the Finnish Artists' Association to Finnish towns and municipalities during the time period of 1952–55, fifteen towns in Finland used over million marks (equalling roughly 30,000 euros) and six towns more than five millions (roughly 150,000 euros) on art institutions, supporting artists, and purchasing art combined.⁵⁴ In most towns, the sum was very small, or there was no public funding for art. Interestingly, the spending on art does not correlate with the size of the city: Tampere spent the most: 22.5 million marks (668,500 euros) in four years' time, and Turku came second with 16.2 million marks (472,000 euros). Helsinki was only third in public funding of art (13.6 million marks, 400,000 euros), and the number is even more modest if divided per capita.⁵⁵ This is partly explained by the fact that due to the capital status of Helsinki, the state maintained a number of art institutions in the city.

The public funding for art also varied greatly in the named cities from one year to another, which communicates of a lack of overall planning. Furthermore, it should be noted that these numbers do not necessarily correlate with the number of realised public paintings. Funding for public painting was acquired from different sources, such as from the construction budget of a building, or directly from the City Board. In Turku, the artist Irja Soini was employed by the City Building Department in 1954 with a monthly salary of 35,000 marks (1,030 euros) for the duration of the execution of a mosaic work the city had commissioned to a workers' canteen in the harbour.⁵⁶ [Image 102.]

In most cases, the municipal art committees were not allocated separate budgets for commissioning public artworks, but the funds were in each case applied for from the City

Board. Likewise, once the State Art Commission was established, it was not given a budget of its own but it worked with construction surplus until 1970. The Percent for Art program was never enforced on the governmental level but it was adopted in various cities: in the 1950s at least in Helsinki and in Hämeenlinna.⁵⁷ Also Tampere, Jyväskylä, Oulu, Hyvinkää, Kemi, and Kuopio adopted the program in the 1960s.⁵⁸ The percentage program was, however, generally put to effect only sporadically.

Around Finland, the commissioning of public paintings accelerated during the latter half of the 1950s. The production of public paintings often began prior to the establishing of a municipal art committee, which resulted in varying practices. Smaller towns might have commissioned only one or few public paintings—not indicating a systematic production. However, also these isolated cases appeared around the same time in the 1950s.

School Construction and Art in Education

The municipal public painting production during the postwar period covered a wide array of locations: hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes, theatres, concert halls, city halls, and so forth. Educational facilities, however, dominated in numbers. In 1954, the Finnish Artists' Association suggested that since it was not possible or practical to place art in every public building, locations that were “frequented by lots of people”, such as schools, hospitals, and office buildings, should be prioritised. In these premises, artworks could “effectively fulfil their mission also in the educational sense”.⁵⁹

The Finnish school system was and is a central agent in promoting the values of the society. However, during the 1950s, there existed two parallel school systems with different student strata and different missions. The municipal elementary school system, *kansakoulu*, offered all-round education. In particular the children from the lower parts of the society attended only the elementary school, while those in search of higher education parted after a few years to private secondary schools. Also the state maintained secondary schools, in which the tuition fees were lower than with other organisers. Higher education was mainly available in the cities, and for the more affluent part of the society.⁶⁰ The municipal art commissions naturally concentrated in municipal *kansakoulu* schools. In the end of the 1960s, the Finnish school system was renewed and a comprehensive school system *peruskoulu* replaced the two parallel systems. At this point, many private secondary schools became public—and, along with the premises, their public paintings.

The Compulsory School Act was enacted in Finland in 1921, during the short reign of Centre government (formed by *Maalaisliitto* and *Kansallinen edistyspuolue*). The municipalities had up to sixteen years to realise schooling for everyone, as the task was known to burden their economy. Thus, the national school building project was completed—for the time being—in the 1930s.⁶¹ In the postwar years, there was a renewed demand for large-scale school construction.

The school act has to be seen partly as a result of the civil war, and the unification policies of the Centre parties. The idea of common schooling, however, meant different things for different political parties. The ideal of the Liberal Centre Party was to unite the

nation through common education. For the National Coalition Party (*Kokoomus*), common schooling was seen as a means of straightening the people up according to the White values. For the Social Democratic Party, this was precisely what was feared. The party, for example, opposed religion in the school curriculum—in vain.⁶² Finnish school historian Sirkka Ahonen has argued that the idea of pluralism was not recognised in school curriculum. On the contrary, the school system was, indeed, aimed for committing the losing side of the civil war to the values of the victors. Even more importantly, the objective of uniting the nation failed as the parallel school system maintained inequality in education. In the 1930s, mere 12% of children attended secondary school.⁶³ Also, up to 13% of children were without access for any schooling, as the Compulsory School Act did not oblige children in sparsely populated areas.⁶⁴

Until the postwar years, the Art for Schools Association had been a main commissioner of public paintings for schools, and original artworks were rarely encountered in school premises. In the late 1940s, some public paintings were realised in educational facilities, mainly as donations, but starting from the early years of the 1950s they were produced in growing numbers by municipalities around the country. Half of the public paintings produced for the cities of Helsinki, Tampere, and Turku between 1950–70 were located in schools. In Oulu, all three public commissions were for school localities, and in Jyväskylä three out of five—the remaining two being kindergartens. Indeed, public paintings were also commissioned for day care facilities and Adult Education Centres, “Workers’ Institutes”. The new university buildings in Helsinki and Tampere were decorated with public paintings in the 1950s and 1960s. Furthermore, the early state public painting commissioning—from 1956—concentrated on school localities: of the ten monumental paintings commissioned by the State Art Commission in 1956–64, seven were located in educational facilities.

The question of locating public paintings is connected to the construction of public buildings. And, between 1952 and 1960, when the production of public paintings peaked, the number of schools built in Finland outnumbered all other public buildings combined. According to Sirkka-Liisa Jetsonen, schools were “the building project of the 1950s”.⁶⁵ Following World War II, several factors put pressure on school building. First, the country had lost nearly 150 schools in the bombings of the wars, and 500 schools had been left at the ceded areas, whereas the pupils of those schools moved to what was left of Finland.⁶⁶ Second, and even more important factor was the birth of the baby boomers, who reached school age from 1952 onward. In Turku, the number of children attending elementary school doubled from the mid-1940s to mid-1950s, and, in Helsinki, the number tripled.⁶⁷ Besides birth rates, the number of school children grew in the cities due to the fast urbanisation. As a result of the rapid growth, eighteen new schools were built in Helsinki in the 1950s, and fourteen in the 1960s. Also several extensions to the existing schools were built.⁶⁸ Despite the measures of construction, schools were unable to accommodate all of the children at one time, and many functioned in two shifts.⁶⁹

In larger cities, the school construction in the postwar decades was concentrated in the suburbs, which reflects the growth and spreading of the cities. Due to the comparably late urbanisation, Finland was urbanised and suburbanised nearly simultaneously. In 1950, over 80% of the population of Helsinki, circa 300,000 people, lived in the central area of Helsinki, in “Helsinki proper”. In 1970, the number had dropped to 42%.⁷⁰ At the same time, the neighbouring towns of Helsinki grew significantly.⁷¹ Families moved out to the suburbs,

and most of the new schools were built to the new residential areas. Schools played an important role in urban and suburban planning. Schools were neighbourhood cornerstones, and often centres to which other municipal services, such as health centres and libraries, were annexed.

From the point of view of architecture, the 1950s in Finland have been characterised as a “Heroic period”, referring to international fame gaining modernist form language, and also a time of hero architects with Alvar Aalto as the leading figure. Nevertheless, despite the masculine ethos of heroism, the everyday life was in the special focus of architecture. Serious attention was paid, not only to prominent public buildings, but also to social housing projects, schools, and kindergartens.⁷² Standardised plans for school buildings were used to satisfy the huge demand, especially in small rural schools, but generally school buildings were individually designed.⁷³ In Helsinki, schools were designed by notable architects, such as J. S. Sirén (Myllykallio School and Lapinlahti Central School), and by Jorma Järvi (Herttoniemi and Pakila Schools and Kulosaari Coeducational School).⁷⁴ Sirkkaliisa Jetsonen has emphasised the roles of Jorma Järvi and Aarne Ervi in renewing the Finnish school architecture.⁷⁵

In urban areas in the 1940s and continuing until the 1950s, there was a preference towards tall and large buildings that were considered most cost-efficient. Economic factors largely dictated the preconditions for school construction, and architects were not necessarily encouraged to search for new solutions. Novelties in school architecture spread more towards the end of the 1950s. The typical school building, especially in Helsinki, came to be a low brick and plate structure with band windows. Schools were lighter in structure, followed the principles of rational architecture, and were scaled according to their surroundings.⁷⁶

Sirkkaliisa Jetsonen has named the Meilahti School from 1953, designed by Viljo Revell and Osmo Sipari, as a turning point in Finnish school architecture.⁷⁷ The school was commissioned based on a competition, which Revell and Sipari won with their design *Piha* (Yard). As the name implies, the yard was a central element to the design, as the school curved around its site, leaving as much space for the school yard as possible.⁷⁸ Meilahti School also houses a public painting by Onni Oja, located in the main lobby, in the area in the middle of the curved construction, which separates the lower elementary school from the upper elementary school, the dining room, and gymnasium. There is a round staircase in the middle of the lobby, which adds to the curved sensation of the space. The painting was realised after the completion of the building, but the architect Revell was involved in the planning of the painting project. He had hoped for an abstract painting, “which is most profitable for the architecture,” but the wish was not, however, fulfilled.⁷⁹

Ideally, public paintings were to match both the architecture and the function of the building in question. A connection to the function of a building was often sought with the selection of the subject matter and the applied form language, but the relation to architecture was sought with varying intensity. The State Art Commission, for example, arranged public painting competitions without clearly communicating the future location of a painting. In school buildings, public paintings were most often located in hallways, cafeterias, and assembly halls, where they received the biggest possible audiences, and which had large enough walls to accommodate monumental paintings. The lack of suitable spaces was often lamented.



Image 52. Lobby of Meilahti Elementary School by Viljo Revell and Osmo Sipari, with a painting by Onni Oja. Helsinki. Photo: JR 2006.

The emphasis on placing art in schools was not only based on measures of public construction but it was also an ideological choice: “Precisely on the walls of schools, in front of the eyes of the growing youth, art best fulfils its educational mission,”⁸⁰ wrote the art critic Edvard Richter in *Helsingin Sanomat* in 1947 at the unveiling of a fresco by Hilikka Toivola for the Normal School for Girls. [Image 97.] With this claim, Richter summed up some of the key ideas behind the school mural production: art has an educational mission, and it is best taken advantage of in schools. Placing art in schools manifested both the position of school as the most important institution of social reformation in the society, and as “a cultural institution.”⁸¹ With the educational mission, the postwar public art commissions continued on a basis laid by the art education movement and the Art for Schools Association in the early century.

The educational mission of art had several implications: an encounter with an original artwork was to civilise and educate the viewing subject. Then, by means of officially produced public painting, the society was to benefit through having more civilised citizens, and the artworld through a wider public interested in art. The placing of costly artworks in schools also suggested a high value given to education and children—it implied humane values from the part of the authorities. As the interiors of school buildings were not accessible to the large public, or the customary art audience, the production of art for schools suggested that children were valued as a public for art. But, as was clearly indicated in the writings of the time and through the realised paintings, they were considered a specific kind of public, which demanded a specific kind of art.

The other side of the coin is that school locations have often been little appreciated, and the public artworks they house have been omitted in the Finnish art historical writing and often left to fall into decay. In 1968, the State Art Commission lamented that due to its regulations, the most important buildings were often left without decoration—while a large proportion of the realised decorations were for schools.⁸² Furthermore, the two failed public painting competitions to the Parliament House, in 1930 and 1961, suggested that the organisers did not consider Finnish artists capable of decorating the valued space. Public paintings were executed for prominent public buildings but not, in the end, for the most prestigious.

Governmental Art Commissions

Systematic governmental production of public paintings began in Finland later than in many municipalities and private companies. The production for municipalities also outnumbered, by far, that for the state. Nevertheless, the state was an important agent in the field: it arranged prestigious competitions with considerable awards, and as a commissioner it imposed an emphatically official and national character for the produced works.

Systematic governmental public painting commissioning was launched in 1956. The National Council for Visual Arts (*Valtion kuvaamataidelautakunta*) had been established at the time of independence of the country in 1918. At times, the council pronounced views regarding questions of public art but the commissioning of such works did not belong to its mandate. In 1956, the Finnish Government made an initiative of beautifying public buildings with artworks, and the State Art Commission was established to fulfil this mission.

The resolution enabled using a part of construction budgets for the “beautification of buildings with artworks”.⁸³ The use of construction budgets had also been an objective of municipalities, and was the goal, for example, behind Helsinki City’s tentative Percent for Art resolution. Nevertheless, the state regulation allowed the acquiring of art only for buildings which undercut their budgets. This meant that artworks were not systematically commissioned. Furthermore, the initiative of acquiring art had to come from the ministry that would govern the building in question, National Board of Building (*Rakennushallitus*), or the State Building Committee (*Valtion rakennustoimikunta*). In October 1956, the State Art Commission, which had been functioning for five months, noted that it had not received any assignments for acquiring art, and decided to approach ministries, asking them to make initiatives.⁸⁴

The first committee was formed of the representatives of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Transport and Public Works, and Ministry of Finance, as well as the National Board of Building, augmented with three artists members, painter Unto Pusa and sculptor Aimo Tukiainen as representatives of the Finnish Artists’ Association, and painter Aarre Heinonen as the representative of the School of the Fine Arts Academy of Finland (*Suomen Taideakatemia koulu*, today known as Academy of Fine Arts).⁸⁵ In the first meeting, only the political members were present, and Aarre Heinonen resigned before ever attending a meeting. Erkki Koponen was appointed to replace him.⁸⁶

In November 1956, the committee was assigned its first beautification project for the Imatra Lyceum, the construction budget of which had a surplus of 700,000 marks. The Art Commission calculated that the sum would suffice for a closed competition between three artists. The winner would be paid 510,000 marks (circa 14,000 euros) for the execution of the work, and the two others 75,000 marks (2,000 euros) each.⁸⁷ Erkki Koponen suggested the artists Jorma Kardén, Urpo Vainio (Wainio), and Veikko Vionoja, and they were, consequently, invited to the competition, arranged in 1957.⁸⁸ Vionoja, who was known especially for meditative landscape paintings, and who had prior to this competition executed some public and altar paintings, received the commission.⁸⁹

The realised painting by Vionoja is a rather rigid composition of four girls in a round game. The figures are notably large, and the colour scale is light and soft, dominated by the green surroundings. As the first monumental painting commissioned by the State Art Commission, the work did not suggest a notably radical take on public art. The committee accepted Vionoja's work in September 1959, and the final payment, 70% of the total sum, was paid to Vionoja at this moment.⁹⁰ According to Lauri Ahlgrén, who realised a painting for the state in 1959, the State Art Commission took works of an artist as a deposit for the down payment. Ahlgrén suggests that the reputation of artists appeared too bad to trust them with payments before the realising of the commissioned work.⁹¹

In 1957, the committee organised an open competition for sketches for public art. The technique and subject of the sketches were free, and the locations were not specified in more detail than to be "mainly state secondary schools, agricultural schools and vocational schools" as well as possibly "some office buildings and other public buildings". Inside these buildings, the locations were established as "mainly halls and lobbies." As public paintings were understood to function in close relation to the architecture, both by form and by subject, the unspecified location of a painting may have presented problems for the artists. Nevertheless, the competition received 69 painting and mosaic propositions, and 50 sculpture and relief propositions.⁹² As a result of the competition, four public paintings were commissioned. In addition, four sketches were acquired out of construction budgets of two schools and two office buildings.⁹³

Among the awarded artists was Lauri Ahlgrén, whose sketch was commissioned to be realised for the practice school of the Teachers' College in Heinola in 1958. At the same time, completed in 1959, Ahlgrén executed an altar painting for his home parish, Karkku, and he later became a renowned abstract artist, specialising in monumental and glass painting. The painting for Heinola, *Vapaapäivä* (Day off), has narrative elements but the painting is strongly abstracted, large colour fields juxtaposed to geometrically decomposed human figures. [Image 53.] The large painting is dominated by blue shades, and depicts boys running and riding bikes, and a group of seated girls or women, one caressing her hair, one holding a child.

Lauri Ahlgrén remembers that in preparing a sketch for the competition, he included the bicycle motif he had seen in Sam Vanni's sketches for the Kauttua public painting competition in Vanni's studios. A man with a bicycle was also present in Ahlgrén's altarpiece for Karkku Parish Hall. According to Ahlgrén, Vanni, on his part, had got the idea of the bicycle motif from his visit to Paris.⁹⁴ The locations for the paintings had not been specified at the time of the competition, but Ahlgrén suspects that the subject of "running children" made his sketch seen appropriate for a school location. Ahlgrén also notes the concept

of “day off” was somewhat in fashion at the moment as the demand for leisure time was growing in the society.⁹⁵ The themes of the painting were, thus, inspired by examples the artist had seen in other artworks as well as contemporary discussions within the society.



Image 53. Lauri Ahlgren, *Vapaapäivä* (Day off), 1959. Oil and tempera on canvas, 300 x 400. Seminaari School, Heinola. State Art Collection. Photo: JR 2009.



Image 54. Tapani Jokela, *Wheel*, 1960. Oil and tempera on canvas, 220 x 500. Hamina Lyceum. Currently in Hamina Library. State Art Collection. Photo: JR 2009.

The other realised works, by Tapani Jokela for Hamina Lyceum (later moved to Hamina Library), by Erkki Hervo for Lappeenranta Secondary School and by Stig Fredriksson for Äänekoski Office Building (both currently in storage), also worked with monumental compositions based on juxtaposing abstract and figurative elements, but in their own distinct ways. Tapani Jokela was developing his monumental expression in various public works around the same time: he realised a painting for Tuomela School in Hämeenlinna in 1957 and Männistö School in Kuopio in 1959. The painting for Hamina Lyceum was completed in 1960. [Image 54.]

In 1960, the State Art Commission arranged another large competition to decorate three schools and one office building: two with sculptures and two with paintings. The realised public paintings were by Juhani Linnovaara for Seinäjoki Lyceum and by Unto Pusa for Kokkola Office Building. No additional prizes were given out.⁹⁶ Juhani Linnovaara's take of monumental painting was unique in the Finnish context, coloured by surrealist elements. The scene in Linnovaara's painting for Seinäjoki takes place on the beach—lacking any direct local or national references. Two men play ball and a group of women contemplate the sea, creating an even stronger emphasis on leisure time than Ahlgrén's work. Clear yellow and blue shades dominate the colour scale. [Image 55.] For Linnovaara, this was his second public commission; the first had been for Fazer factories in Vantaa in 1957.⁹⁷ Unto Pusa, on the contrary, was an established monumental painter and the painting for Kokkola Office Building repeats themes from his other public commissions. *Keskus* (Centre) is a composition based on the interplay of abstract and figurative elements. A large propeller spinning on top of the town plan of Kokkola, together with local landmarks, ground the work to its locality, and an excavator suggests the continuing construction of the city.⁹⁸ [Image 56.]

The early years of the 1960s testify to a change in the public painting commissioning of the State Art Commission, and in the form language of the realised paintings. The State Art Commission made its first direct public painting commission in 1963 to an office building on Bulevardi in Helsinki. During the competition of 1960, Erkki Koponen had asked to be released from the State Art Commission.⁹⁹ If the motif had been to take part in the competition, it was in vain, as he was not awarded. However, this first direct commission was made from Koponen. The committee had difficulties in deciding between the two abstract sketches presented by Koponen, for which reason he completed both of them. Eventually, the work *Energian purkaus* (Eruption of energy) was placed in the cafeteria of the building.¹⁰⁰ [Image 57.]

Sam Vanni received two commissions from the State Art Commission: for Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) in 1963 and for the Vocational College of Lapland in Rovaniemi on the basis of a competition in 1964, realised in 1965 and 1966 respectively.¹⁰¹ [Images 137–138.] Interestingly, none of the public paintings commissioned by the State Art Commission in the 1960s can be characterised as representing *art informel*, which enjoyed much institutional support and was often favoured in public paintings at that moment.¹⁰²

Towards the end of the 1960s, the State Art Commission started to reflect its scope of action, and approached the National Board of Building in 1968 concerning the matter. As buildings were understood in hierarchical position with each other, art was considered most necessary in the most valued locations. However, according to the rules of the committee, the construction surplus could only be used to decorate the building, from which the surplus



Image 55. Juhani Linnovaara, *Excelsior*, 1961. Oil and tempera on canvas, 230 x 425. Seinäjoki Lyceum. Currently in Seinäjoki Campus House. State Art Collection. Photo: JR 2010.



Image 56. Unto Pusa, *Keskus (Centre)*, 1962. Oil and tempera on canvas, 235 x 450. Kokkola District Court. State Art Collection. Photo: JR 2010.



Image 57. Erkki Koponen, *Energian purkaus* (Eruption of energy), 1964. Tempera, 135 x 360. State Office Building, Helsinki. State Art Collection. Photo: JR 2006.

originated. The Art Commission lamented that the surplus in construction budgets was arbitrary: more important buildings might have been left without any artistic decoration whereas some less important building projects might have saved a great deal in its budget. In addition, the committee noted there had been less surplus during the last years, and these funds had not always been allocated for art. The committee suggested a yearly budget of 300,000 marks (circa 412,000 euros, 0.12% of the state construction budget in 1968), with which it could decorate ten *important* buildings.¹⁰³

At the same time, artists' associations publicly stated their dissatisfaction with the nomination of the artist members in the state committees. The recommendations of the associations had been repeatedly omitted. A statement requiring the Ministry of Education to take action on this matter was published in *Helsingin Sanomat* in January 1968.¹⁰⁴ Following this discussion, in 1970, the organisation of the State Art Commission was renewed. It gained a yearly budget and was moved under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education who, from this point on, appointed the members to the committee.¹⁰⁵

Before the reform, the State Art Commission had produced ten public paintings. The latest commission was from Vanni in 1964, completed in 1966. During this time, the Art Commission had not had a budget of its own. It could manage the construction budget surplus it was allocated, and decide, for example, whether a painting or sculpture would be commissioned to the building in question, and how. Among the small number of public paintings the State Art Commission commissioned during its first ten years, a large variation of approaches is seen, and it commissioned both from established as well as younger artists. Thematically the paintings were in line with the public paintings painted for other

commissioners at the time. As a governmental agent, its scope of action was clearly defined, and the procedures rather strict.

Even though the State Art Commission did not freely choose the locations where art was commissioned, it is worth noting that seven out of the ten public paintings were located in schools. This may be explained by more than one fact: first of all, schools were built in great numbers, even by the state. Second, school constructions may have had budget surplus more often than other constructions, or, the Ministry of Education may have allocated the budget surplus to the committee more easily than other ministries due to its close relation to it. However, it is not irrelevant that the relationship between public art and education was understood as being close. Even later, when the budget of the committee has not been earmarked to construction budgets, educational facilities have played an important role as locations for state commissioned public paintings—summing up to half of the production between 1956 and 2009.¹⁰⁶

Indicating Corporate Social Responsibility

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, Finnish public painting had largely depended on the private sector. Also in the immediate postwar phase, in the late 1940s, the corporate investment in public painting was noteworthy, and the number of corporate commissions grew even more in the 1950s.

Unlike often presented, the private and public sector, market forces and public authorities, are not in contradictory positions; they are not each other's counterforces. Instead, the operation of market forces has been dependent on public authorities in Finland. Legislation has controlled the possible actions of the citizens and corporations within the market forces. And, vice versa, Finnish society has depended on many services produced by the private sector.¹⁰⁷ Naturally, the mid-20th century corporate world was not obliged to support art or commission artworks. Yet, commissioning artworks was a way for gaining visibility and manifesting corporate social responsibility, for showing participation in the welfare society. Specific reasoning in individual cases varied on a wide spectrum.

Corporate social responsibility refers to the responsibility taken on by a corporation on economic, social, and today especially ecologic questions beyond the level demanded in legislation. The term may not have been evoked in the discussions on public painting commissioning, but the basic ideal was clearly visible in the practice. Elisa Juholin has connected the question of social responsibility in Northern Europe already to the time of industrialisation, with factory owners offering social services to their employees.¹⁰⁸ In 1960, the theorist of corporate social responsibility Keith Davis articulated that socially responsible business decisions could be justified with an expectation of long-run economic gain to the firm.¹⁰⁹ Social responsibility did not, then, mean altruistic behavior. Doing “public good” was hopefully rewarded with benefits for the corporate image.

Banks had commissioned monumental paintings for their branches since the 1910s. Nevertheless, entering the 1950s, art was not that common a sight in bank localities. The Nordic Union Bank commissioned monumental paintings for its branches already at the

turn of the 1950s: for the Rovaniemi and Joensuu branches in 1949, Kemi and Turku in 1950, and Lahti in 1951.¹¹⁰ But, for example Postal Savings Bank (*Postisäästöpankki*) began collecting art in the 1950s in very moderate numbers, and acquired public paintings only in the 1960s. In KOP Bank, systematic art collecting began in 1959. At that moment, the collection housed around 40 paintings and a few sculptures. The art collection of the Bank of Finland was about the same size.¹¹¹ According to Juha Ilvas, in the 1950s, resources were in short supply, and thrift was a national virtue. Thus, for example banks could not spend money on art without a good reason.¹¹² However, justification for acquiring art was found among the management of various companies—even banks.

The outspoken reasoning for the art acquisitions dealt with the benefit of the society. It was emphasised that the companies functioned with other than economic goals in mind. Upon the unveiling of a painting *Rakennustyömaa* (Construction site, 1955) by Erik Enroth in 1956 in the Nordic Union Bank branch in Turku, the bank declared its social program: the aim of acquiring art was not only to beautify its office but also to make one's part "in supporting young artists who are dealing with financial difficulties."¹¹³ [Image 108.] In 1960, the Jyväskylä region newspapers celebrated the cultural values of the local bank who had commissioned a public painting from Erkki Heikkilä. [Image 124.] The papers quoted the speech held at the unveiling ceremony by Mauno Pohjonen, the chairman of the board of the bank, and a Member of the Parliament, who declared that "money should not be allowed to master".¹¹⁴

"This bank wants to advance the economic and spiritual growth of its field of operation. In the latter meaning it has strived to beautify the banking hall. Therefore, a large painting was commissioned from the local boy Erkki Heikkilä, who has shown national competence in the field of art."¹¹⁵

The corporate agents often justified the acquisition of art with the desire to support artists and to look after the wellbeing of one's workers. The corporate world, thus, claimed to share the social agenda of public commissioners. The head of the textile factory Kutomo & Punomo in Turku argued in 1953 that the sense of safety, healthiness, and comfort for the employees were important factors in building an industrial establishment. By commissioning a painting from Helge Stén for the factory canteen, the corporation argued to have improved the atmosphere of the establishment.¹¹⁶ In addition, corporate directors articulated their hopes of exposing the workers to art, and thus motivating them to enjoy art also during their free time.¹¹⁷ Helge Virkkunen, a member of the board of cooperative SOK stores 1949–62, who was responsible for its art acquisitions, pondered that "surely art touches also the salesperson, bookkeeper, and the girl at the cashier's office."¹¹⁸

The patronising attitude of Virkkunen echoes those of the official discussions: public painting served essentially to civilise the people from the top down. However, a main justification for spending money on art is likely found in the benefits achieved for the corporate image through a public painting. The commissioning of a public painting received much attention: public paintings were often noted in the newspapers, and the companies were expressed explicit thanks for their exemplary actions on supporting art. Thus, the PR-values of public painting commissioning were undeniable, even if the term was not used at the time.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, encountering art in one's business locality gave a certain image of the company to the customer: it implied the humane values of the corporation.



Image 58. Juhani Linnovaara, *Fazerin kanttiinissa* (In Fazer's canteen), 1957. Oil on canvas, 280 x 470. Fazer Factories, Vantaa. Photo: JR 2010.

Private agents not only commissioned art for their premises but also donated them to public buildings. Donating a painting carried similar PR-values—and social agenda—as commissioning a public painting for one's own spaces, enhanced perhaps with a twist of altruism. The goodwill of the patrons was generally noted in the press at the unveiling of the work, and their generosity may even have been recorded in the vicinity of the painting.

In private companies, the acquisition of art depended and depends largely on the interests and preferences of the management of the corporation. In 1956, the head of the Fazer bakery and confectionery industry, Sven Fazer, commissioned a monumental painting for the newly built Fazer factory building in Vantaa from Juhani Linnovaara. The painting was commissioned following an exhibition in Gallery Artek—the first major exhibition of the 22-year-old surrealist—which the industrialist had seen and from which he had acquired two paintings for his company.¹²⁰ By selecting a young artist with no previous experience in monumental size, Fazer positioned himself as a friend of art with a strong taste.

The painting *Fazerin kanttiinissa* (In Fazer's canteen) lacks the conservative elements of localism, and depictions of work and humble Finnishness. Also stylistically, the painting works outside of the main lines of Finnish postwar public painting, employing neither the Norwegian pseudo-cubist monumental composing, nor of the Léger-influenced modernist mural language. Instead, the setting is surreal, with a young girl with a whisk as the central figure, staring firmly at the spectator. [Image 58.] Disregarding many conventions of the genre, Linnovaara actively took part in public painting competitions, and was awarded in the public painting competition of the State Art Commission in 1960. [Image 55.]

In particular in smaller towns, where municipal investment in art was often small or non-existent, the corporate investment may have gained great significance. In the town of

Varkaus, where the Ahlström Paper Mills were the main employer, Harry Gullichsen, the director of the corporation in 1932–54, and especially his wife Maire were important patrons of art. The Ahlström Corporation funded an altar fresco for the Varkaus Church (1951–54), and Harry Gullichsen sat in the jury of the painting competition.¹²¹ The Gullichsens also funded a monumental painting by Sven Grönvall for the Varkaus Retirement Home in 1953. Maire Gullichsen was behind the arranging the Kauttua public painting competition between Finnish modernists in 1946, and she created and maintained several art institutions, especially in support of international modernism, such as the Free Art School (*Vapaa taidekoulu*), and Gallery Artek.¹²²

Sven Grönvall was a personal friend to Maire Gullichsen and dedicated a sketch for the Retirement Home painting to Maire and Harry Gullichsen, “who made possible the execution of the painting”.¹²³ The painting *Elämän kulku tehtaan varjossa* (The course of life in the shadow of the factory) depicts, as the name implies, different stages of life: a young couple in the left, two women and a child in the middle and an elderly couple to the right. [Image 59.] Two young boys and two workers, men with bare upper bodies, complete the group of people. In the middle of the painting in the background, the two water towers and three pipes of the Ahlström paper mills are seen.

For the small community of Varkaus, the paper mills were an important provider of local identity. Bruno Tuukkanen had included the paper mills in his public painting painted in 1940 for the cooperative department store TOK in Varkaus, and even the altarpiece by Lennart Segerstråle at the Varkaus Church (1954) refers to the locality and honours the commissioner of the work with the inclusion of a scene of paper manufacturing, workers handling a huge roll of paper.¹²⁴ Bruno Tuukkanen’s painting features people enjoying a day in airy, green and lush landscape. [Image 60.] Between the two green hills on the left and right, the two water towers and three pipes of the Ahlström Paper Mills are seen in the horizon. While the foreground of the work is a fantasy landscape, the paper mills refer to the reality—or to the provider of this luxurious life in the foreground.

It is tempting to read Grönvall’s painting, funded by the Ahlström Corporation, as a eulogy for the factories. However, the solemn, burdened features of the figures points also to another reading to the “shadow of the factory”. The leftist conviction of Sven Grönvall is suggested with the nude boy, escorted by a worker, delivering a red flag for the mother and infant in the middle. An earlier monumental painting by Sven Grönvall, painted in 1939 for the Wärtsilä headquarters, similarly suggests sympathies for the workers’ movement through the strained appearances of the shirtless workers.¹²⁵

Most often, the public painting production of the private sector was in line with that of the official commissioners, but the art commissions also may have suggest different viewpoints on public painting, as the examples of Linnovaara and Grönvall indicate.¹²⁶ It is noteworthy that in the postwar decades, a leftist imagery became a possibility in corporate spaces instead of the right-wing commissions from the interwar period. But, as official commissions had mainly refrained from suggesting strongly right-wing political statements in the 1930s, they also refrained from notably leftist contents in the 1950s.

Following World War II, right-wing patriotic public paintings were not commissioned even for the corporate spaces, and those from earlier decades were not looked well upon: the *War of Freedom* frescoes by Eric O. W. Ehrström in the lobby of the Vocational School of Kymi Corporation in Kuusankoski from 1933 were covered in the postwar years and



Image 59. Sven Grönvall, *Elämän kulku tehtaan varjossa* (The course of life in the shadow of the factory), 1953. Oil, 215 x 450. Varkaus Retirement Home, now Käpykangas Service Centre. Photo: JR 2010.



Image 60. Bruno Tuukkanen, *Varkaus*, 1940. Oil, 197 x 523. TOK department store. Currently in Päivönsaari School, Varkaus. Photo: Sinikka Miettinen, Varkaus Art Museum.

not re-exposed until 1983.¹²⁷ Noteworthy, the unveiling happened at the same time as the church decorations from the 1950s were removed in search of “original” state of the church interiors.¹²⁸ Apparently, in the 1980s, the subject of the civil war could be historicised as “original decoration”, and claimed to promote values from the time of their commission, not the contemporary values of the company. However, in the postwar decades, the imagery had been too laden for this kind of relativist interpretation.

During the postwar period, public art commissioning was a way for the corporate patrons to manifest their social responsibility: the practice was justified by employing artists and investing in the visual environment of the workplace. Art purchasing suggested that the commissioning body had other aspects besides financial gain on its agenda. Importantly,

through their articulated social agenda, public paintings positioned corporations as socially responsible members of the welfare state.

Monumental Altar Paintings

The Church has a long history of art patronage in Europe, also in Finland. The main question where the Finnish Evangelic Lutheran Church and art intersected in the postwar years was the execution of memorials for the Fallen in the past wars. However, also national altar painting competitions were arranged, even if in limited numbers, for churches in the 1950s, and the outcomes of these competitions employed contemporary, highly stylised, and geometrically simplified monumental language. The conventions of monumentality were applied largely in the same way in church interiors as in public buildings.

The role of the Evangelic Lutheran Church within Finnish society has been significant, and it has been institutionally closely connected to the public authorities. It had the power to levy and collect taxes until the 1950s, and, until 2000, the President of the Republic was the head of the Church.¹²⁹ In the 19th century, the Church had an important role in public education, and in support of the Finnish nationalism. The Finnish national values have been, thus, deeply connected to Lutheran Christianity, summed up in the patriarchal trinity of “Home, Religion, and Fatherland”; that is, subsuming to the power of the father of the family, God, and the authorities. Despite freedom of religion, the special status of the Evangelic Lutheran Church has been secured in the Finnish legislation, which has also defined blasphemy a crime. Due to its institutional position, the Evangelic Lutheran Church has also been a strong moral leader in the Finnish society.

According to Kerttuli Wessman, the costs of memorial monuments led, among other reasons, to a situation where the church interiors were in the postwar period left without decoration or decorated with the cheapest, not necessarily the artistically most competent options.¹³⁰ However, this is only part of the picture. The Kemi parish arranged a national altar painting competition for the Kemi Church in 1951, Ahlström Corporation a closed competition for the Varkaus Church in 1952 and the alcohol manufacturer Alko for the Rajamäki Church in 1953. As a result of these competitions, high-quality, modern monumental paintings were executed for church premises: by Erkki Koponen for Kemi [image 61], Lennart Segerstråle for Varkaus, and Anna Räsänen for Rajamäki.¹³¹ As can be seen with the cases of Varkaus and Rajamäki, corporate patronage was intertwined also to the ecclesiastic public painting.

Lennart Segerstråle realised a large number of altar paintings in the 1950s, and was lauded as a master in the field. He is also an example of an artist who had strong religious beliefs and manifested them in his art. Yet, the devotedness of an artist was not necessary for taking an interest in altarpieces and ecclesiastic art. The group of artists, who realised municipal and corporate public paintings, also took part in altar and glass painting competitions in the postwar decades.

In addition to the specialised monumental painters, there were local painters dedicated to ecclesiastic art, creating less attention both among contemporaries as well as in retrospect.



Image 61. Erkki Koponen, *Minä olen ylösnousemus ja elämä* (I am the resurrection and the life), 1953. Oil on canvas, 260 x 613. Kemi Church. Currently in Paattio Chapel, Kemi. Photo: JR 2010.



Image 62. Urho Lehtinen, "*Jyväskylä*", 1956. Oil, 172 x 311. Jyväskylä Central School. Currently in Pupuhuhta School. Jyväskylä Art Museum. Photo: JR 2010.

For example the Jyväskylä based Urho Lehtinen worked with church decorations throughout his career, in a total of fifty churches. Lehtinen, who was first trained as a decorative painter, realised many types of church decorations but also several altar and glass paintings.¹³² He was not, however, successful in secular monumental painting competitions. In 1956, he realised a

public painting for a school, the Jyväskylä Central School (*Jyväskylän keskuskansakoulu*), as a commission of a local women's society. [Image 62.] Possibly the religious art of Lehtinen appealed to the commissioning association, but the crowded school painting did not employ the compositional conventions of monumentality. The lack of monumentality suggests a reason for Lehtinen not being successful in public competitions.¹³³

In Lapland, there was a large demand for church construction in the postwar years as the retreating German forces had damaged or completely destroyed several churches.¹³⁴ The reconstruction of churches was financially a large effort, and the losses were compensated by the state only to a small degree. The reconstruction of the Rovaniemi Church, for example, cost 132 million marks (4.7 million euros), of which the state funding was 4.8 million marks, less than four per cents.¹³⁵ American help was received for the construction of, for example, Pello, Turtola, and Enontekiö churches.¹³⁶

Prominent architects designed the reconstructed churches, and, for example the Salla Church by Eero Eerikäinen and Osmo Sipari is valued as a significant work within the Finnish modernism. The building, as well as the Rovaniemi Church by Bertel Liljequist, was realised as a result of a national design competition. Liljequist designed also the Kemijärvi Church and the Kuusamo Church in Oulu County, and the artist Antti Salmenlinna worked in all of these projects. Salmenlinna painted decorations as well as designed benches, pulpits, and lamps for the church buildings.¹³⁷ For the altar wall of the Rovaniemi Church, a fresco was commissioned from Lennart Segerstråle. Also other acclaimed artists realised altarpieces for the reconstructed northern churches. Aale Hakava painted a new altarpiece for the Kemijärvi (1950) and Pello (1953) churches, among others, and Uno Eskola an altarpiece combining fresco and mosaic techniques for the Enontekiö Church (1951).¹³⁸

In many of the new altar paintings local references, northern landscape, and Sami culture were combined together with Christian content.¹³⁹ Localism, the emphasising of local characteristics, functioned as a means of producing national sentiment. In 1953, Annikki Toikka-Karvonen evaluated many of the Finnish altarpieces “un-Finnish in their spirit”, and aesthetically modest, if not lousy. However, she praised the altar fresco of the Rovaniemi Church for embodying a spiritual message and being *national* by depicting the harsh northern landscape, as well as for being an aesthetically competent monumental painting.¹⁴⁰

The large fresco in the Rovaniemi Church, *Elämän lähde* (Well of life), depicts Christ as the central figure—his shadow cast to a pond in the foreground of the picture plane. [Image 63.] The pond divides people to those who follow the Christ, neat and solemn, and those who do not, quarrelling and fighting. In the foreground a man has passed out holding a bottle. [Image 64.] The people on the “bad” side compare to a pack of wolves eating a reindeer, whereas behind the “good” people, a distant population centre is seen in between the fields. In the painting, the man built environment, “civilisation”, relates to civilised, good people, and the northern wilderness to the low status of the people. In the sketches to the fresco, the reconstruction theme was also present, but in the final work, only few men in overalls on the good side subtly refer to it.¹⁴¹ Despite its great distance from the Southern Finnish artistic centres, the fresco was widely presented in the press, and sketches for the work were exhibited first in Helsinki in 1953, and then around Finland, raising wide interest in the media.

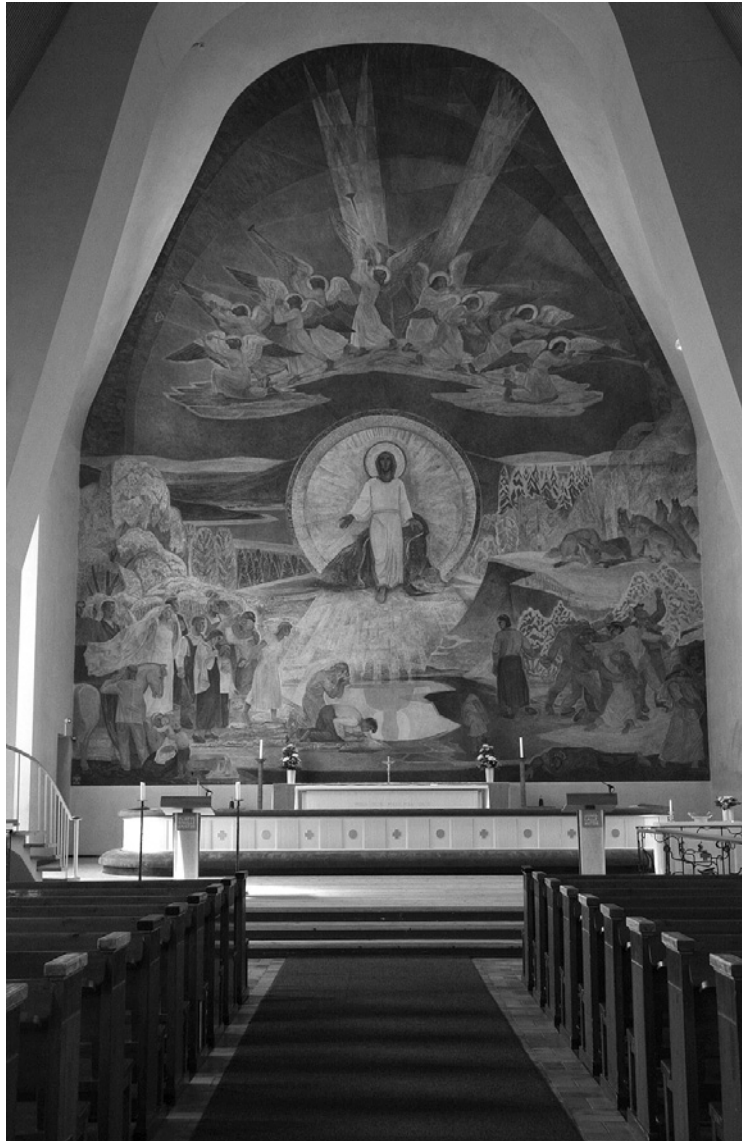
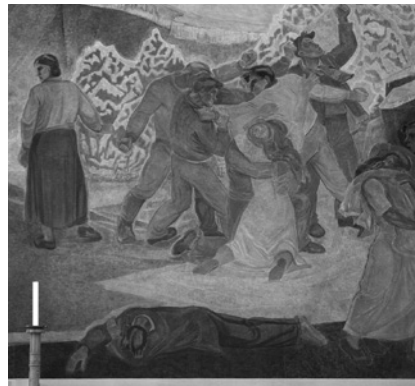


Image 63. Lennart Segerstråle, *Elämän lähde* (Well of life), 1951. Fresco, 1400 x 1100. Rovaniemi Church. Photo: JR 2010.

Right: Image 64. Lennart Segerstråle, *Elämän lähde* (Well of life), detail. As above.



In the postwar years, the church was given new functions, affecting also the Finnish church architecture. The church building was not to be a monumental centre of its surroundings, but a part of the everyday community. In the church design competitions of early 1950s, for Lahti (1950) and Seinäjoki (1951), the aim was a large compound, which included other facilities of the parish, such as meeting and office spaces. Both of these churches were designed by Alvar Aalto.¹⁴² Similarly, school buildings were often designed to house also other municipal services, such as health centres.

At the same time as altar painting competitions were being arranged, the desire for painted decorations diminished as the modernist church architecture became more common. The procedure was gradual, and the two traditions coexisted in the 1950s. Sculptural and pronouncedly modernist form language was used, for example, by Heikki and Kaija Sirén in the design of the Otaniemi Chapel (1954–57) and by Keijo Petäjä in that of the Lauttasaari Church (1958). Their form language denied the need for monumental paintings, in particular figurative ones. An art competition was, however, declared for the Lauttasaari Church in 1968, apparently against the wishes of the architect Petäjä. Without the approval of the Church Council, Lauri Ahlgrén's winning proposal was not realised.¹⁴³

In the early 1960s, when *art informel* broke ground in Finland, abstract works were commissioned also for modernist church spaces. In 1961, Kain Tapper realised an *informel* wooden altar relief *Golgotan kallio* (The rock of Golgata) for the Orivesi Church, designed by Heikki Sirén. The exceptional piece was shunned but not removed.¹⁴⁴ For the altar of the new Hyvinkää Church, the architect Aarno Ruusuvuori designed a cross, but a bold, red, *informel* monumental painting with black relief structure was commissioned from Jaakko Somersalo the lobby space in 1962 as a gift of the city to the church.¹⁴⁵ [Image 65.] A cross often replaced the altar painting as it was easier to skip the possible controversies caused by abstract paintings.¹⁴⁶

The ecclesiastic production is connected to the contemporary interests in public painting. During the 1950s, altar paintings were realised for churches that had been built decades earlier, even at the beginning of the century, such as for the Kylmäkoski Church from 1900 and Oulunjoki Church from 1908. However, since the 1960s, the appreciation for painted decorations of the earlier decades has been little.¹⁴⁷ The case of Kemi Church testifies to the changing cycles of the popularity of painted decorations: the church was built in 1902, an altarpiece was acquired from Erkki Koponen in 1951–53 [image 61], and in 1986, Lauri Ahlgrén executed glass paintings for the windows in the altar wall. In 1987, during the renovation of the church, Koponen's painting was removed, and the crucifix that had preceded the painting was returned to the altar wall. According to present-day values, the "scant decoration" is considered more original, and the altar wall that has a crucifix instead of painting is seen to "underline the simplified, devoted milieu."¹⁴⁸ Heikki Hanka has criticised this tendency, and called for toleration for visual inconsistency: according to Hanka, the Finnish church decorations were often realised during a long period of time, according to financial resources. Thus, the original look of a church interior has frequently been scant by necessity.¹⁴⁹

In the postwar years, monumental altar paintings were commissioned for new as well as old church buildings, in connection to the enthusiasm for monumental painting in other parts of the society. Altar paintings drew both from the contemporary ideals of public painting and the tradition of church decorations. At the same time, new architectural ideals

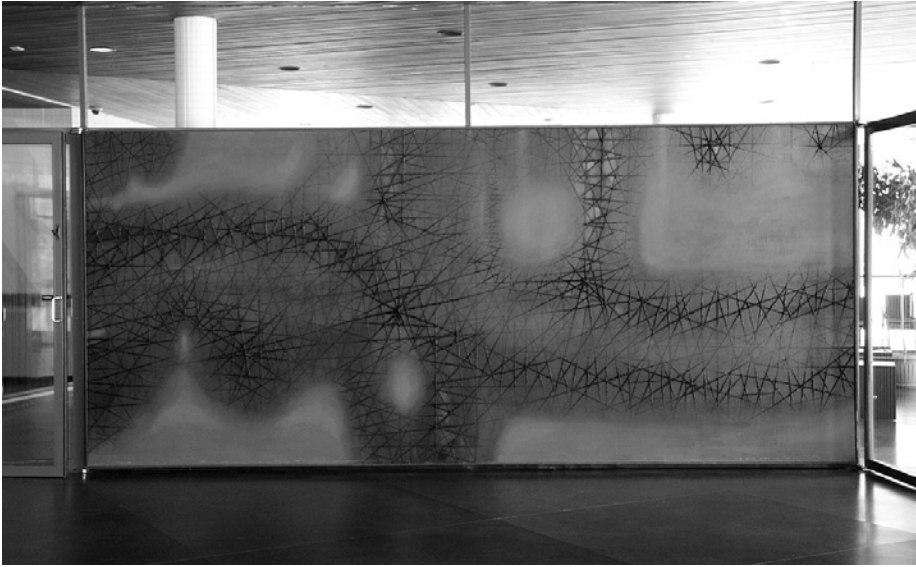


Image 65. Jaakko Somersalo, “*Red painting*”, 1962. Oil on canvas, 240 x 550. Hyvinkää Church. Photo: JR 2009.

denied the need for painted decorations. While the period from 1920s to 1950s is known as the era of “decorative church interiors”, in the postwar period, the ecclesiastic monumental painting did not reach the output of the secular public painting.

Opportunities for Artists and Finnish Art

In the mid-1950s, public painting was at the height of its popularity and the commissioning of public art functioned as a means of establishing oneself in support of artists and Finnish art. In 1955, The Finnish Cultural Foundation (*Suomen Kulttuurirahasto*) organised a large-scale public painting competition, as a result of which five public paintings were realised, mainly in facilities of higher education. Earlier that year, the yearly exhibition of the Finnish Artists’ Association had dedicated a whole department to monumental painting. *Helsingin Sanomat* had lauded the exhibition, as it brought deserved visibility to monumental art, which was “topical in a completely new way”.¹⁵⁰ Public painting was topical, since various agents found the possibilities it incorporated useful for their purposes. For the artworld, it created a point of connection with the surrounding society.

The Finnish Cultural Foundation was an important agent in supporting art and academic research. The foundation had been established in 1937 inspired by the Finnishness movement, and as a direct counterforce to the numerous wealthy cultural foundations of the Swedish-speaking Finns.¹⁵¹ Until then, the Alfred Kordelin Foundation had been a lonely agent in supporting Finnish-language culture. The monumental painting competition of the

Finnish Cultural Foundation was valued as a prestigious competition; it had notable awards and created wide interest. With the arranging of the competition, Osmo Laine lauded the foundation for functioning according to its *raison d'être*.¹⁵²

Alfred Kordelin Foundation had arranged art competitions in the 1920s and 1930s, and in the 1950s, the Finnish Cultural Foundation took up this method for supporting culture: it arranged composition competitions in 1954 and 1955, and a writing competition in 1957.¹⁵³ In 1962, the foundation arranged a monument competition for the premises of the University of Turku.¹⁵⁴

L. A. Puntila, the chairman of the board of the Finnish Cultural Foundation articulated the high ideals behind the arranging of the monumental painting competition. He emphasised that even “the best of artists cannot give their best” without opportunities for work. Puntila made an analogy to the Golden Age of Finnish art, when—according to Puntila—artists had been well trained and believed in their ability to serve “the preservation of the Finnish nation” and, importantly, were given public and private work opportunities. Puntila assessed that contemporary art was not always enough appreciated, and suggested that via this competition Finnish artists would gain an opportunity to “test their forces”. In addition, the cultivation of the “general public” was also mentioned; according to Puntila, the “sense of art” of the general public could be developed only by leading the public to the presence of art.¹⁵⁵

The competition aimed to encourage the practice of monumental painting, and create opportunities for artists. It was formulated also as a means of financial support for the artists. This view was shown in the discussions of the jury, as it pondered that one artist could only receive one award, and an artist submitting more than one sketch would, hence, have to use the same pseudonym for all the sketches.¹⁵⁶ This condition was not included in the final competition program as it would have been contrary to the competition rules of the Painters’ Union.

The subject for the competition entries was free. However, the foundation suggested motifs related to Finnish cultural history, academia, the life in different Finnish counties, or nature.¹⁵⁷ The Library of the Students’ Union of the University of Helsinki (now the Library of the School of Economics) was the only named location for a realised painting, and the size of the sketches was determined in relation to this space. However, it was suggested that also other paintings would be realised in spaces used by students, as well as other locations, possibly in the hometown of the awarded artist.¹⁵⁸ Thus, localism was encouraged as an important theme for the paintings. While the competition was still on-going, the Finnish Cultural Foundation issued a press release, in which it announced that a sketch from the competition might be realised for the newly built *Porthania* building of the University of Helsinki.¹⁵⁹

As many as 110 suggestions were submitted to the competition. Fifteen sketches were excluded from the competition for not following the competition rules: mainly by less known artists but also three works by Lars-Gunnar Nordström, who had not included detailed sketches of his propositions.¹⁶⁰ The prizes were given out in full amount: the first prize to Olli Miettinen (300,000 marks, circa 9,000 euros), the second to Erkki Koponen (200,000 marks), and the third to Unto Pusa (150,000 marks), and all of these sketches were later realised: Miettinen’s *Kehrä* (Spindle) to *Porthania* building of the University of Helsinki, Koponen’s *Nuorta elämä* (Young life) to two different locations, the Library of

the Students' Union in Helsinki and the City Library of Joensuu, and Pusa's *Suma* (Sweep) in 1959 for the Kemijärvi Teachers' College. The fees for commissions were given out as two-year artistic grants, summing up to 600,000 marks (13,000 euros).¹⁶¹ All of the awarded artists had been present in the department of monumental art in the exhibition of the Artists' Association. In addition, as many as five sketches from different artists were bought for 100,000 marks (3,000 euros) each, and from among these artists, Pentti Melanen was commissioned a new sketch for a public painting for the City Hall of Lahti, his hometown.¹⁶²

However, the jury was not unanimous. An artist member of the jury, Ragnar Ekelund, placed a dissenting opinion, supported by Reino Viirilä. They would have given Yngve Bäck the first prize, Unto Pusa the second, and Tapani Jokela the third, while placing the sketches by Miettinen and Koponen among the additional purchases.¹⁶³ The winning sketch *Spindle* by Olli Miettinen divided opinions: it was rated the best among the jury and lauded by, for example, the art critic Einari J. Vehmas, but the artist members Ekelund and Viirilä of the competition jury considered it "cursory, compositionally bland and poor by its colours."¹⁶⁴ The (majority of the) jury considered the work especially suitable for an academic environment, and the building committee of *Porthania* selected this sketch to be realised for the new university premises.¹⁶⁵ Vehmas suspected Miettinen had planned his painting for an academic environment, and selected the subject of the "following of light", with the idea that "knowledge is light".¹⁶⁶

The realised painting features six slim human figures in rigid positions, grouped slightly differently than in the sketch; the main group consists of three women with their backs to the spectator, greeting the sun. [Image 66.] Miettinen finalised his painting in 1960, which means that before it, the abstract *Eteenpäin ja korkeammalle* (Onward and upward) by Arvid Broms had been realised to the same lobby space. [Image 131.] The commission from Broms had been an initiative of the architect of the building, Aarne Ervi, and in contrast to it, Miettinen's work seems particularly conventional.

In January 1956, the Finnish Cultural Foundation commissioned Erkki Koponen's sketch to be realised for the Library of the Students' Union in Helsinki. Art critics had considered the competition sketch unoriginal and conventional by its content—according to Einari J. Vehmas it "lacked a centralising idea". Nevertheless, the artist was lauded for the confident execution.¹⁶⁷ In 1958, once Koponen had already prepared a large canvas, the foundation decided to commission the painting as a fresco and allocated further 400,000 marks (8,800 euros) for Koponen for the job. The fresco was unveiled at the Library of the Students' Union in October 1958, and the first-executed oil on canvas version was located to the City Library of Joensuu in March 1961.¹⁶⁸ There is no obvious connection between Koponen and Joensuu; instead, a location was sought for the already realised painting. An opportunity was found in conjunction to the establishing of the North Karelia Regional Fund of the foundation, and the painting was unveiled at the opening ceremony of the regional fund.¹⁶⁹

The fresco and the painting, both known with the title *Nuorta elämää* (Young life), are variations of the same theme, with slight alterations in the figures. They depict young couples, children watching birds, a man holding up fishing net, and simple white apartment buildings built in a harmonious relationship with the sea and the surrounding nature. [Image 123.]



Image 66. Olli Miettinen, *Kehrä* (Spindle), 1960. Oil/tempera on canvas, 320 x 500. Porthania, University of Helsinki. Photo: JR 2012.



Image 67. Pentti Melanen, *“Lahti”*, 1958. Tempera on canvas glued to the wall, 263 x 772. Lahti City Hall. Lahti City Art Collection. Photo: Tiina Rekola, Lahti City Museum.

Furthermore, the foundation commissioned a public painting from Pentti Melanen in 1956—not, however, on the basis of his competition sketch. The foundation commissioned a new sketch, and appointed a new jury to evaluate it.¹⁷⁰ Melanen’s painting, which was unveiled in 1958 in Lahti City Hall, is an image of work and Lahti, with groups of human figures with clearly defined allegorical roles, depicted in architectonic surroundings referring to Lahti. [Image 67.] Pentti Melanen was the only artist among those employed by the Finnish Cultural Foundation who had not realised a monumental painting prior to the competition, and this painting remained his only monumental commission. Nonetheless, the painting in Lahti City Hall is an archetypal example of Finnish postwar public painting.

In 1959, the Board of the Finnish Cultural Foundation decided to commission the competition sketch by Unto Pusa to be realised in the premises of the Kemijärvi School for Teachers.¹⁷¹ The establishing of the school in 1950 had been an important act of regional policy, directed towards getting qualified teachers to Northern Finland. Following the war, there was a lack of qualified teachers all over the country, but the demand was felt greatest in the sparsely populated areas.¹⁷² The education of teachers in Kemijärvi began in 1950, but the construction of the school lasted another ten years. The main building, to which Pusa's painting was commissioned, was completed in 1955.¹⁷³

The subject of Pusa's competition sketch, log floating, was likely considered appropriate for the northern location, and matched the painting to its the location. At the same time, the masculine imagery largely ignored the female population of the coeducational school. Combined with the work-oriented log floating subject of the painting was, as typical to Pusa, abstracted elements, as well as a large stylised mandarla composed of a fallen rootstalk. Kerttuli Wessman commends the painting but hints towards disappointment on Unto Pusa's behalf due to the remote location of the work: "Kemijärvi was not Paris."¹⁷⁴ As a contemporary critic wrote in *Aamulehti*: "It is clear that the question may arise whether anything really significant can happen this far from the artistic centres."¹⁷⁵ The answer was positive, as the writer continued by stating that Pusa had been "faithful to his artistic ambitions" even in this remote location.¹⁷⁶ But, indeed, public paintings in the periphery from the point of view of Southern Finnish artistic centres, and especially those realised by less known artists than Pusa, have remained peripheral also in Finnish art historical writing.

The competition of the Finnish Cultural Foundation was yet another example of the widely shared practise of monumental painting production in the society at the moment. Nevertheless, it was continuously argued that the Finnish monumental painting was not fully developed and artists did not have enough opportunities for monumental work. In the context to the Finnish Cultural Foundation competition, Einari J. Vehmas assessed that monumental painting had the position of a "stepchild" in Finland, and the commissions had been few and "often modest".¹⁷⁷ According to Alf Krohn, the results in the field of monumental painting in Finland had not been "very convincing" due to the lack of work opportunities and practice.¹⁷⁸ This competition was seen as a promise of development in the field.

The lack of organisation in art policies in the 1950s led to varying practices in public art commissioning. Nonetheless, when studying the public painting production at large, it manifests as surprisingly coherent: the different agents commissioned public paintings using similar procedures, and selected similar kinds of works to be realised, suggesting similar agenda behind the production. One provider of coherence was the rather strict understanding of the conventions that defined monumental painting. Another important factor was the pool of artists: in the Finnish artworld during the dealt time period, the number of artists participating in national competitions and executing local commissions was rather restricted. The same people worked with ecclesiastic, corporate and municipal public painting. Furthermore, the artists' associations mediated in both official and corporate commissions: in arranging public painting competitions, also corporations had to respect the rules of the Painters' Union, and employ its experts in the selection of the works.

The individual commissioners, in particular the private ones, were free to frame their art purchases according to their own preferences. Yet, most often corporations chose to

work in line with the official agenda. Companies even articulated their social mission in relation to art commissions in similar words as the official agents—they wanted to promote the same noble ideals. The production of public paintings by the variety of agents during the postwar decades fortifies the image of Finnish postwar uniformity culture and suggests the prevalence of the contemporary unanimity speech.

Chapter Six

COMPETING ART

Paintings through Competitions

Public art was among the main concerns of the newly founded municipal art committees in Finland, and through public art competitions members of the art committees could establish themselves as gatekeepers of the field. They selected the awarded artworks and negotiated with the artists during the processes of painting public works, at times articulating detailed views on how the works should be executed. In art competitions, artworks were main agents: the sketches interacted with the jury of the competition, and it was their characteristics that defined which artist was employed, if any. The realised public paintings were also important agents in the field, encouraging or discouraging further commissions. It was often in relation to them that the competition sketches were juxtaposed.

Art competitions were established as a means of acquiring art in Finland in the late 19th century following international examples. They were used especially in prestigious large-scale projects: architecture, monuments, and monumental paintings. Architecture competitions have been arranged in Finland since the 1870s, and the first set of competition rules was established by the newly founded professional association Architects' Club (Arkitektklubben) in 1893.¹ In the field of sculpture, first competitions were arranged in 1878 for a funerary monument of J. L. Runeberg in Porvoo, and in 1884 for a monument of the Emperor Alexander II in Helsinki. The competition for Runeberg's memorial was re-arranged twice, and the end result was an undecorated tombstone, unveiled in 1888. The monument for Alexander II by Walter Runeberg was unveiled in 1894.² Also monumental paintings were acquired through competitions since an early moment on. The commissioning of the monumental paintings for the main hall of the University of Alexander (now University of Helsinki) was formulated as a closed competition in 1890. The Art for Schools Association based its public painting commissions on anonymous competitions since the 1910s, and the competition practises of the association were copied by other agents, such as the Alfred Kordelin foundation in the 1930s.³

During the 1950s, the competition processes for acquiring public paintings were standardised in different municipalities and in the commissions for other agents. The artists' associations had been reasserting their authority in the society, and they required the following of their competition rules. Members of the Painters' Union were able to participate in an art competition only if the rules of the union were followed. At the time, the members of the Painters' Union mainly consisted of the Helsinki-based artists while other

cities had local artists' associations. Therefore, the rules of the union needed to be wholly implemented only in national competitions. Yet, the general practices were widely shared.

In postwar public art competitions—as in direct commissions—the final authority on the realisation of a work belonged to the commissioning body. The municipal and state public painting was deeply dependent on the political agents, and the corporate production on the desires of the corporate owners and leaders. The decision of not commissioning the winning work of a competition was not uncommon. Also the members of the artists' associations had a significant role in defining and controlling the competition institution, even though municipal authorities also ignored their rules and demands. The networks of people interacting in postwar Finnish artworld, in artists' association, as competing artists, and as jury members, were often close, and people functioned in various roles in the public painting production.

Competition juries judged public painting competitions on the basis of sketches, which had been signed with pseudonyms. A jury was generally composed of representatives of the commissioning body as well as artist members, usually appointed by the local or national artists' associations. In the competition calls, the size of the final work was determined, as well as the scale in which the competing sketches had to be realised. Often, a one-to-one size detailed sketch was required in addition to the overall plan of the work. The motif of the work may have been outlined in broad terms, for example to preferably “deal with children’s world”.⁴ At times, a preferred technique was also determined. The first prize sometimes included the fee for the realising of the work but most often not. And, importantly, the commissioning body held the right to choose which, if any, work it would realise, despite the decisions of the jury.

The composition of a jury was, of course, essential in defining the outcome of a competition. And, judging from the available documentation, the juries of the postwar public painting competitions were often disunited. In particular in Helsinki, the proceedings from a competition to execution were, often problematic: the Helsinki City Art Committee frequently did not give out first prizes and often arranged second rounds. In Helsinki as well as in other municipalities, the artist members often took an opposite stand from the politically appointed members. Furthermore, a municipal art committee or municipal board could, at their will, disregard the decisions of a jury.

In Turku in the first half of the 1950s, the city generally omitted the decisions of the public painting competition juries, and commissioned public works from the recipients of the second or third prizes. In 1953, the city commissioned a public painting for Vasaramäki School from the third-prize-winning Matti Kallinen. [Image 84.] Why the City Board asked cost estimates from Kallinen, and Johannes Paavola, whose sketch was purchased in the competition, instead of the first- and second-prize winning artists Liisa Tanner and Armas Mikola, is not revealed in the minutes of the board.⁵ In an interview, Kallinen recalls being “as if dazed, even shocked” when getting the commission. However, as the execution had been negotiated “silent as a mouse” he had had time to adapt for the thought.⁶

The commission from Kallinen was not self-evident, but the Turku City Board had to vote on it. Kallinen won by votes 7–4. There was a difference of 20.000 marks (580 euros) in the cost estimates of Kallinen and Paavola, so very likely this was not decisive factor.⁷ How the works were, in the end, evaluated was not recorded in the minutes of the City Board. It was, nevertheless, recorded that the City Board visited the exhibition

of the competition sketches before making the decision. This implies that the members of the board, indeed, made a new artistic evaluation of the works, largely bypassing the choices made by the jury.⁸ Often, when executing power over a competition jury, the city or municipal boards decided in favour of a more traditional or conventional work than the one awarded by the jury.

As this case exemplifies, in order for a sketch to be realised as a public painting, it had to be accepted on several levels of decision-making. After the jury of a competition had reached a decision, the power over the realisation of a work belonged to the commissioner, such as the city board or the head of the commissioning company. And, even after a work had been commissioned, the proceedings of the artists were regularly checked in many municipalities.

In Vantaa (then, Rural Municipality of Helsinki, Helsingin maalaiskunta), Tapani Jokela won the competition for the Municipal Hall in 1962. The Art Committee was in favour of executing Jokela's painting *Vesiratas* (Waterwheel) but wanted to negotiate with the artist about the sketch and its colours before the final decision. Jokela was called to a meeting with the Art Committee, and he explained that the sketch had been "entirely unfinished" due to an accident he had suffered, and that it would have to be remodelled in any case. The Art Committee decided to suggest the commission from Jokela to the City Board, who then accepted the suggestion. The Art Committee also decided that it would work in a tight collaboration with the artist, giving him advice "that is seen necessary" on the execution of the sketch, and which the artist "has to take into consideration". Later on, when inspecting a final sketch, the Art Committee advised that the silhouette of the city in the painting should be made narrower and the colours on the left side of the painting made brighter.⁹ [Images 68–69.] The politically composed Art Committee, hence, established itself as an authority on artistic matters.

The silhouette of the city in the painting is that of the neighbouring Helsinki, an iconic view of the South Harbour with the cathedral.¹⁰ Possibly for this reason, the Art Committee wanted to diminish its weight in the painting—the first major public painting in the municipality, which was to reflect the "history and life of the municipality".¹¹ Art committees often meddled in the preparation of the paintings, but cases where a commission would have been cancelled, or a finished work eventually not accepted, have not appeared in the documentation.

From the point of view of the artists, competitions offered a possibility for large-scale commissions and public attention but also demanded an investment with possibly no reward to expect in return. A competition sketch that was not awarded was likely hard to sell as an independent artwork, even though the commissioning bodies may have hung competition entries on their walls. In 1956, shortly after the City of Helsinki had begun to arrange public painting competitions, the general assembly of the Painters' Union discussed whether it was necessary to "continuously" arrange competitions. Unto Pusa, for one, argued in favour of direct commissions. Pusa, as a fairly renowned monumental painter, had already at that point been involved in controversial competitions. For him, getting direct commissions would have been more convenient. The majority of addresses, in the end, favoured competitions.¹²

From the point of view of the commissioning body, competitions were in many ways useful. Through a competition, the commissioner was able to select the work to be realised from among often a notably wide selection of prepared sketches, without having to commit



Image 68. Tapani Jokela, *Vesiratas* (Waterwheel), competition sketch, 1962. Oil on hard-board, 58 x 121. Photo: Vantaa Art Museum. © Vantaa Art Museum.



Image 69. Tapani Jokela, *Vesiratas* (Waterwheel), 1964. Oil on canvas, 273 x 599. Vantaa City Hall. Photo: JR 2010.

to any of them. In 1955, the Painters' Union argued that a competition was more lucrative to the commissioner because the resulted work was "often notably more successful".¹³ In addition, a competition frequently received more visibility in the media than a direct commission, with the exception of a commission from a star artist.

The commissioning body also received artworks in exchange for the awards. Following monumental painting competitions, the awarded sketches were generally included in the art collections of the commissioning bodies as individual artworks. In Turku, in the context of the public painting competition for the Luolavuori Retirement Home in 1955, the artists were asked to rework the sketches after the competition so that they would better function as individual easel paintings. The wall where the painting was to be realised incorporated

a large doorway. After the competition, the awarded artists were asked to fill the gap of the door in their sketches.¹⁴ [Images 70–71.] The public painting competitions functioned, then, also as a part of the collection work of the municipalities and other agents.¹⁵

With private companies, the commissioning procedures may have been one step more straightforward, but with municipal commissions, the evaluation process often passed three levels of decision-making: the jury, the city art committee, and the city board. And, frequently, the suggestions of the lower levels were not followed. The juries tried to make their decision transparent by recording the justifications. On upper political levels, however, such practices were often not in use.



Image 70. Harry Kivijärvi, *La Fresko* (Fresco), competition sketch, 1955. Oil on chipboard, 79 x 219. WAM. Photo: Toni Vuori, The Museum Centre of Turku. The gap for the door, that was painted over following the competition, is visible in the sketch.



Image 71. Harry Kivijärvi, *La Fresko* (Fresco), 1955. Fresco, 340 x 845. Luolavuori Retirement Home, Turku. WAM. Photo: Toni Vuori, The Museum Centre of Turku.

Awarding the Correct Artists

The art competition institution was—and is—based on the ideal of anonymity. Theoretically anyone can win, and supposedly the artistically best work does. In the postwar Finnish public painting competitions, the competition entries were signed with a pseudonym, and the artists behind the pseudonyms were recorded in sealed envelopes that the jury only opened after deciding the awarded artists. Nevertheless, within the small circles of the Finnish artworld in the 1950s, and especially in local competitions, the anonymity of the artists was retained with difficulties. Generally, the critics expected that the most experienced artists won, and they often did. Indeed, wide and even furious discussions often arose among the artworld had an unknown artist been awarded.

One angered debate rose after the public painting competition arranged by the Nordic Union Bank for their Lahti branch in 1951. Unto Pusa and the prior unknown L. A. Matinpalo shared the first prize, and Matinpalo won also the third prize. It was rumoured that the jury had mistaken Matinpalo's painting for Sam Vanni's work. Vanni later communicated that Bertel Hintze, a member of the jury, had called him before the revealing of the results of the competition, verifying that his sketch did not have a glassblower motif.¹⁶ Thus, the original rumour was perhaps mistaken but the act of Hintze calling Vanni was, in itself, against competition rules and accepted practices.

After the results of the competition had been released, *Helsingin Sanomat* downplayed Matinpalo (and even more, the judgement of the jury) by claiming that the third prize had been won “with an unfinished sketch he had included only to support the package, which contained the still slightly damp winning painting.”¹⁷ As it was necessary to sign sketches with a pseudonym and submit an envelope revealing the true identity of the pseudonym, it is unlikely that this reading of the second painting would be true.

Awarding an artist that had not been trained in Finnish art schools was seen as an insult to the Finnish artworld. The Painters' Union harshly attacked the artist members of the jury, Erkki Kulovesi and Bertel Hintze, in the pages of newspapers: they did not enjoy the trust of the Painters' Union.¹⁸ The union emphasised, however, that the commissioning bank had nothing to be blame for in the matter: the ability for artistic evaluation was the responsibility of the artist members of the jury. The union did not want to jeopardise the arranging of further competitions. Despite the fury, the jury did not change its position, but the bank chose a way out of the controversy by commissioning the work from Unto Pusa. His *Kaupunki nousee* (City rises) was completed in 1954. [Image 115.]

The artist members of the art committees and juries held important positions in deciding which artists were to be awarded, even though their opinions may have been disregarded by the political agents. Hence, impartiality questions among the artist members of the juries were also discussed. The altar painting competition of the Rajamäki Church in 1953 led to a suspicion of nepotism as Anna Räsänen, who won the second prize and from whom the work was eventually commissioned, was daughter to Uno Alanko, a member of the jury. Markku Valkonen has suggested that the participation of a family member to a jury member of a competition was, following this, denied in the competition rules of the Painters' Union.¹⁹



Image 72. Allan Salo, *Tampere*, 1956. Fresco, 275 x 385. Chamber of the City Council, now known as “The Old Library House”, Tampere. NYMU. Photo: JR 2006.

A printed version from 1956 does not, however, show this modification. The rules state: “jury members cannot personally or indirectly participate in the competition”.²⁰

The municipal art committees did not always pursue impartiality, which likely is explained by the small circles in the local artworlds. In Turku in 1961, Hilikka Toivola sat in the jury of the Pääskyvuori School public painting competition and awarded her husband Otso Karpakka with the second prize. Toivola also received an artistic grant in 1962 from the Turku City Art Committee she was a member of.²¹

In Tampere, in the Amuri School painting competition in 1955, the City Art Committee purchased a sketch from a member of the committee, Allan Salo, bypassing the suggestions of the jury of the competition. For the duration of the handling of this matter Allan Salo was recorded as not being present in the meeting.²² The Tampere City Art Committee also commissioned, without a competition, a fresco from Salo for the Chamber of the City Council in 1955. The chairman of the committee, Olavi Veistjäjä, argued that local competitions had lost their meaning as the same individuals always received the awards.²³ Also, the cost estimate of Lennart Segerstråle, who had been first approached, was considered too expensive. For the City Board, the committee explained that only few people in Tampere would manage the difficult technique, and that direct commission would result cheaper, which is why it recommended the commission from Salo.²⁴ Salo realised the painting in 1956: a rigid and conventional composition that features figures suggesting

motherhood, education, and local livelihood in a landscape referring to the industrial and growing nature of Tampere with the elements of a dam and a crane. Salo's inexperience with fresco technique is seen in the handling and especially in the loud colour scale of the painting. [Image 72.]

Contrary to the municipal bodies, the State Art Commission regulated the possibilities of the artist members of the committee more tightly: they could not sell their work to the state. In 1960, the State Art Commission wanted to establish a two-year buying restriction for artists that had been on the committee, but this was considered unreasonable by the Painters' Union.²⁵ These kinds of regulations were more on the agenda in Helsinki, where the national artists' associations and committees functioned, and less often considered in smaller towns, where the pool of artists was even smaller.

Maintaining an ideal of anonymity did not indicate that it would have been irrelevant who was awarded. The competition sketches hinted towards their makers, and the jury needed to award the "correct artists", the established ones. A basic hypothesis was that the established monumental painters could more convincingly use the conventions of monumentality in their sketches and suggest a more compelling end result. On the other hand, as the discussion around the competition for the Parliament House of the 1930 exemplified, it was often considered problematic that the "biggest names" did not participate in the competitions.²⁶ Lauri Ahlgrén has estimated that "experienced artists" took part in competitions more rarely, and when they did, they either won or got angry for not winning.²⁷

Few women artists received awards in the public painting competition in the postwar decades. It is possible that the sketches by women artists were not as easily awarded, but it can also be postulated that women participated more rarely in the competitions. The defining of the genre as a masculine one may have inhibited women artists from participating. Hilikka Toivola, for example, had been discouraged and belittled in the beginning of her career as a monumental painter. The old master Juho Rissanen had suggested that the "delicate girl" should, instead of painting frescoes, pursue a career as an art teacher.²⁸ However, after gaining name as a monumental painter, Toivola received awards in a number of competitions, as well as direct commissions.

The organising bodies rarely documented the sketches, which were not awarded, and the authors of these sketches remained anonymous. Therefore, it is hard to draw conclusions about, for example, some artists being more easily awarded than others. Often, however, the awarded artists were well-established agents in the field, and the same names frequented among the awarded ones in different competitions.

Institutional Friction in Competitions

Via the competition institution, different kinds of agents participated in the production of public paintings. These agents may have had conflicting goals, which created problems for the competition processes. Public painting competitions offered a platform where municipal policies, the interests of artists' associations, and individual goals met and often contradicted.

Not only the results of the competitions but especially the question concerning the role of the artist members in the juries and committees raised continuing debate among the artworld. Artists' associations were concerned about their authority and wanted proper compensation for artists who functioned as jury members. According to the competition rules ratified by the Finnish Artists' Association and the Painters' Union, the two artist members of a jury were to be paid 10–15% of the total costs of the competition.²⁹ At the same time, the associations did not want to jeopardise the work of the committees with, for example, individuals who might not collaborate well with other members of a committee.³⁰ A dramatic situation followed Unto Pusa's short term in the State Art Commission, from which he was expelled by the Artists' Association in 1957. The discussion within the Painters' Union following the expulsion led to the resigning of Pusa, Ragnar Ekelund, Gösta Diehl, and Uno Alanko from the Painters' Union. Alanko however, cancelled his resignation in the following meeting.³¹

The Painters' Union was especially delicate in its relationship with the City of Helsinki. The Painters' Union held a permanent position in the Helsinki City Art Committee, and its member also functioned in the juries of public painting competitions the city arranged. Thus, the city needed to call only one additional artist member to the competition juries. This led to a situation where one artist member of a jury was paid a regular meeting fee (1,000 marks, equalling 300 euros in 1955) and the other 10% of the competition costs, a much larger fee. The City of Helsinki approached the Artists' Association in December 1955 suggesting that the vice-member of the artist member of the Art Committee could be called into competition juries, in which case both of the artist members would receive the same low fee. The Artists' Association suggested that the Painters' Union should strive to unanimity with the city in these "matters of secondary importance" and notified that also the State Art Commission functioned without additional members and with regular meeting fees. In January 1956, the Painters' Union agreed to the suggestion.³²

However, with the City of Tampere, the Painters' Union did not show flexibility. The question of jury fees raised by the City of Tampere in 1956 resulted in a dispute between the city and the union and ended the arranging of public painting competitions by the City of Tampere for some years. The quarrelsome mosaic competition in Tampere in 1956 may exemplify the frictions between the commissioning bodies, artists' associations, and artists in public art competitions.

In February 1956, the City of Tampere declared a national mosaic competition for the new swimming pool in Pyyrikki. The dispute with the Painters' Union rose during the opening time of the competition regarding the fees of the artist members of the jury, which amounted to 70,000 marks (1,900 euros) each, plus travelling expenses.³³ The fees were high as the prizes in the competition were high: the first prize of the competition was set to 350,000 marks (9,600 euros), second 250,000 marks and third 100,000 marks. As a comparison, in the Haapaniemi School public painting competition arranged in Kuopio the same year, the first prize was slightly larger, 400,000 marks (11,000 euros), but it included the fee for executing the final work. The second prize was 90,000 marks and third 60,000. In this competition, the jury fees were established at 25,000 marks (685 euros), including travel expenses.³⁴

The Tampere City Art Committee approached the Painters' Union with a plea for lowering the jury fees, but in vain. Painters' Union threatened to withdraw the jury members,

in which case members of the union would not be allowed to participate in the competition. Functioning in the jury of the mosaic competition in question was, according to the Painters' Union, "extremely demanding and time consuming".³⁵ In October 1956, the Tampere City Board agreed to pay the established jury fees, but declared that the city would not arrange national competitions as long as the article on the jury fees in the competition rules of the Painters' Union remained the same.³⁶ The Tampere City Art Committee communicated this decision to the Painters' Unions. It argued that the unreasonable fees were a threat for all municipal public painting production.³⁷

The ultimatum from the part of the City of Tampere was taken seriously within the Painters' Union, and its board unanimously supported the revising of the rules. In 1957, the rules of the Painters' Union were examined and the jury fees were lowered to equate 5–8% of the total costs—only to be raised again in 1961 to 8–12%.³⁸ The jury fees were justified by the fact that the artists who took jury positions could not themselves take part in the competitions in question; the jury "duty" was, thus, also a disadvantage.

The Artists' Association and its subdivision Painters' Union functioned on both local and national levels. As the members of the associations were active artists, they took turns in awarding and executing competition sketches. Two public painting competitions of the City of Helsinki were judged in the late 1955: for Myllykallio School and for Aurora Hospital. Olavi Valavuori functioned in jury of the Aurora competition, and won the Myllykallio competition. He was a member of the Board of the Painters' Union, and, in 1956, he was appointed a member of the Helsinki City Art Committee. During the controversy with the City of Tampere, Valavuori functioned as the secretary to the Painters' Union, communicating the decisions of the Union to the Tampere City Art Committee.³⁹ This competition he later won.

Whether related to his connectedness or not, Valavuori managed to charge high fees for his monumental works. For the Myllykallio School fresco, Valavuori asked 1.2 million marks (34,300 euros), three times the sum paid to Tove Jansson and Onni Oja for their Aurora hospital paintings in Helsinki the same year: 450,000 marks (12,900 euros) and 375,000 marks (10,700 euros) respectively.⁴⁰ The fee for Valavuori's mosaic in Tampere was set to 2,050,000 marks (circa 56,000 euros)—including 500,000 marks (13,700 euros) to acquire materials for the mosaic from Italy.⁴¹

In the 1950s, standards for artists' fees in the competitions had not been established, but for example the Helsinki City Art Committee agreed to what an artist asked for. While Jansson and Oja both had experience as monumental painters, the Myllykallio painting was the first fresco by Valavuori—and the commission for Tampere swimming pool his first mosaic. After the Myllykallio competition, in declaring the Käpylä School competition in 1956, Helsinki established the maximum fee for execution as 1,425,000 marks (36,500 euros). Expectedly, this was the sum paid for Unto Pusa for his mural in 1958–59.⁴² As noted above, the fees were much smaller in smaller towns.

The Tampere swimming pool mosaic competition closed in November 1956, attracting thirty-five entries, two of which lacked the demanded detail mosaic sketch. Olavi Valavuori won the first prize, the local artist Tauno Hämeranta the second, and Irja Soini, who likely was best acquainted with the technique, the third.⁴³ The mosaic proposal by Valavuori, *Versio* (Version), consisted of three individual monumental nudes. A variation of the "three graces" theme—one of them male—the figures are positioned in the red brick wall of the

swimming pool. Two of the figures are drying themselves with towels, binding the subject explicitly with the environment of the work. [Image 73.] The jury of the competition lauded the winning proposal for the monumentality of the figures and its “proper decorativeness” in relation to the wall, as well as their positioning which took in consideration the diving board.⁴⁴

After the awarding of the competition, the City Art Committee was divided between whether to commission the work from Valavuori or Hämeranta. The chairman of the Committee, Olavi Veistjäjä, argued that since the procedure of commission had not been mentioned in the competition call, the work should be commissioned from the winner of the competition. Matti Petäjä, an artist member of the committee, feared a “nationwide dispute” if the first-prize-winning sketch was to be omitted. Since a “strong argument” against the winning sketch was not found, the work was commissioned from Valavuori.⁴⁵

The execution of the work spanned over two years, and was documented as a quarrelsome one. The Tampere City Art Committee meticulously examined the proceedings of the artist and expressed its dissatisfaction. In December 1957, the Art Committee judged Valavuori’s sketches and found flaws in them: according to the committee, the male figure seemed like a “spiritless intellectual worker” and not the “Apollo-type” it should have been. The committee expressed concerns on Valavuori’s ability to realise the work in “oversize” and demanded full-size sketches of all of the figures, which the artist reportedly “endlessly and illogically” resisted.⁴⁶ In January 1958, members of the committee, Olavi Veistjäjä and Pentti Toivonen travelled to Helsinki to negotiate the matter of jury fees of municipal art competitions with the national artists’ associations and to see Valavuori’s fresco in Myllykallio School. [Image 74.] They reported that the work was disappointing, and suspected it had disappointed the City of Helsinki as well.⁴⁷

Even an invoice of 40,000 marks (884 euros) on lime resulted in argument, in which the mediation of the Artists’ Association was demanded. Valavuori had ordered lime and sent the invoice to the City of Tampere, whereas the Tampere City Art Committee considered it had covered the material costs in the artist’s fee. The Artists’ Association interpreted the situation in favour of Valavuori, and the Art Committee, still refusing to pay for the lime, decided to return it to the artist.⁴⁸

Finally in March 1958 Valavuori presented sketches the Tampere City Art Committee could approve, and in September the work was completed. The committee still found flaws in the execution of the figures, and judged that from a distance, the work seemed “dead grey”. However, it considered the mosaic “rather successful” and satisfactory.⁴⁹ At the unveiling of the work, the Mayor Oiva Kaivola lauded the mosaic as modern and monumental, and as being executed with a firm hand, “at least to the eye of a layman and they are laymen who mostly have to look at them.”⁵⁰ The discussions on public art frequently placed the preferences of the “common people” in a contrary position with those of the art experts. The comment by Kaivola, thus, lauded the mosaic by Valavuori for pleasing its artistically uneducated public. At the same time, the comment can be seen as hinting towards the work not pleasing the eyes of an art expert.

The art competition institution was a main factor in defining the field of postwar public painting, and an arena where the collective production of art was made clearly visible. The controversies in public painting competitions demonstrate how the political agents entered in discussion with the artworld. In art competitions, the differing artistic criteria, economic



Image 73. Olavi Valavuori, *Versio* (Version), 1958. Mosaic, height of the figures 370. Pynnikki Swimming Pool, Tampere. NYMU. Photo: JR 2006.



Image 74. Olavi Valavuori, *Allegro*, 1956. Fresco, 300 x 670. Myllykallio (now Lauttasaari) School, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2006.

questions, and power relations often clashed. Successful art competitions required balancing between the different, even conflicting goals of the participating agents. The competitions were—and often resulted in—art of compromise.

Local versus National

The national artists' associations aimed for a comprehensive implementation of their competition rules, but this was not fully realised. Especially during the first half of the 1950s, competitions were arranged with varied practices. Often, members of local artists' association were appointed to the competition juries of the municipal competitions, instead of members of the national associations. Participation in the competitions was frequently limited only for local artists, which was also an ideological choice, a means of support for local artists.

Such localist practices were employed for example in Turku. This applied not only to public art competitions, but the city purchased art only from Turku-based artists until 1967, when the acquisition of works by out-of-town artists was made possible. However, the acquisitions from other than Turku-based artists needed an approval of the City Board.⁵¹ In the City of Kuopio, where national monumental painting competitions were arranged in the mid-1950s, the local artists were not pleased with the loss of work opportunities.

The City of Kuopio arranged national public painting competitions for Haapaniemi School in 1956 and Männistö School in 1958, in which the local artists were, perhaps expectedly, superseded by artists from the Helsinki region. The artist members of the juries were members of the Painters' Union, Olli Miettinen and Ragnar Ekelund in the first, and Miettinen and Aale Hakava in the second. That is, also the jury members belonged to the Helsinki art circles. In arranging the first competition, the local art committee decided to publish the competition call in Helsinki newspapers, while Kuopio artists were approached by mail to save in advertising costs—a practice indicating the small number of local artists.⁵² The competition received wide interest, 89 entries, and the jury considered the level “reasonable”.⁵³ A large part of the sketches, 33, were sent from the Helsinki area, among them the awarded ones: by Mauri Favén, Tapani Jokela, and Yrjö Verho.⁵⁴

Following the competition, the member of the jury Olli Miettinen emphasised in a local newspaper the educational aspect of competitions and suggested that the possible next competition should be organised among local artists so that they could show their strength.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, also the following competition was arranged as a national one, and Tapani Jokela won the first prize, Onni Oja the second, and Valma Mitikka the third.⁵⁶ A local competition was arranged only in 1964. In both of the national competitions, paintings were commissioned from the first-prize-winning artists. Favén had earlier executed a religious painting for the Vanaja Retirement Home in Hämeenlinna (1956), and Jokela for Tuomela School in Hämeenlinna (1957).

Bypassing local artists further, a public painting was commissioned from a Helsinki-based artist, Lauri Ahlgrén, for the Kuopio Theatre in 1963. The secco *Yhtäaikaisia tapahtumia sinisessä tasossa* (Simultaneous events on a blue level) has been credited as the largest abstract mural in Finland, and the size is, indeed, notable: over 6 x 12 metres.⁵⁷ [Image 143.] The work was a direct commission from Ahlgrén, and the funding was arranged through the Finnish Cultural Foundation.⁵⁸ Local funding was, thus, not used. Nevertheless, local artists' association strongly opposed the commissioning of public paintings from “outsiders”. The commission was considered a “dangerous precedent.”⁵⁹ While executing



Image 75. Annie Krokfors, *Arbete tyglar livets villkor* (Work harnesses the conditions of life), 1957. Oil, 200 x 360. Kokkola Savings Bank. Currently in Kokkola City Hall. Photo: JR 2010.

the painting in Kuopio, Ahlgrén recalls experiencing hostility among the Kuopio artists, and suspects that this resulted from the bitterness of local artists for not getting these commissions.⁶⁰

As a response to the complaints, the City of Kuopio arranged a competition for the library of the Särkiniemi School in 1964, open only for artists residing in Kuopio or its proximity.⁶¹ The competition rules were formulated with unusually high requirements: they demanded a full size sketch (200 x 315 cm) of the painting. According to the secretary of the art committee, “a small sketch may succeed partly by accident, which does not guarantee its creator can fulfil his/her idea in monumental size.”⁶² Likely due to this requirement, only eight sketches were submitted, but the quality of the works was considered high.⁶³ The painting was commissioned from Unto Heikkinen, who had earlier realised monumental paintings for the KOP Bank branch in Kuopio in 1959, and Tarinaharju Sanatorium in 1961. In 1964, Heikkinen also realised an altar painting for the Männistö Church on the basis of a closed competition.⁶⁴ Heikkinen was a locally significant monumental painter, who has not received nationwide fame.

The body of Finnish public painting reveals a number of such figures. As another example, the Ostrobothnian artist Annie Krokfors was trained in monumental painting and fresco technique in the department of decorative painting of the Art Academy of Stockholm in the 1930s, and she realised monumental paintings near her home locality during over four decades, 1939–82. The municipalities of Kokkola, Pietarsaari, and Kruunupyki commissioned several paintings from Krokfors, especially for school locations.⁶⁵ The painting *Arbete tyglar livets villkor* (Work harnesses the conditions of life), realised for the Kokkola Savings Bank in 1957, is a fine example of Krokfors’ Norwegian-styled

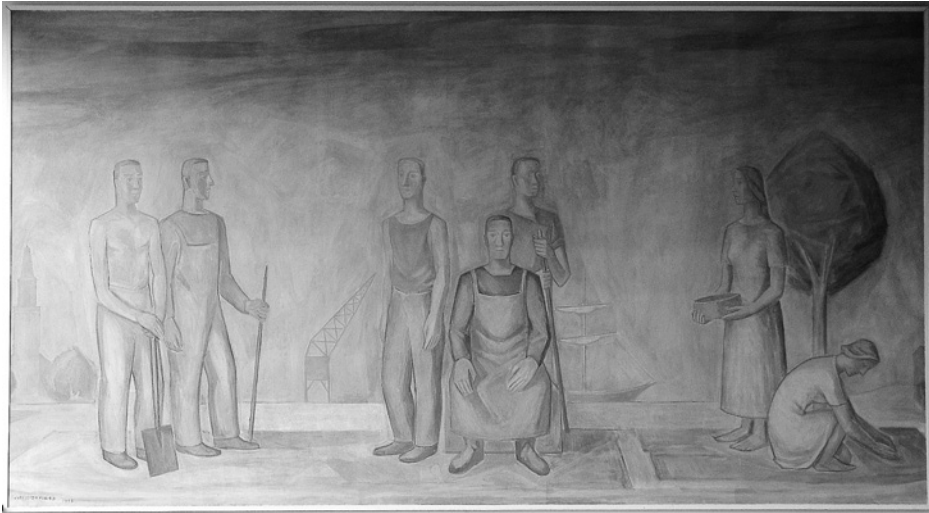


Image 76. Olli Miettinen, *Työntekijät* (Workers), 1952. Oil on canvas, 324 x 594. Turku Concert Hall. WAM. Photo: Toni Vuori, The Museum Centre of Turku.

monumental composing, executed with a clear, bright palette. [Image 75.] The painting, currently located in the main auditorium of the Kokkola City Hall, features different fields of local livelihood, such as fishing and leatherwork. As a central element, a man taming a bolting horse allegorically sums up the message of the painting.⁶⁶ Krokfors did not, despite her fame locally, receive commissions from other parts of the country, and the artist and her production have remained fairly unknown outside Ostrobothnia.

Employing local artists was not necessarily only ideological but also a practical solution: local competitions often had smaller prizes than national ones, and local artists realised public paintings with more modest fees than nationally acclaimed artists. For example, the town of Pori arranged a public painting competition for Pori Technical School in 1966, won by local artist Juhani Tarna. Of the six artists who were invited to the competition, two decided not to take part, one of them being the most acclaimed artist of the group, Erik Enroth. The prize for sketches was set to 500 marks (740 euros), and the commission paid 5,000 marks (7,370 euros).⁶⁷ In 1965, Enroth was paid 21,000 marks (32,170 euros) for a painting he executed for the Kallio Office Building in Helsinki—and this was a direct commission without the trouble of competing.⁶⁸ Given the difference in fees, Enroth’s lack of interest for the Pori competition seems understandable.

One more aspect of the local character of postwar public painting was the emphasizing of local subjects, which often seems to have been an attempt to please the commissioner. According to Olli Miettinen, from whom the Huhtamäki Corporation commissioned a monumental painting for the new Turku Concert Hall in the early 1950s, the emblems of Turku presented in painting, the Cathedral and the cranes, were there to fulfil the demands of the commissioner.⁶⁹ [Image 76.] Also, the commissioning of a public painting for the Postal Savings Bank branch in Turku in 1961 was labelled by the bank as a “local patriotic” project by giving the job to a local artist, Hilikka Toivola, and by defining the subject of the painting

as “symbolizing Turku”.⁷⁰ [Image 92.] The depiction of local elements implied a local identity, commitment to the locality, that was seen necessary by the commercial agents. In addition, local subjects were to make the public of the paintings relate to them better.

Municipal public painting commissioning was largely a local activity, employing local artists and often depicting local issues. Not keeping the production within local art circles, as was done in Kuopio, was not well received among local artists. In various towns, commercial agents may have commissioned more public paintings than the municipality; yet, employing the same local artists.

The “national” often finds embodiment in the capital cities. In Finland, Helsinki has been the location of national monuments, national art museums and also the main locus for nationally acknowledged art circles. The “local” artists, who do not exhibit or are not recognised in the Helsinki-based artworld, lack a “national” status. Indeed, the local character of public paintings is likely one factor, which has contributed to the minor position public painting has had in the art Finnish art historical writing. The localist production struggled to reach a position of national art.

Painting for a Public

According to the definitions of public painting in the postwar decades, works were to relate to the type of building they were located in, to refer to its function. “The function of the building is the reference to the composition of the artist, because the functional spirit of a municipal hall, bank, hospital, or maternity hospital is different,” wrote Unto Pusa in 1967.⁷¹ Importantly, the function of the building relates to the public it accommodates. This idea of public is not to be confused with the actual audience of the paintings, whose views were not considered being of great importance in the public discussions on public painting, or in the ponderings of the commissioning bodies.

In public painting competitions, in selecting proper paintings for different publics, the art committees and other institutional agents made presumptions on the behaviour, taste, and, essentially, the needs of “the public”, the “Finnish people”. From the discussions and the outcomes of the competitions, it can be deduced that a main need was the need to be educated. Hannu Nieminen has shown that during the 19th century, the “people” in Finland was defined by the Swedish-speaking upper classes as “common” and as a target of civilisation. The patriarchal structures from the time when the Finnish public sphere was being formed have continued to define the Finnish society until today, Nieminen argues.⁷²

Accordingly, schools comprised a significant target location for public paintings. In public discussions, and through the realised artworks, children were defined as a special kind of public, who demanded a special kind of art. In competition calls for school locations, the subject matter was frequently defined as “appropriate” for school children. Already in the paintings commissioned by the Art for Schools Association in the early 20th century, play and “the children’s world” were emphasised. Per Hedström has made the same observation in the case of artistic decorations in Swedish schools. The Swedish school murals depicted

local nature, local and national history, and first and foremost children playing: boys in boys' schools, and girls in girls' schools.⁷³

Only on rare occasions did Finnish postwar public paintings in schools completely avoid the theme of children playing. This axiomatic tendency led Sixten Ringbom to ask in the context of a public painting competition for a school in Turku in 1958: "is it so absolutely sure that school children want to see playing children above all?"⁷⁴ The main argument of Ringbom was, however, targeted against the conventional monumental language.

In 1955, the City of Helsinki arranged its first public painting competition for the new children's hospital, Aurora Hospital. Artworks were sought for three different locations, a hallway, an operation room, and a waiting room, and the working committee set by the Helsinki City Art Committee pondered that the different locations demanded different approaches from public paintings. A painting for the staircase of the paediatric hospital needed to be able to "capture the children's attention completely, so that they would not have time to think they had come into the hospital," and to "create a sense of light into the dusky hall". Because the target public of the work consisted of children, the realisation could "to some extent resemble decorative painting", which was defined as an opposite of "a purely valuable work of art."⁷⁵

The art committee invited five artists to enter the competition, also open for other artists, and received three suggestions they considered for execution, by Tove Jansson, Onni Oja, and Erkki Koponen. Of the other invited artists, Gösta Diehl did not participate and Erik Granfelt's suggestion was not seen to fulfil the terms of the competition. Only two other artists participated, and the general outcome of the competition was considered nondescript.⁷⁶ The execution of the staircase painting was given to Tove Jansson, whose painting depicts fairy tale animals and Moomin figures happily hastening up the stairs. [Image 78.] The playfulness and colourfulness of the painting and the richness of action in the work likely corresponded with the desire of "capturing children's attention." Also, as the course of movement in the painting is directed from the lower to the upper flight, the painting supposedly persuaded children coming to the hospital also to climb up the stairs.⁷⁷

Tove Jansson, a versatile artist and writer, famous especially for the Moomin stories, had prior to the commission realised public paintings for kindergartens and for Kila School in Karjaa (1953), featuring a fantasy landscape and fairy tale figures. [Image 77.] In addition to these locations, where the main public of the paintings composed of children, she had realised paintings for restaurant spaces—another milieu generally considered fitting for "lighter" subjects. Jansson had a distinct, lush, decorative style, which differed from the general line of postwar public painting. It is noteworthy that she was not awarded in monumental painting competitions, even though she took part in some, but her paintings were realised on the basis of direct commissions—with the exception of Aurora Hospital.⁷⁸ For the Aurora competition, she had been suggested by Professor Paavo Heiniö, a paediatrician who planned the decorations with the Helsinki City Art Committee.⁷⁹

In a paediatric hospital, the public of the artworks was defined not only as "children" but also as "patients". Professor Heiniö emphasised that the placing of art was particularly important in a children's hospital, since directing the child patients' attention to other issues than treatment had positive effects in their recovering.⁸⁰ Generally, however, artworks placed in hospitals and sanatoriums in Finland were located in the public areas, not in the patient or treatment rooms.



Image 77. Tove Jansson, *Lintu sininen* (Blue bird), 1953. Secco, 190 x 362. Kila School, now Karjaa High School, Raasepori. Photo: JR 2012.



Left: Image 78. Tove Jansson, *Leikki* (Play), partial view, 1956. Aurora Hospital, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2006.



Right: Images 79 a–b. Tove Jansson, *“Squirrels”*, 1956. As above.

In Aurora hospital, the second location for a decoration was the “EEG room”, the ceiling of which was to be decorated with a painting, again to capture the attention of the child patient. In this work, there were not to be “too many details, to give the child’s imagination too much stimulus.” This would disturb the treatment, as the patient would eagerly turn his/her head around.⁸¹ The Art Committee articulated clear views on how children behaved in treatment, and how they would react to different kinds of paintings. According to Heiniö, other hospitals had had positive experiences of such ceiling paintings, in making the work of the nursing staff easier. Tove Jansson got to execute also this decoration, with the demand that the colour scale was to be “more sober” than in the original sketch.⁸² [Images 79 a–b.]

The third public painting was commissioned for a waiting hall, at times used for baptisms, the public of which was understood as consisting of adults, not children, as in the staircase of the same building, or a mixed crowd, as was the likely reality in both locations. This definition of public was articulated explicitly and, hence, according to the Art Committee, the painting executed for this space needed to be “purely artistic” by its subject and realisation.⁸³ The competition entries were not considered fully satisfying, for which reason a second round was arranged between Erkki Koponen and Onni Oja, who then got the commission. In the second round, it was emphasised that the subject of the work “should be appropriate for a waiting room, but it should not either be at variance with the function of the baptism room.”⁸⁴

The realised painting *Äitejä ja lapsia* (Mothers and children) features eight women, seven of them with children, and one older girl with a baby doll, emphasising the course of events and chain of generations. Two of the women with infants are nurses, indicating the locale of the painting. [Image 80.] The one lone woman in the background has shed her eyes down and put her hands together; she is not manifestly grieving but can be interpreted as such—the lack of children defines her. The public of this painting was not only defined as “adults” but also as “women” and even “mothers”. Men play no part in the painting, but there are boys among the children.

The Helsinki City Art Committee, hence, clearly differentiated the needs of different kind of publics. Also Onni Oja, who executed the painting for the baptism room, had different registers of monumental painting for different publics: his paintings for schools from the same time radically differed from the hospital painting. In *V viimeinen koulupäivä* (The last day of school), painted for Meilahti School [image 51], the dynamic composition of playing children was brightly coloured, while *Mothers and children* had a more delicate palette, more naturalistic portraits, and a soothing, calm composition. Thus, Oja suggested that children were more adept as a public for modernist form language—or, that illusionist figuration was more serious art. In the public painting *Kohtalon kutojat* (Weavers of destiny), painted for Hyvinkää Central School (now Asema School) in 1955, Oja employed solid colour fields and a bright palette, similarly to Meilahti School. The composition is, nevertheless, more rigid than in Meilahti and the subject, a procession, explicitly patriotic with the flying of the Finnish flag. The small artistic investment in this tempera on plywood painting is not comparable to either of the previously mentioned.⁸⁵ [Image 81.]

Generally, the public of a public painting was not attributed agency in the discussions; it was a passive mass of people. On occasions, the public of a painting was even defined as distinct of the audience who could see the work. At the unveiling ceremony of Matti Petäjä’s *Omenankeruu* (Picking apples) at the Koukkuniemi Retirement Home in Tampere



Image 80. Onni Oja, *Äitejä ja lapsia* (Mothers and children), 1956. Fresco, 285 x 200. Aurora Hospital, Helsinki. HAM. There is a glass in front of the painting, which creates reflections in the photo. Photo: JR 2006.



Image 81. Onni Oja, *Kohtalon kutojat* (Weavers of destiny), 1955. Tempera on plywood, 250 x 300. Hyvinkää Central School, now Asema School, Hyvinkää. Photo: JR 2009.

in 1957 [image 5], the representative of the Tampere Board of the Social Work articulated that the artworks belonged to a program, which aimed to make “the aged truly feel that the society remembers them.”⁸⁶ Noteworthy, the painting in question was not located in the living quarters of the inhabitants but in the spaces used by the workers of the facility. Nevertheless, “the effect [of art] is mediated also to their benefit”, the speaker argued.⁸⁷ It was often argued that the presence of art benefited the public, but according to this speaker, not even exposure to the artworks was necessary. The society “remembered” the inhabitants of the retirement home with art placed in the facilities of the employees. It can be hypothesised that the beneficial features of the artwork were mediated to the care of the inhabitants of the facility in the form of better involved workers. However, in this model, the “public” had only an indirect connection to the artwork, not a first-hand encounter with it.

The members of the audience were not given an opportunity to participate in the selection of public paintings. A rare event took place in connection to an exhibition of the competition sketches for the Amuri School public painting competition in 1955: a voting was arranged among school children, all in all 612 first to sixth graders. However, the voting had no effect on the competition itself.

The three works, which received the most votes were *Kesäloma* (Summer vacation), “which depicts in a narrative tone vacationing out in the nature by a lake with its various activities,” *Akvario* [sic] (Aquarium), “a summery lake landscape with boats and rays of sun,” and *Kouluvuodet* (School years), “also narrative.”⁸⁸ Unfortunately, as these sketches were not awarded, very little can be said about them besides these short descriptions in a newspaper article. *Summer vacation* and *School years* were actually excluded from the competition, as the artists had not included a demanded detailed sketch. According to the writer in *Aamulehti*, they likely would not have been successful in the competition even if they had included the detailed sketch, since they were “rigid, dry, and otherwise inartistic”.⁸⁹

On the fourth place in the voting, with thirty-six votes, was *Convent*, the winning sketch of the competition by Kauko Salmi, which was later realised. [image 112.] This was, according to the writer, surprising, and showed “developed artistic taste among the upper-graders”.⁹⁰ The *Aamulehti* article demonstrates how the children were not necessarily expected to immediately like the works the art experts had selected. Generally, among those who made judgements on public paintings, the artistic competence of children, or “people” in general, was not considered highly developed. Importantly, the selected works were intended to develop their aesthetic ability, not necessarily to please their current taste.

The commissioning of public paintings was often a central task for the newly established municipal art committees in the 1950s. It was one of the main issues discussed in the art committees—and also within the Painters’ Union. Even though direct commissions were made throughout the time frame of this research, the competition institution had a significant role in shaping the field of public painting in the postwar years. Through public painting competitions, art committees and other involved agents made definitions of the “Finnish public” at large.

The defining of the public of paintings seems to have taken place rather effortlessly: for example in schools, the public of the paintings were understood essentially as “children”, “students”, and “Finnish”, and also as “boys” and “girls”. This public was commissioned artworks, which related to its given characteristics. The realised production suggests a patronising attitude from the part of the commissioning bodies, indicated clearly in the

educative positioning of the works. Also the formulation of the transference of the artworks to the citizens indicated this position. At the unveiling ceremonies of the public works, they were turned over to the citizens as a gesture of care from the part of the city.⁹¹ Public paintings were defined from above, with the benefit of the “common man” as a main target, but without a need for the participation of this common man.

The body of Finnish public paintings may seem rather conventional, as, for example, new artistic trends appear at a different pace than in easel painting. Explanations for this could be sought from the artistic evaluations made by politicians and other outsiders to the artworld. However, it would be unfair—and unwise—to judge public art with the criteria adapted from other fields of art. Furthermore, public paintings acquired through competitions did not necessarily differ from those acquired without. Instead, the processes of production, including the competition institution, must be understood as an inseparable part of the artworld, a factor, which limited and enabled the means of expression in artworks, and made public paintings to what they are.

Chapter Seven

IMAGINING FINNISHNESS

From Politics to Images

The politics of art competitions defined the field of Finnish postwar public painting, and non-experts in art held important positions in the competitions. However, also members of the artists' associations, the artists themselves, made their voice heard in the juries and in the media. The competition sketches had to convince both art experts and "laymen" without artistic training or much knowledge of the field. Often, artists pursued this by employing the conventions of monumentality and a tested subject matter.

In the postwar decades, public painting continued to be a highly regulated field of art and artists were well aware of the compositional expectations of a monumental expression. The genre of monumental painting was not taught in art schools but an understanding of monumentality was widely shared. The conventions of public painting were frequently referred to by the juries and by newspaper critics, but often in vague terms. In the following quote from 1955 Osmo Laine explains mural painting by referring to the "nature of murals", and by indicating subordination to the architecture of the location:

"One must get used to making a clear difference between mural and easel painting. Mural painting has the nature of background; its mission in a [...] room [...] is accompanying, not self-purposeful. Due to this mission, the division of the surface, composition, and the general selection of colours is handled according to the nature of mural painting. Therefore, even noticeable distancing from natural forms is accepted."¹

The basic compositional expectations of a monumental painting were the suggestion of flat picture plane and the arrangement of various scenes into one entity. Illusionistic realism was avoided and solid colour fields and even heavy contours were used instead to emphasise the flatness of the painting. Often, Finnish monumental painters worked with a soft colour scheme in resemblance of fresco painting, even when painting with oil or tempera colours. Besides referring to the prestigious fresco technique, this helped to achieve "harmony" and "peacefulness" that were preferred qualities of large paintings. According to Lauri Ahlgren, the painter Aale Hakava, who taught for example in the fresco course arranged by the City of Helsinki in 1957, advised that the peacefulness of a monumental painting was achieved with blue colour. The larger the painting, the bluer it should be.²



Image 82. Harry Kivijärvi, “*In Guard*”, 1954. Vähä-Heikkilä Barracks, Turku. Photo: JR 2007.

Moderate geometric decomposing, as learned from the Norwegian fresco painters, was a popular tool in creating a monumental composition.

The compositional expectations also incorporated the arranging of different elements in the painting. Generally, public paintings depicted human figures in the foreground and a city or landscape in the background, avoiding the use of singular perspective. The artist Erkki Hienonen, who assisted Unto Pusa in the painting of the Käpylä School mural (1959), has later estimated that the subject of these “social commissions” was defined “as if in an iconostasis”, so that in the front, there had to be a depiction of work and the “basic family, father, mother, and children”, and in the background, a cityscape.³ Hienonen’s formulation is slightly caricaturised, yet it well characterises a typical composition.

Through the official selection processes, only “proper” imagery ended up on public walls. The values promoted by those in power and the imagery of postwar public painting are deeply related but, of course, public paintings did not merely picture contemporary politics. As a main trend, official and corporate public paintings depicted subjects arising from the “Finnish way of life”: family values, people working and playing, agricultural idyll, local landscapes, and reconstruction. The postwar public paintings *imagined*, created an image of, Finnishness. Even altarpieces partly incorporated the same themes, especially when executed by artists who also worked with secular public paintings.

Besides their symbolic or ideological content, also the visual and compositional aspects of the different elements must be acknowledged. For example, the figures in public paintings are most often dressed in simple clothing, suggesting both modesty and nostalgia for a simple agrarian past. [See, for example, images 82 and 84.] However, the simple clothing is also explained by the fact that a certain degree of reduction was seen necessary to attain a monumental character. Some elements may be used time and again because they are seen to belong to the genre, or because they offer practical compositional elements for the artists, or both.

The rays of light, which played a significant part in Lennart Segerstråle's *Finlandia* frescoes (1943) [images 40–41], appeared in public paintings and competition sketches in the early 1950s: for example in the painting by Harry Kivijärvi for the canteen of the Vähä-Heikkilä Barracks in Turku (1954).⁴ [Image 82.] The painting was realised during Kivijärvi's military service, and the work of the young artist was unpaid. The *Finlandia* frescoes were undoubtedly widely known via reproductions and Kivijärvi recalls to have seen them on a trip to Helsinki during his art school years in Turku (1947–50).⁵ In Kivijärvi's painting, the rays of light divide the picture plane into two scenes: while the soldier to the right is standing in guard in a winter landscape, the family scene on the left is depicted in spring. The chronology of the painting proceeds, hence, as in *Finlandia*, from the right to the left.



Image 83. Matti Kallinen, *Kylvöö ja satoa* (Planting and harvesting), competition sketch, 1952. Oil on canvas, 69 x 119. WAM. Photo: Toni Vuori, The Museum Centre of Turku.



Image 84. Matti Kallinen, *Kylvöö ja satoa* (Planting and harvesting), 1953. Oil on hardboard, 254 x 514. Vasaramäki School, Turku. WAM. Photo: Toni Vuori, The Museum Centre of Turku.

The employment of the element of the rays of light was also criticised. In 1953, in the context of the Vasaramäki School public painting competition in Turku, the art critic Edvard Elenius considered the rays of light as a “worn out” element. According to Elenius they were an easy way to cover a lot of space on the canvas.⁶ As a consequence, Matti Kallinen, whose competition sketch had included the rays of light and who got to execute the public painting, left the beams out of the final work. [Images 83–84.] The creation of a successful monumental composition was careful balancing between following conventions and not being repetitive.

In the process of cumulating imagery, the agency of the paintings was central. Artists learned the conventions of monumentality especially through public paintings and their reproductions in the media. At times, the used example can be clearly detected. In 1961, Vieno Orre won the painting competition for Pääskyvuori School in Turku. The painting was positioned as a long frieze near the ceiling of the gymnasium hall of the school, the same way as Olle Nyman’s frieze for the Klingsborg School in Norrköping, Sweden, from 1950. Nyman’s painting was presented in detail in *Konstrevy* in 1952 and Orre without a doubt knew Nyman’s painting, so strong are the similarities.⁷ [Images 87–88.] Assumably he knew it from the journal, and not from the school itself.

Both Orre’s winning sketch *Väri ja rytmi* (Colour and rhythm) and Nyman’s painting are boldly stylised geometric compositions featuring of a procession of children walking, playing, and doing gymnastics. In both, children proceed from left to right; their feet touch the bottom of the painting while their heads nearly touch the top of it. Neither Nyman’s nor Orre’s children have facial features, and one of the girls in Orre’s detailed sketch closely resembles one of the girls in Nyman’s painting, depicted in *Konstrevy*. The position of the head and the line dividing the face are the same. [Images 85–86.]

The Pääskyvuori School competition was held at a moment when *art informel* was gaining ground in Finland, and abstract public paintings were realised in small numbers. An abstract sketch, *Abstraktio* (Abstraction) by Otso Karpakka was awarded in this competition for the first time by the City of Turku.⁸ In the final painting, realised by Orre for the Vasaramäki School in 1962, he distanced from the rigid lines of the competition sketches towards further abstracted form language, but the basic compositional idea remained the same. [Image 88.]

In crafting a winning sketch for a public painting competition, artists had to dominate two aspects over others: monumental composing and the selection of a proper subject matter. It was generally thought that the subject of the work should relate to the public of the painting. Art competitions often required a detailed sketch realised in full size and in the technique of the final painting. This way, the jury estimated the ability of the artist to realise the final work.

According to the available information, Finnish artists had well incorporated a set of proper motifs to suggest as public paintings when offering works for competitions. As has been explained before, the sketches that were not awarded were usually not documented. However, some conclusions can be drawn from the titles of the competition entries. The documentation of my research suggests that juries did not necessarily select the sketch with the most appropriate subject, but could award the most competent compositions from among a variety of works with similar subjects.



Image 85. A detail image of Olle Nyman's frieze (1950) in Klingsborg School, Norrköping, Sweden. (*Konstrevy* 4–5, 1952, 198.)



Image 86. Vieno Orre, *Väri ja rytmi* (Colour and rhythm), competition sketch, 1961. Oil on canvas, 70 x 155. WAM. Photo: Toni Vuori, The Museum Centre of Turku.



Image 87. Olle Nyman, "*Parade*", 1950. Klingsborg School, Norrköping, Sweden. (*Konstrevy* 4–5, 1952, 199.)



Image 88. Vieno Orre, *Väri ja rytmi* (Colour and Rhythm), 1962. Tempera on canvas, 142 x 1980. Pääskylvuori School, Turku. WAM. Photo: Toni Vuori, The Museum Centre of Turku.⁹



Image 89. Mauri Favén, *Aetas aurea*, partial view, 1957. Haapaniemi School. Oil on canvas, 170 x 350. Currently in storage. Kuopio Art Museum. Photo: JR 2009.

In the painting competition for Myllykallio School, situated on the island of Lauttasaari in Helsinki, thirteen of the thirty-seven competition entries referred to playing or childhood, such as *Leija* (Kite), *Satu* (Fairy tale) and *Leikkikenttä* (Playfield), seven to schooling, for example *Kodista kouluun—koulusta elämään* (From home to school—from school to life), *Tiedon puu* (The tree of knowledge), and seven had geographical local references, such as *Myllykallio*, *Saari* (Island), or *Helsinki horisontissa* (Helsinki in the horizon).¹⁰ The winning sketch, *Allegro* by Olavi Valavuori, does not explicitly reveal its subject by its title, but it depicted children in different activities.¹¹ The composition of the final painting is further reduced from the competition sketch, depicting isolated child figures on a grey background. [Image 74.]

In Kuopio, a large number of sketches remained in the possession of the city from the competitions arranged in the 1950s.¹² The fourteen known sketches from the Haapaniemi School competition of 1956 all depict children. Most have playing children as their main subject. Two exceptions can be mentioned: the sketch *Lasten ystävä* (A friend of children) has an explicitly religious subject, Christ greeting children, and *Peruskivi* (The foundation stone) depicts, as the name suggests, the laying of the foundation to a building. In this work, children merely watch. The jury placed neither of these to the top category. In other known competition sketches, children or youth were the main protagonists; they are outing and playing, in most cases in a natural setting or a school yard.

Consequently, the three awarded sketches in the Haapaniemi School competition had playing children or youth as their main subject. The winning sketch *Aetas aurea* (Latin for “Golden age”) by Mauri Favén was lauded by the jury for the unconventional plan: the composition of the themes from the “children’s world” was “lively and integral”.¹³ [Image 89.] The jury recorded evaluations only on the top eleven sketches, and barely made

any comments on the subject matter of the works.¹⁴ All works that reached this level, well incorporated the “children’s world”, and the evaluations could focus on the composition, colour scheme, and execution of the sketches.

In Finnish history writing, “the 1950s” are often reminisced as a positive and optimistic time period, fed by the economic growth and the rise of the general standard of living, and the time when youth culture, rock music, and television, arrived in Finland. The domestic cinema experienced huge growth, and, as a part of it, also the genre of popular culture *rillumarei* film and music, an opposition to the high culture and the cause of many “culture wars”. In art history, the 1950s have been labelled as the moment of the breakthrough of modernism. Nevertheless, during the time, the conservative value basis of the society was strongly pronounced, for example, through the school system. “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom” advised the vicar Yrjö Hirvonen school children in the inauguration ceremony of the Amuri School in Tampere in 1954.¹⁵

The first mentioned aspects, optimism and economic growth, were frequently suggested in the public paintings of the time; the rise of popular culture was not. Also the past war was absent. Indeed, there were many points of silence in public painting. Public paintings are not to be seen as documents of “the Finnish postwar period” but they did have an institutional mandate behind the image they portrayed. Through the participation of official agents in their production, public paintings held the position of official art in the society.

Nation as a Family

Since public painting was established in Finland both as a national as well as an educational project, the themes of the realised paintings were often of an elevated nature, and their protagonists ideal, exemplary citizens. The core values of the postwar Finnish society, “Home, Religion, and Fatherland”, translated in public paintings as images of families working in a setting of local nature.

Christianity manifested through public paintings as the moral code for the society, while religious subjects as such were seldom presented. The theme of home was suggested in variations of the family scene. In addition, the postwar public paintings strongly emphasised the importance of work, suggesting the Lutheran values of the society. The local landscape served as an allegory of the Fatherland: hometown referred to the homeland in a smaller scale. Very often the locality of a public painting was referred to in its themes—the recognition by the viewer was to happen on the basis of a local church, factory, or town hall depicted in the horizon of the painting. This emblem creating recognition was placed at the background of an unspecified “Finnish” environment.

Importantly, however, a spectator of a painting did not need to recognise the specific environment to associate a painting as “Finnish”. The association was achieved by depicting such topography, trees and plants that frequented in Finnish nature and in Finnish art. For example the painting *Leirielämä* (Camp life), painted by Olli Seppänen for Teuvo Pakkala School in Oulu in 1959, depicts, as the name suggests, youth camping out in the nature. The landscape of the outing is that which opened from the artist Seppänen’s window in his



Image 90. Olli Seppänen, *Leirielämä* (Camp life), 1959. Oil on canvas, 232 x 511. Teuvo Pakkala School, Oulu. Oulu Art Museum. Photo: JR 2010.

home locality, in Neittävä in Kainuu.¹⁶ However, even without this background knowledge the landscape is easily recognised as Finnish with its flat topography and low hills in the far distance, and the inclusion of spruces and birches as well as Labrador tea. [Image 90.]

The depiction of a family was, as Erkki Hienonen caricatured, a part of the iconostasis of postwar public paintings. The typical family scenes in postwar public paintings included infants with their mothers and, at times, with their fathers, and older children being taught or sent to school by their parents or participating in the activities of the adults. The image of family has gained symbolic weight through the tradition of Western art and the emblematic scenes of the Christian Holy Family, in particular Mary with the child. In the context of postwar Finland, the image of family connected to the reproduction of nation following the war, and to the forward-looking development of the society in the form of new generations.

The postwar aim of reproducing the nation included the ideal of at least four, preferably six children per family, actively propagated by the Family Federation.¹⁷ During the postwar period, the attitudes of the society were moulded more positive towards the home and the family. Women, who had during the war time largely occupied men's position in the labour market, were now expected to return home. This was reflected, among other issues, in housing policies.¹⁸ The postwar public paintings frequently depicted a nuclear family with a distinct gender differentiation. However, the number of children per mother is most often one or two, not six. While the family was present in the paintings precisely due to the importance given to family in the society at that moment, the number of depicted children needed to be limited for compositional reasons.

Of course, the family is in the eye of the beholder. Yet, it is also a way these groups were intended to be read. It is a self-evident interpretation when the figures of a grown-up and a small child are shown together. Despite the lack of clearly suggested allegorical figures in Finnish public paintings, allegorical readings were eagerly made during the postwar phase.

The figure of a mother translated into an allegorical, collective mother. Mother with an infant child was an embodiment of the reproduction of the nation.

In the Finnish context, the native country, “Fatherland” (*isänmaa*), has often been depicted in the form of a maiden, Finnish Maiden (*Suomi-neito*). The native country has also found an embodiment in the figure of a mother, for example in Segerstråle’s *Finlandia* frescoes.¹⁹ [Images 40–41] The female figure has even been seen in the form of the country on a map. The female body has a long history in Western art of being depicted as an allegory instead of an individual. Women have embodied virtues such as Justice and Truth, and concepts such as Victory and Patria. According to Marina Warner, the reason for female embodiment is connected to the gender of the words in many European languages. Furthermore, the female body supposedly has the power to persuade, to convey a message through its pleasing form. Notably, female form is not attributed to the virtues on the basis that women would possess these virtues—to be just, or free, for example.²⁰



Image 91. Hilikka Toivola, *Portti itään ja länteen* (The gate to the East and West), 1957. Fresco, 420 x 1035. Turku Harbour. WAM. Photo: Toni Vuori, The Museum Centre of Turku.



Image 92. Hilikka Toivola, “*Turku*”, 1961. Oil, 140 x 300. Postal Savings Bank, Turku. Current location unknown.²³ (Willner-Rönholm 1996, picture plate XVIII.)

The allegorical readings of public paintings were articulated by artists as well as newspaper critics during the postwar period. For example, a personification of the City of Turku was repeatedly seen in the paintings of Hilikka Toivola: in the fresco *Portti itään ja länteen* (The gate to the East and West), painted for the Turku harbour in 1957, and in the painting for the Postal Savings Bank branch in Turku in 1961. [Images 91–92.] In *The gate to the East and West*, Petra Uexküll interpreted the central female figure with the seagulls as a personification of Turku, standing at a meeting point between the sea (the West) and the mainland Finland (the East).²¹ In the bank painting, the female figure holding a child by the hand was interpreted allegorically as “Aunt Turku” (Turun täti) in *Turun Sanomat* and as “Old Mother Turku” (Vanha Turku-mamma) by Kalle Rautiainen in *Uusi Aura*.²²

Rautiainen describes the scene as follows: “Old Mother Turku guides the Young Turku across the bridge to the other side of the river, or to the new Turku, growing out of its old clothes”.²⁴ The division of the city by the river Aura has had significant symbolic weight in the layout of the town. The historical centre is located on the south-eastern side of the river, and the contemporary city centre on the north-western side. This is what Rautiainen refers to, never minding that the “new” centre had been moved to the other side of the river during the first half of 19th century. Rautiainen’s personification of the city is twofold: on the one hand the figures in the painting are seen as allegories of Turku, on the other hand they are situated in Turku, referred to in a personified way, “growing out of its old clothes”. A more straightforward reading of the scene would be that of a mother, securing a child that is balancing on a bridge or a gate. When commissioning the painting, the local bank had hoped for a Turku subject, and even though the painting lacks the most typical elements of depictions of Turku, such as the castle and the cathedral, it was read as an image of the city.

In Finnish public paintings, the natural place for infants is in the lap, or near proximity, of their mothers. In *The last day of school* (1953) by Onni Oja in Meilahti School in Helsinki a woman wraps herself tightly around her child, marked by a yellow circle as the head in the radically reduced composition. [Image 51.] In the painting *Elämä ja aurinko* (Life and sun) by Erkki Heikkilä, from 1960, a baby is similarly hinted to only with a few lines near the mother’s breast. The mother is half sitting half lying on her side, feeding the child. [Image 124.] Her casual position with one knee up distances associations with the Christian mother-child imagery. However, another common analogy was made by a contemporary writer in juxtaposing the mother with the earth or land. “The love of a mother is, at the same time, love of the land.”²⁵

In Olavi Laine’s painting *Virtasalmi*, painted in 1958 for a cooperative society of Virtasalmi, a baby is exceptionally in the hands of a man, the father, who is “playfully” lifting the child in the air. [Image 93.] Playfully is placed in quotes since the static, staged position of the figures does not suggest playfulness. The family of three is on a picnic: a blanket has been spread behind them, and the mother is making coffee on open fire. A city with its factories is seen in the distant horizon behind this leisurely scene, the small island with summer cottages. According to Petja Hovinheimo, the painting “reflects the postwar optimism, a better world of tomorrow being built through the family”.²⁶ This is the common and, indeed, the intended reading of this imagery. The presence of a courting couple and the young family refer to the renewal of the nation, and to a future as harmonious as this painting.



Image 93. Olavi Laine, *Virtasalmi*, 1958. Oil, 190 x 375. Cooperative Society of Virtasalmi. Now in Tradeka Art Collection. Photo: Museokuva / Matti Huuhka and Ilari Järvinen.



Image 94. Onni Oja, *Welcome*, 1958. Oil on hardboard, 400 x 180. Lohja Savings Bank. Photo: JR 2011.

With the emphasis on both family and constructing—discussed below—it is somewhat surprising that “home” in the form of a building is almost never present in Finnish public paintings. They do not enter the private space of home, but take place outdoors, in the public realm. Furthermore, even though a city is often depicted in the background, the primary

setting of the postwar public paintings is among nature, rarely in a cityscape. In fact, it is the family, the figures of a woman, child, and a man that create the idea of home, as seen, for example, in the Rantavitikka School painting *The life of man* (1951) by Antti Salmenlinna and Paavo Leinonen, and in *The gate to the East and West* (1957) by Hilikka Toivola. [Images 49 and 91.]

In Onni Oja's painting for the Savings Bank in Lohja (1958) home is suggested in a slightly more emphasised way. [Image 94.] The spectators face a scene of a yard and are greeted, in the literal meaning of the word, by a family standing at an open gate. The gate is located in a garden, and it is not connected to a fence. Behind the family, there are large bushes and a bit further back a partly visible one-family house. The painting is conventionally divided in three parts: the family is in the middle, and on the left and right, there are scenes of agriculture and gardening, inclusive the common symbolic scene of harvesting grain. In the background, as also was typical, we can see the local town, the Lohja paper mills and the medieval Lohja church.

The family in Oja's main scene has an ideal composition of a nuclear family: a man, a woman, an older girl and a younger child, likely a boy as it has not been indicated otherwise. The father has lifted his hand high in the air and the girl is also waving. The mother is holding the younger child in her lap and touching the older child by the shoulder. She guides for the children, while the father embraces the mother as the protector of the whole family. They all look directly forward at the viewer of the painting, as if receiving waited visitors. This kind of direct communication with the viewing audience is rarely found in a Finnish public painting and is, thus, rather striking. The family does not correspond to the image generally implied in the public paintings: their clothes are simple, but modern and brightly coloured, and the father has a collared white shirt and a neat haircut. On top of everything, the mother is smiling.

In Oja's painting, the family of four is a tight unit. More often in postwar public paintings, the father is somewhat distanced from the unit of a mother and child: he is working beside them, or perhaps standing with a shovel in his hand, looking into the distance, as in *The life of man* (1951) in Rantavitikka School in Rovaniemi. [Image 49.] Another common image of the family was the scene of a mother and children greeting the father, who is leaving for or returning from work. This scene is found in Taisto Toivonen's *Orava* (Squirrel), painted for the Tampere Savings Bank in 1956, and in the painting by Nina Vanas and Liisa Rautiainen, painted for Karihaara School in Kemi the same year. [Images 95–96.] These visualisations of the Finnish family clearly suggest as an ideal a model where father is the "provider of bread", and mother the caretaker of the home and the children.

In *Squirrel*, the father is dressed as a factory worker and has a lunch box in his hand. He has lifted his hand to greet his wife and son, who are holding hands, their backs to the spectator. The father is looking at the general direction of the son—however not directly at him—and the son returns the wave. The mother is standing rather inexpressively, but we cannot see her face properly. Two trees create a frame for the scene.

In the painting by Vanas and Rautiainen, the family scene takes place in a dark shadowy ground shaped by trees in the middle of the painting, a rather sombre setting. The father is holding a shovel as an emblem of the work he carries out. A mother and three children stand in the shade, while the father is outside of it. The mother is holding her hand on the child who is embracing her, and an older brother is pulling a younger child away from the father.

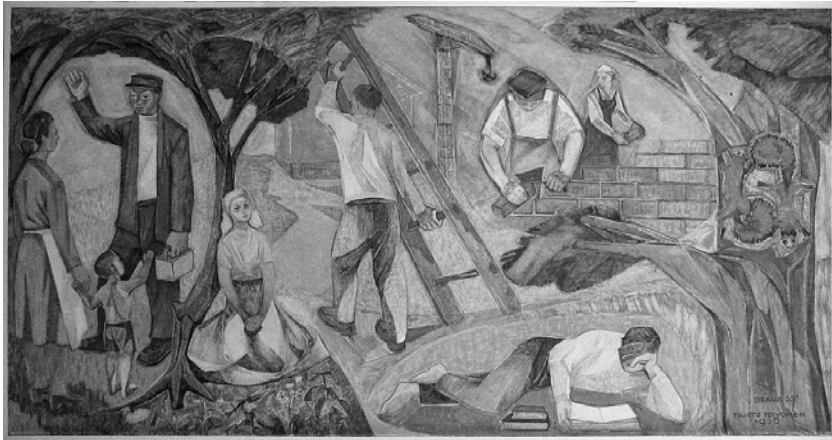


Image 95. Taisto Toivonen, *Orava (Squirrel)*, 1956. Oil/tempera on canvas, 131 x 251. Tampere Savings Bank. Currently in storage. Tampere Art Museum. Photo: JR 2006.



Image 96. Nina Vanas and Liisa Rautiainen, *“Goodbye”*, 1956. Mural painting. Karihaara School, Kemi. Photo: JR 2010.

In a local newspaper, the scene was described as “children saying goodbye to the father who is leaving for work”.²⁷ In fact, the father is saying goodbye to the dog, not the family, and none of the family members is looking at the father.

The symbolic readings of different figures in public paintings were widely accessible. According to *Pohjolan Sanomat*, the reading girl in Karihaara School painting suggested “thirst for knowledge” and the boys on the beach youth.²⁸ As Toivonen’s painting for the Tampere Savings Bank included the figures of two squirrels, it was seen in *Aamulehti* as symbolising “saving” along physical and mental work.²⁹

The Finnish postwar public paintings emphasised the importance of home without picturing it. Family was positioned as the basic unit of the nation, often suggested in the paintings through the image of mother and children. The pair composed of mother and child represented the family, and the family equalled to the idea of home. Importantly, the home that is presented in the public paintings is not a private, individual home, but the outdoor locations suggest the home of homeland.

The Days of Life

A preferable compositional choice in large-sized public paintings was the combining of various scenes into one painting. Paintings were typically divided into three or more scenes displaying people in different activities, often with a more symbolic dimension of suggesting different stages of life, or the seasons of the year. However, the commissioned monumental paintings during the postwar period were generally rather small in size. In order to execute monumental human figures, the number of different scenes to be fitted on a canvas was limited.

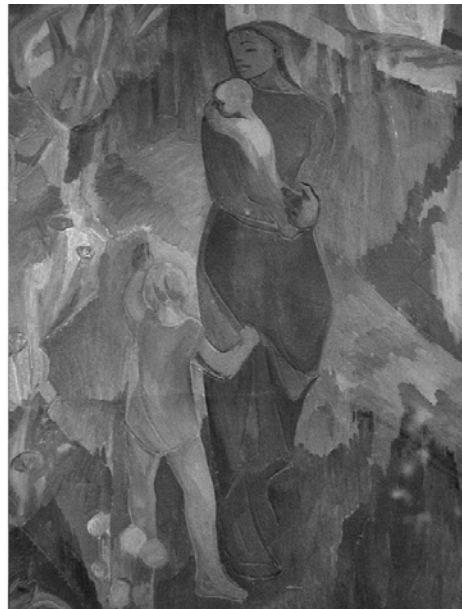
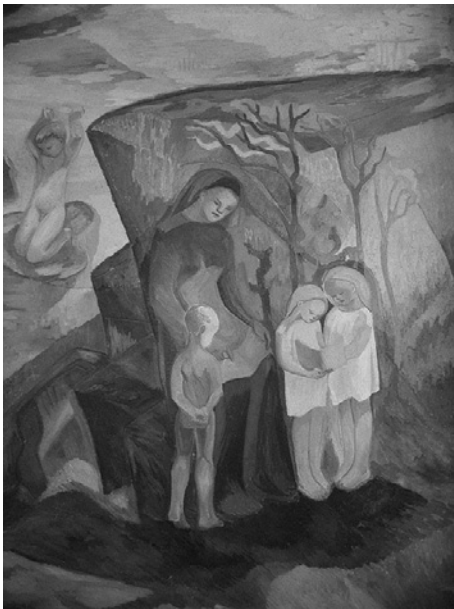
An example of a larger painting cycle is the fresco commissioned by the publishing house WSOY from Hilikka Toivola for the Normal School for Girls in Helsinki in 1945, realised in 1947. The painting *Ihmisen elinpäivät* (The days of life) is a triptych, with the theme of different stages of a woman’s life. Men are distanced from the family units, and almost completely from the large fresco cycle. In a girls’ school, the focusing on women was likely considered a natural choice. [Images 97–98.]

The left panel depicts childhood, and suggests studying as an essential task for children. [Image 98 a.] In the panel, a woman (mother) is reading to a child, while two girls beside them are studying a book on their own. The only clearly indicated male figures of the triptych appear in this panel: there is a man (father) taking a break from the physical labour he has been occupied with, and two of the five children in the scene, the naked and short-haired ones, are to be interpreted as boys. In the middle panel, Toivola presented different roles and forms of companionship for women. However, the reproductive role is suggested as an essential one for the young adults: many of the women have infant children. [Image 98 b.] The right panel depicts old age, and it is suggested as a quiet, lonesome time. Only two women are featured in the large panel, and they are not interacting. The third panel originally included a scene of death, which was, according to Sakari Saarikivi “extremely beautiful from the point of view of composition”. This was nevertheless left out from the final version as “inappropriate for a school environment”.³⁰

All of the scenes in the panels take place in a natural setting, without references to the man-built environment. While the background of the painting is calm and serene in the



Image 97. Hilikka Toivola, *Ihmisen elinpäivät* (The days of life), 1947. Fresco, three panels, 300 x 500 each. Normal School for Girls. Now Chydenia, Helsinki School of Economics. Photo: JR 2006.



Images 98 a–b. Hilikka Toivola, *Ihmisen elinpäivät* (The days of life). Details of the left and middle panels. As above.

childhood scene, it grows more dramatic towards the adulthood and old age. The dramatic landscape, the geometrically arranged scenery, and the handling of the sky, with the clouds and the rays of light, are reminiscent of the Norwegian fresco tradition, and especially the Crematorium frescoes in Oslo by Alf Rolfsen, painted in 1932–37.

A version of the life cycle theme is also suggested in the painting *Kotimaamme ompi Suomi* (Our homeland is Finland), painted by Unto Pusa for Käpylä School in Helsinki in 1959. [Image 99.] The painting is a three-part life cycle motif, where childhood and the time before school are depicted on the left, school life in the middle, and adulthood, working life, on the right side. The landscape on the left, where the curious children have climbed on the fence to see the school life, is clearly a suburban environment. The buildings are multi-storey apartment buildings, spread among the nature according to the ideals of suburban planning. In the school scene in the middle, mathematics and geometrics are visualised with a girl using an abacus and a boy with a pair of dividers. The depicted adult life is an industrial environment: men working with machinery, welding, and making a bicycle.

The middle scene of the painting is dominated by a large map of the world, and a teacher pointing out Finland on the far end of the globe. The gesture puts Finland in scale in the world, communicating modesty, a true virtue of the time. The figures are modestly clothed, barefooted—with the exception of the teacher, dressed in a black suit and a tie. The teacher represents higher education, but in Pusa's vision, the municipal elementary school children were not to be trained as academics but to work in the industry, the source of Finnish prosperity.

The narrative of the painting is rather explicitly stated, and also the form language emphasises the vision of the technological advancement and the modernity of the society. The modesty and solemnity of the figures best connect Pusa's work to other monumental paintings of the era. Even though prosperity was growing, there was no need to get overly excited.

The progression of the Käpylä competition, organised by the City of Helsinki in 1956, suggests friction in the views regarding the sort of imageries public paintings were to create. The sketch, which Pusa submitted to the competition, *Vanne ja vene* (The hoop and the boat), presented boys playing with hoops and building a boat. Despite the conventional subject of children playing, Pusa's imagery was not conventional. Heavy industrial environment, silos, electric wires, and factories, dominated the sketch. Compared to the small size of the boys in the foreground, industry nearly became the main subject of the work. The children did not, hence, live in a nostalgic agrarian idyll, but in a technological, industrial world. For this reason or another, the chairman of the Helsinki City Art Committee Arno Tuurna considered the subject of the work to be “completely inappropriate for the location”.³¹

A second round of the competition was arranged, and Pusa finalised his sketch for this round in Paris in the spring of 1958—therefore having had the possibility to deepen his relationship with Léger's works.³² He got to realise the school painting on the basis of a new sketch, which included neither a hoop or a boat, nor silos or electric wires. It depicted a modern school facility, from where the children graduated to an industrial, modern country.

Of course, the narrative of a life cycle could be condensed into smaller scale, suggested with a limited number of figures and typically three scenes. Erkki Heikkilä's *Vuodenajat* (Seasons), painted in 1957 for Vaajakoski School in Rural Municipality of Jyväskylä (Jyväskylän maalaiskunta, now part of Jyväskylä), depicts seasons of the year in three



Image 99. Unto Pusa, *Kotimaamme omi Suomi* (Our homeland is Finland), 1959. Oil on canvas, 330 x 564. Käpylä School, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2006.



Image 100. Erkki Heikkilä, *Vuodenajat* (Seasons), 1957. Oil, 197 x 605. Vaajakoski School. Currently in Palokka School, Jyväskylä. Photo: Jari Kuskelin, Jyväskylä Art Museum.

scenes. [Image 100.] To the left, two men are working in a wintery scene of timber woods, and in the middle, in a summer scene, a group of young women and men are dancing in a circle. To the right of the painting, there is autumn, harvest time. A man and a woman are working side by side while a grey haired woman—the grandmother—is holding a young

boy. The generational procession is included in the narrative with the depiction of the extended family.

Similarly, the paintings *From morning until night* (1950) by Birger Carlstedt [image 50] and *The course of life in the shadow of the factory* (1953) by Sven Grönvall [image 59] are life-cycle motifs, suggesting different stages of life from infancy to old age. The theme is implied also in the titles of the paintings, in Grönvall's case more directly and in Carlstedt's case more allegorically. With the subject arising from the "workers' day off"³³—articulated by the commissioner—old age is less emphasised in Carlstedt's painting.

Similarly in a low and wide format, the painting *Leikkiä ja totta* (Play and reality), painted in 1956 by Pentti Toivonen for Rahola School in Tampere, echoes the basic structure of Carlstedt's work, with a beach scene framed by large trees in the middle. [Image 101.] Stylistically, however, the paintings have little in common. While Carlstedt employed modern French monumental language, reduced cubistic composition with stark colour fields, and the painting featured bulky, monumental human figures, the delicate secco of Toivonen has the sensibility of coloured pencil in its execution.



Image 101. Pentti Toivonen, *Leikkiä ja totta* (Play and reality), 1956. Secco, 150 x 728. Rahola School, Tampere. Photo: Mikko Marjamäki, NYMU.

The Tampere City Art Committee commissioned an extensive decorative program for the Rahola School. *Aamulehti* suspected that this was the first school building in the country, for which a "large, detailed plan for artistic decoration had been planned already during the building stage."³⁴ A large number of "decorative paintings" featuring fish, birds, animals, historical costume parades and sporting were commissioned from a variety of local artist and hung in the hallways of the school.³⁵ Toivonen's painting was a result of a public art competition, framed as a "free idea competition". The competition sought plans for decorating both a wall and a pilaster in the lobby space of the building. As a consequence, many propositions were rejected as they had suggested only one of these elements, and the jury seriously considered only two sketches.³⁶

The decoration was commissioned from Pentti Toivonen and Mauno Juvonen on the basis of their joint suggestion *Play and reality*.³⁷ Toivonen answered for the painting of a

mural, while Juvonen executed ceramic reliefs with the subject of children for the so-called pilaster—in fact, an adjacent wall. The two parts are not integrally connected.

As was seen fitting for a school environment, children—and work—have emphasised roles in Toivonen's painting. The children in Toivonen's painting carry out the three main tasks allocated for children in school paintings: they play, work, and learn. A young boy is making sand castles, playing, but the slightly older children are occupied with garden work, planting and watering. A boy pushing a wheelbarrow has the appearance of a workman, wearing stern boots, a sleeveless shirt, and long trousers—in contrast to shorts, which were the customary boys' clothing at the time. The figures referring to schooling are a boy reading in mother's lap, and the pair of mother and daughter walking hand in hand, the girl with a briefcase in her hand. The central scene, depicting adulthood, features the themes of love, leisure, and work. It takes place by the water, where a young couple is looking into the horizon, a man is sunbathing and another man is fishing.

In the life cycle theme, many of the common themes of postwar public painting were expressed in a concise manner. The narratives defined play and studying as essential tasks for children. Work was emphasised as the central element of adult life and mothering as the main task for women; the distinction between genders was clearly marked. Young adulthood was for courting, although delicately referred to, and old age for contemplation and, at times, for passing on wisdom for younger generations. In a well-functioning society, that was imagined in the paintings, there were no conflicts as everyone knew their place. People worked towards a common goal, and children learned the importance of work early on, developing into responsible members of the society.

Work and Rest

In Finnish figurative public painting production, both in the early 20th century, and in the postwar period, human figures were nearly always present. The human figure was an essential point of reference for the intended public of the paintings; it was an important means to create meaning for a painting. First and foremost, the human figures suggested an exemplary character. The protagonists of the postwar public paintings had homogeneous “Finnish” appearances—they were blond, slim, and healthy looking—and they were involved in meaningful activities: they worked. Generally, the protagonists were depicted as “simple folks”, dressed in neat but simple clothes, and were often barefooted. Women had frequently veiled their hair with scarfs. This was the down-to-earth image of Finnishness that was to relate with “the people”, the public of the works.

Landscapes or cityscapes without a human reference were seldom realised: as exceptions that prove the rule can be mentioned the large mosaic by Irja Soini, *Kirkkautta Auran rannoilla* (Brightness on the shores of River Aura, 1954) in Turku Harbour, and *Paikka auringossa* (A place in the sun, 1964), painted by Matti Petäjä for Sampola School in Tampere. [Images 102–103.] These works suggested urban views of the cities they were commissioned for. Lennart Segerstråle, who was famed—besides as a monumental painter—as a bird painter, realised a nature motif with the subject of swans, *Joutsenten*

paluu keväällä (Return of the swans in spring), as a public commission for the KOP Bank branch in Rovaniemi in 1960.³⁸



Image 102. Irja Soini, *Kirkkautta Auran rannoilla* (Brightness on the shores of River Aura), 1954. Mosaic, 257 x 940. Workers' canteen, Turku Harbour. Toinen linja, Turku. Photo: Raakkel Närhi, The Museum Centre of Turku.



Image 103. Matti Petäjä, *Paikka auringossa* (A place in the sun), partial view, 1964. Oil, three panels, 210 x 160 each. Sampola School. Currently in Frenckell Building, Tampere. NYMU. Photo: JR 2006.

The exemplary human figures of the postwar public paintings were, then, engaged in meaningful activities—they were depicted as working people. However, the “working” figures are not necessarily caught in the middle of action. Instead, their field of work may be referred to with an emblem, such as a shovel or basket in their hands. Similarly, the “playing” in public paintings is not animated, and the paintings are seldom playful. This is likely explained by the demands of harmony and balance of the composition, which would have been broken with too much movement in the painting—large paintings were to be “peaceful”. Also, the static poses of the figures contributed to the time dimension; they created a slow tempo for the paintings.³⁹ The slowness of the paintings was to suggest their permanence, their unchanging character and high value.

In the early postwar years, in the late 1940s, public paintings also took joyful positions that were not seen later on. The early postwar paintings took a clear distance from the war, whereas the reconstruction theme became more common at a moment when the physical reconstruction of the country was largely completed, and the postwar effort could be heroised.

In 1947, Tove Jansson painted two frescoes for the restaurant Kaupunginkellari (City cellar) of the City of Helsinki: *Juhlat kaupungissa* (Celebration in the city) and *Juhlat maalla* (Celebration in the countryside). The locale also functioned as a formal reception venue.⁴⁰ Later, the paintings have been moved to *Arbis*, the Swedish language Adult Education Centre in Helsinki. As the titles of the frescoes indicate, they suggest a theme of celebration. One of the paintings features a ball with elegantly dressed couples swinging on the dance floor. There are flower arrangements, evening dresses, drinking, and smoking, and flirting—referring to a luxurious life that was not later seen in officially produced Finnish public painting. [Image 104.] In the other fresco, Jansson depicted a leisurely scene inside a lush forest full of flowers: a violinist plays, couples caress each other, a woman plays with her child, and another looks in the mirror, in a classic gesture of vanity. [Image 105.] Tove Jansson, notably, did not participate in the solemnity of Finnish public painting even later on, but held on to her personal imagery of play and fantasy, for example in the paintings for Kila School in Karjaa (1953) and for Aurora Hospital in Helsinki (1956). [Image 77–79.]

In a similar way, in Tuomas von Boehm’s lakeside view, also painted in 1947 for a restaurant owned by a cooperative store in Imatra, people are seated in an outdoor café, drinking and smoking, and a man is reaching for a woman as if asking for a dance.⁴¹ In the background, people are sunbathing and sailing, some even uninhibitedly running on the beach. The scenery could refer to the lake district of Finland but just as well to the French Riviera. The people are dressed up, women have long dresses and hats, and men are wearing suits. [Image 106.] The atmosphere is, however, more solemn than in Jansson’s painting, as if the shadow of war would still linger on the faces of the figures.

Onni Oja’s view of a summer day, painted for the cooperative society Elanto in Helsinki in 1946, depicts “simple folk” in characteristically Finnish landscape. Yet, as in the paintings by Jansson and von Boehm, none of the figures are working, let alone constructing something. Instead, there is an accordion player, a couple dancing, people making coffee on open fire, and parents bathing their children in the water. [Image 107.]

Both in von Boehm’s café as well as in Jansson’s terrace, there are bottles and wine glasses suggesting celebration with alcoholic beverages—unimaginable for later, pronouncedly serious public painting. In a contrary role, alcohol plays a part in the narrative



Image 104. Tove Jansson, *Juhlat kaupungissa* (Celebration in the city), 1947. Fresco, 206 x 490. Restaurant Kaupunginkellari. Currently in the Swedish language Adult Education Centre, *Arbis*, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2006.



Image 105. Tove Jansson, *Juhlat maalla* (Celebration in the countryside), 1947. Fresco, 203 x 531. As above.

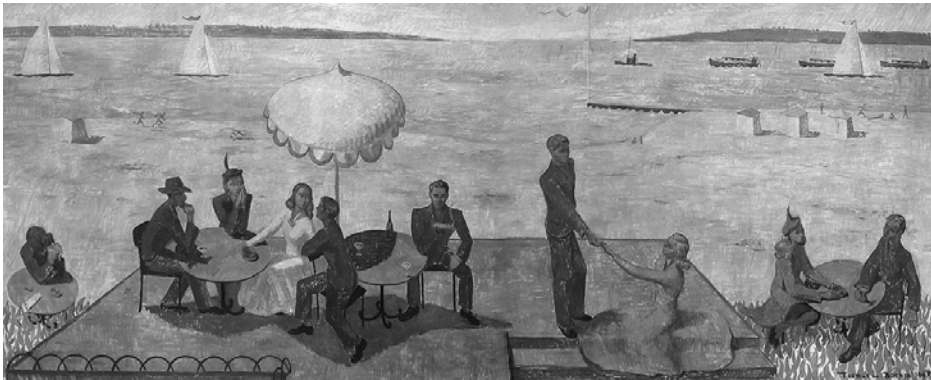


Image 106. Tuomas von Boehm, *Saimaan rantaa* (Shores of Saimaa), 1947. Oil, 300 x 650. Restaurant in “Väärätalo”, Imatra. Currently in Tradeka Art Collection. Imatra Art Museum. Photo: Museokuva / Matti Huuhka and Ilari Järvinen.



Image 107. Onni Oja, *Kesäpäivä* (Summer day) 1946. Oil on canvas, 185 x 400. Elanto. Currently in the Finnish Club in Helsinki (Helsingin Suomalainen Klubi). Photo: JR 2010.

of Lennart Segerstråle’s altar painting (1951) for the Rovaniemi Church: a man has passed out, holding on to his liquor bottle, giving a warning example of the dangers of drinking. [Image 64.]

Instead of alcohol, coffee has had an established position in marking leisure time in Finnish society and also in art. In von Boehm’s *Shores of Saimaa*, the wine glasses are reserved for men, while women have coffee cups in front of them. Also Onni Oja’s *Summer day* features a coffee pot, and in Birger Carlstedt’s painting *From morning until night* a picnic set is laid out with a coffee pot and cups. [Image 50.] Similarly, Olavi Laine’s painting *Virtasalmi* (1958) has the subject of outing, and a coffee pot, boiling on top of an open fire,

has a central position in the composition. [Image 93.] Already in the early century public paintings, in *Työstä paluu* (Return from work, 1904) by Juho Rissanen and in *Tukinuitto* (Log floating, 1925) by Pekka Halonen, coffee signalled a moment of rest from hard work. [Images 15 and 12.] During the time of Oja's and Carlstedt's paintings, coffee was being rationed following the war, making it an even more valuable product.

The subject of "day off" is, of course, not unrelated in the theme of work. As in Rissanen's and Halonen's paintings, the moment of rest often supports the ideal of hard work—rest is being earned with work. Also, the making of the coffee can be seen as domestic work, allocated for women in the paintings. Often in Finnish public paintings—with the exception of above mentioned paintings of the late 1940s—even the subject of a day off incorporates the engaging in meaningful and healthy activities, such as outing in the nature or reading.

The main fields of work depicted in the body of postwar public paintings were constructing as well as agricultural activities such as planting and harvesting. These activities also had clear and well-established symbolic meanings, interpreted both from a religious and secular perspective: planting as investing in and taking care of the future, harvesting as celebrating the fruit of past work. Simply put, "the gatherer of fruit is the gatherer of results."⁴² Harvesting frequently related to depictions of old age, for example in Hilikka Toivola's frescoes for the Normal School for Girls (1947). [Image 97.] Besides these, also other tasks related to the agricultural world, such as fishing and logging, were frequently depicted. Fishing was featured both as a professional activity, as in Pentti Toivonen's *Play and reality* (1956) [image 101] or in Allan Salo's *Kalastajat* (Fishermen, 1958) [image 121], and as a leisurely pastime as in Birger Carlstedt's *From morning until night* (1950) [image 50].

Playing and studying were indicated as essential tasks for children, but they also often took part in the same activities as adults. In Matti Kallinen's *Kylvöö ja satoa* (Planting and harvesting), realised in 1953 for Vasaramäki School in Turku, children are engaged in picking apples and planting a tree. [Image 84.] A woman is holding a branch of the apple tree, while an older patriarch is supervising the work, holding a younger girl by the hand. The activities of children in public paintings commonly hinted towards healthy and useful pastimes, and the uniting of forces in realising duties.

Women, who in the Finnish reality were in large numbers wage-earners, were in postwar public paintings often depicted in nursing tasks, taking care of their children. However, women were also depicted working side by side with men in agricultural tasks, such as harvesting in in Erkki Heikkilä's *Seasons* (1957) and in Onni Oja's painting for Lohja Savings Bank (1958). [Image 100 and 94.] In both of these paintings, the harvesting is performed by a pair of one woman and one man. In Taisto Toivonen's *Squirrel* (1956) a variety of female roles is presented: a woman holding the hand of her son, greeting the husband leaving for or returning from work, a dreaming young girl seated beneath a tree, eyes raised and with her palms in her lap, and, what is noteworthy, a scarf-headed woman laying bricks together with a male companion. [Image 95.]

A female worker, although commonplace in Finnish society, was a rarity in Finnish public paintings. In the few cases where she is represented, the imagery often suggests a leftist orientation. Yrjö Forsén reserved one of the paintings of his theatre series in Tampere in the 1920s for female workers [image 23], and Erik Enroth included a female figure to his image of a construction site painted for the Nordic Union Bank in Turku in 1955. The nude



Image 108. Erik Enroth, *Rakennustyömaa* (Construction site), 1955. Oil on hardboard, 160 x 306. Nordic Union Bank, Turku. Currently in Nordea Bank, Mikkeli. Art Foundation Merita. Photo: Museokuva / Matti Huuhka and Ilari Järvinen.

woman, facing the spectator, however, abducts a more symbolic position—she does not participate in the construction work.⁴³ [Image 108.]

Also Enroth's muscular men working with heavy machinery differed from the common image of the worker created in the postwar public painting production. Enroth often worked in monumental size even in his free art production, and his powerful and "brutal" paintings have been associated with Mexican influences, especially with that of Orozco.⁴⁴ It is, therefore, noteworthy that many of Enroth's public paintings were direct commissions: the commissioners had to be prepared for Enroth's mural language. His early public paintings that resulted from competitions, for the Swedish Lyceum (now Lönkan School) in Helsinki and Kaleva School in Tampere, both from 1950, stand out as more conventional in comparison to his later, direct commissions.⁴⁵ Commonly, in the postwar public paintings, work was not depicted as a heavy load but something performed at ease. Industrial environments were frequently referred to with a factory in the distant horizon, but paintings rarely included heavy machinery, or people working with it.

While the focus of postwar public paintings was in the symbolically laden fields of work of construction and agriculture, performed as traditional, manual work, white-collar workers were more rarely featured. An electric city view by Tove Jansson, painted for the workers' canteen at the Strömberg Factories in Helsinki in 1945, is exceptional among postwar public paintings in many ways, also as a depiction of white-collar work. [Image 109 and cover.] The view of the city is packed with high apartment buildings; the heavy machinery and the lightning refer to the harnessing of energy, and the three men standing on top of the factory building are clearly engineers, not workers. They wear ties and long overcoats, and are studying papers—they are the ones who are responsible for the creation of electricity in the factory. Jansson painted the work to be a pair for an earlier painting in the same space. The first work, entitled *Lepo työn jälkeen* (Rest after work), had suggested an idyllic landscape by a lake, and the new theme was a wish of the commissioner.⁴⁶

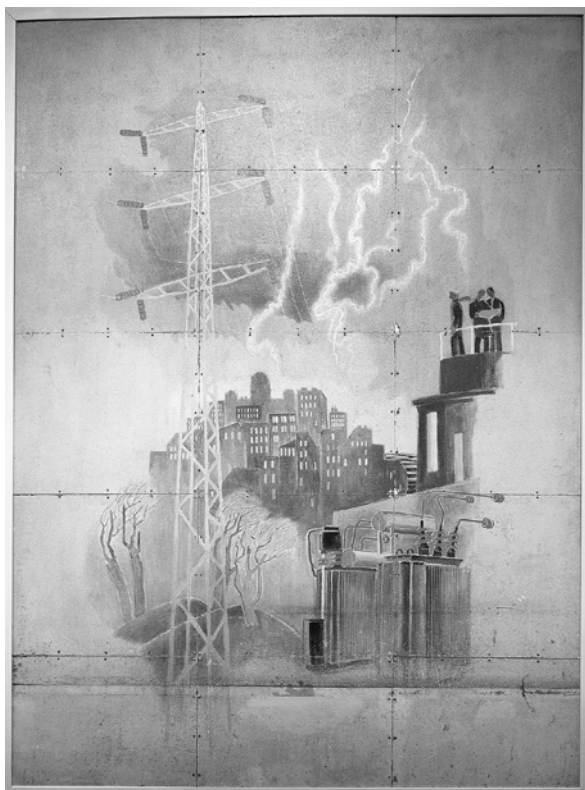


Image 109. Tove Jansson, *“Electricity”*, 1945. Oil on insulate board, 286 x 213. Strömberg Factories, Helsinki. Currently in storage. HAM. Photo: Hanna Riikonen, HAM.



Image 110. Taisto Toivonen, *“Fire fighters”*, 1958. Oil, 210 x 330. Pispala Fire Station, Tampere. NYMU. Photo: JR 2006.

Teachers were included in the images of schooling, such as in Erik Enroth's painting for the Swedish Lyceum (1950) and in Unto Pusa's *Our homeland in Finland* (1959) in Käpylä School [image 99], and also other more atypical professions were featured to match the function of the building. While references to war were generally avoided, soldiers could be depicted in paintings created for the military environments, as in Harry Kivijärvi's painting for the Vähä-Heikkilä Barracks (1954). [image 82.] Unto Pusa depicted engineers in a highly developed laboratory setting in the painting *H₂SO₄ / Harjavalta, Uusikaupunki, Kokkola, Kotka* (1967), commissioned by the chemical company Rikkihappo (current Kemira), and Taisto Toivonen painted firemen at work for the fire station of Pispala in Tampere in 1958 [image 110].⁴⁷ Taisto Toivonen was both a fireman, employed by the Tampere Fire Brigades, and an active member of the Tampere artworld, and thus a fitted choice for decorating the building in question. The commission was paid by the City of Tampere, and Toivonen could spend his work time in its execution.⁴⁸

The importance of work, the moral perception that all members of the society ought to work, has been a cornerstone of the Finnish welfare state. Pauli Kettunen has detected in postwar Finland the parallel reinforcing of two, not self-evidently compatible principles: the ideal of universal social rights based on citizenship and the generalising of wage work as the norm. The newly developed social security measures supported the ideal of social rights; yet, at the same time, the income-related benefits strengthened the value of work.⁴⁹ The importance of work is clearly suggested in the imagery created in Finnish public paintings: they emphasise work as a core value of the Finnish society and indicate useful pastimes for the moments of rest that have been earned through work.

Modern Society

The postwar public paintings implied a national character by depicting “Finnish” people and “Finnish” landscape. The environment of the protagonists of paintings was either a stylised city with simple, modest and modern houses, or a natural setting, such as yard, shore, or thin woods, often unspecified but recognisable as local. The main activities in postwar public paintings generally took place among nature, in the foreground of the painting. Yet, the presence of a city, the developing society, was at least hinted in the background.

The inclusion of the image of a city did not signify a realist depiction of the current order but was used to emphasise the developed nature of the depicted environment. The painting *Convent* (1956) by Kauko Salmi in Amuri School in Tampere depicts youth in a landscape of Tampere—or, a view that reminisces that of Tampere with two lakes and a ridge. However, the ridge is tightly built with modern apartment building. It does not correspond with the view of the Pispala ridge of Tampere, which has until the present day been preserved as a settlement of wooden houses. The Tampere of Salmi is an emphatically modern one. To confirm this, there is a construction site with scaffolding in the right end of the painting.

The landscape in the painting changed from the competition sketch to the final painting, suggesting a more modern environment in the final work. The number of apartment



Image 111. Kauko Salmi, *Convent*, competition sketch, 1955. Oil, 50 x 125. Photo: Marika Turtiainen, NYMU.



Image 112. Kauko Salmi, *Convent*, 1956. Oil on canvas, 200 x 500. Amuri School, Tampere. Photo: Antti Sompinmäki, NYMU.

buildings has increased, and the ploughman working with horse has been removed from the final composition. [Images 111–112.] Also the number of human figures has been reduced to include only the main protagonists in the foreground.

Noteworthy, few of the figures in the painting have emphatically defined roles or tasks. Some do: a man next to the construction site is clearly a worker, with thick gloves and a rod in his hands, and the folder held by the boy in the middle of the canvas positions him as a student. As was customary, the figures are solemn and dignified, standing firm, creating a combination of humbleness and pride. The youth is standing on a platform that resembles a base of a building that has not yet been built—or is being built to the right of the painting. Yet, a tree grows from the middle of the concrete base. The youth is placed on a concrete as well as figurative platform, as examples for the spectators. Their lack of activity was, however, criticised: Toivo E. Rossi considered the figures as representing “contemporary ‘flagging’”, hinting that the given model could have been a more active one.⁵⁰

Modern—often white—apartment buildings were frequently included in the scenery of public paintings in the mid or late 1950s: in the mural by Nina Vanas and Liisa Rautiainen in Karihaara School from 1956 [image 96], in Erkki Koponen’s *Young life* in the Library of the Students’ Union from 1958 [image 123], and in Unto Pusa’s *Our homeland is Finland* in Käpylä School from 1959 [image 99]. The new postwar society was modern, neat and efficient.

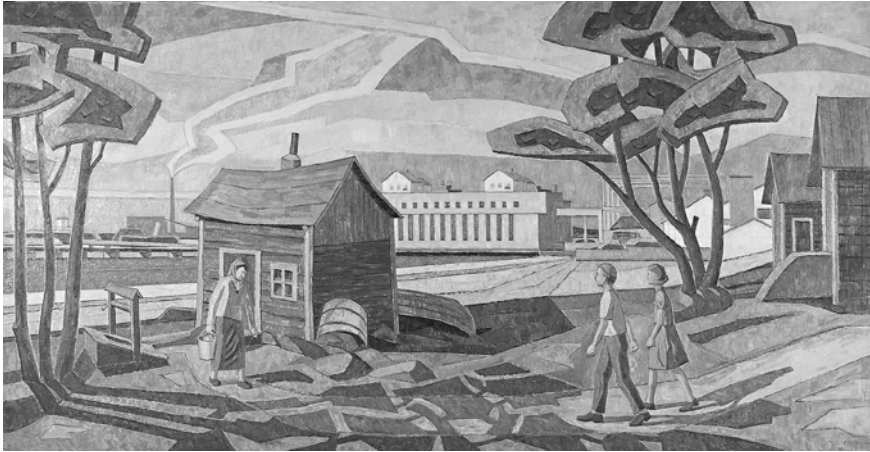


Image 113. Pentti Koivisto, *Uutta ja vanhaa Oulua* (New and old Oulu), 1955. Oil on canvas, 145 x 281. Tuira School, Oulu. Currently in storage. Oulu Art Museum. Photo: Mika Friman, Oulu Museum of Art.



Image 114. Pentti Koivisto, *“By the shore”*, 1953. Furniture Shop Seppo, Oulu. Currently in Hotel Radisson SAS, Oulu. There is a glass in front of the painting, which creates reflections to the photo. Photo: JR 2010.

In many localities, factory pipes referred to the local, industrial identity: for example, in the public paintings of Varkaus, the depicted factories were those of the Ahlström Corporation and not just any industrial environment. [Images 59–60.] Besides creating a sense of the local, the industrial imagery functioned as a reminder of the provider of work and wellbeing in the locality—and in the Finnish society—and emphasised the developed nature of the Finnish society.

The painting *Uutta ja vanhaa Oulua* (New and old Oulu), painted by Pentti Koivisto for the Taira School in Oulu in 1955, suggests the progress of the society by contrasting an archaic dwelling with the new hydro-electric power plant. [Image 113.] The painting features an elderly lady, living in a hut and carrying water from a well, symbolising the “Old Oulu”, while the “New Oulu” rises in the horizon. Two neatly dressed youngsters, walking towards the hut of the old woman, clearly belong to the new world. The artist Pentti Koivisto was known for depictions of Oulu and of the dynamic postwar “Spirit of Oulu”, emphasising growth and development.⁵¹ An earlier public painting by Koivisto, painted for the local Furniture Shop Seppo in 1953, depicted a view of Oulu from the perspective of a boat harbour. The recognisable cityscape sets a frame for the activities of the people in the foreground: boys fishing and sailing a toy boat, men painting a boat, and a young couple boarding a rowing boat. [Image 114.] The painting by Koivisto was lauded especially for the depiction of regional spirit, the safe and cosy “Oulu-ness”.⁵²

Very often, the suggested cityscape was in the process of transformation. Building was an essential theme of paintings, emphasised even more in corporate commissions. Constructing was frequently placed as the main subject of the work, or suggested with scaffolding or a man laying bricks. The theme of building functioned on two levels: first, construction work belonged to the larger category of images of work, and second, it referred to the reconstruction of the society following the war.

A bank commission, *Kaupunki nousee* (City rises), completed by Unto Pusa in 1954 follows the common logic of composing public paintings: human protagonists working at a stage created by the city in the background. [Image 115.] *City rises* is an essential reconstruction painting, referring to it even with its name. And, as often was the case, the conveyed image of reconstruction was a masculine one: the protagonists are all male, nine men performing different tasks in measuring and constructing. Even heavy machinery plays a part in the composition.

The painting was a result of the controversial competition of 1951, in the context of which the awarding of the prior unknown L. A. Matinpalo raised fury in the artworld.⁵³ After receiving the commission Pusa further developed the competition sketch, and the more complex composition of the final painting more clearly suggests the fast urbanisation of the country. Importantly, Lahti is depicted as a larger city than in the original sketch. The dominating building in the centre of the composition is the City Hall of Lahti, and, in the horizon, we can see Lake Vesijärvi and some factory pipes. The composition is cubistically dismantled, and the size of the figures does not follow traditional perspective. Instead, the central figures are larger than the ones on the edges of the painting. While the monumental composition was refined, also Pusa’s depiction of the reconstruction, industrialisation and urban life progressed.

The postwar reconstruction was largely completed in Finland in the early 1950s, but the theme of building continued to be popular in public paintings until the 1960s. In 1963, Unto Pusa painted yet another construction motif, *Kansa rakentaa* (The nation builds), for the insurance company Kansa. [Image 116.] The name of the company translates as “People” or “Nation”, and the title of the painting, hence, refers both to the commissioning company and to the postwar reconstruction. Kansa was a cooperative organisation that offered insurances especially for the working people, and the painting was commissioned for its new headquarters, built to the heart of Sörnäinen in Helsinki. The headquarters, along with



Image 115. Unto Pusa, *Kaupunki nousee* (City rises), 1954. Oil on canvas, 212 x 402. Nordic Union (now Nordea) Bank, Lahti. Art Foundation Merita. Photo: JR 2009.



Image 116. Unto Pusa, *Kansa rakentaa* (The nation builds), 1963. Oil on hardboard, 272 x 520. Kansa Insurance Company. Currently at Mandatum Life, Helsinki. Photo: JR 2010.

other buildings of Sörnäinen, Hakaniemi, and Kallio are depicted in the painting, as well as the Pitkäsilta Bridge connecting Kaisaniemi and Hakaniemi. The Pitkäsilta Bridge has been considered a dividing line between classes: the working people lived “behind” the Pitkäsilta, northeast to the city centre.

The view of the city is depicted meticulously. Yet, the scene is dominated by two abstract elements: a large red letter “S” and a blue vertical pillar. In a previous work, *Keskus* (Centre, 1962) for the Kokkola Office Building, commissioned by the State Art Commission, Pusa had already combined a town plan together with architectural elements, an excavator, and abstract elements to create an image of a modern city. [Image 56.] In *The nation builds*, the only human figures are two workmen in overalls, standing at the bottom of the letter “S”. The depiction of the neighbourhood with a strong working identity, fortified with two workers, was likely an attempt to please the commissioner and honour its ideology. However, the painting was not well received. Pusa had resigned from the Finnish Artists’ Association in 1958 with a quarrel, and Kerttuli Wessman detects undervaluation towards Pusa following this.⁵⁴

In Olavi Laine’s public painting for the Nordic Union Bank in Hämeenlinna (1954) sturdy men, some shirtless, some in overalls, work at a construction site, while the wall of the construction site rises behind them. [Image 117.] At a far distance, in the horizon, there is a city. The men work with an axe, iron bar, and sledgehammer. They lift wood and heavy stones with their hands. There is no heavy machinery, no sign of technology. Yet, in the background, there is a modern city with its factories. Laine created a similar composition with the view of a timber forest for the Kuopio branch of the same bank in 1955. There is the same number of men of a similar body type, working with axes and hand saws. Woods behind the men create a background wall for the scenery, and the town of Kuopio is seen in the distance.

In the public painting *Rakentajat* (Builders) by Allan Salo, bought for the Hatanpää Hospital in Tampere in 1967, the building under construction is an apartment building.⁵⁵ [Image 118.] Even so, the three men working at the construction site are manual labourers, one hammering, one laying bricks. The rarely used vertical composition emphasises the idea of a rising construction.⁵⁶ Especially interesting in Salo’s painting is the way it confronts its site and spectator. It is painted with oil on chipboard and has thin frames. Hence, as was customary, the painting did not literally integrate to the wall it was located on. But, in the foreground of the painting, a man is laying bricks facing the spectator, in the process of blocking the view to the construction site. The bricks suggest a connection to the wall of the hospital—as if the man was building up the wall on which the painting is located.

It has been noted before that the image of a worker in Erik Enroth’s public paintings was distinct from the Finnish public painting tradition, with a more expressionist take and leftist connotations. He also promoted a radical technological advancement in his public paintings. In 1957, the City of Tampere commissioned a painting from Enroth for the library annexed to the new Tammela School in Tampere: the realised triptych included the themes of rocket engineering, sunbathing, and apple-picking. [Image 119.] The layout of the painting followed conventions of monumental composing, but the subject combined the traditional theme of fruit-gathering with a more unconventional one of modern technology and leisure. The Tampere City Art Committee applauded the work at its completion for well representing the artist’s current production.⁵⁷ This argumentation suggests a high value given to Enroth’s



Image 117. Olavi Laine, *Rakentajat* (Builders), 1954. Oil, 150 x 250. Nordic Union (now Nordea) Bank, Hämeenlinna. Currently in Vantaa. Art Foundation Merita. Photo: JR 2009.



Image 118. Allan Salo, *Rakentajat* (Builders), 1967. Oil on hardboard, 250 x 150. Hatanpää Hospital, Tampere. NYMU. Photo: JR 2006.

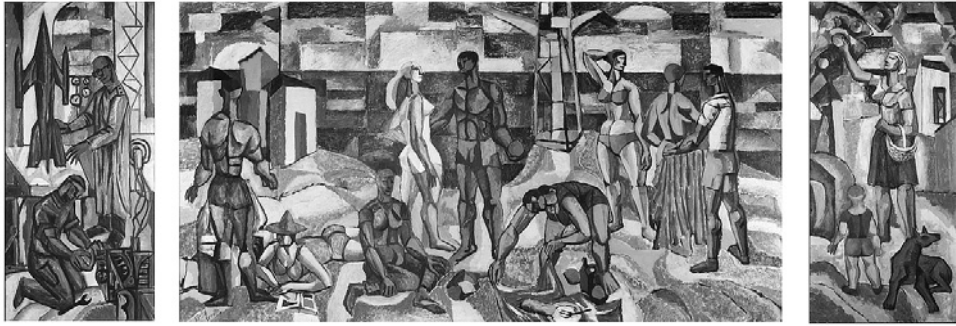


Image 119. Erik Enroth, *Nyky aika* (Present day), 1958. Oil, 165 x 450. Tammela Library, Tampere. Currently in storage. NYMU. Photo: Marika Turtiainen, NYMU.

artistic expression, as public paintings were not often evaluated with reference to an artist's free art production.

In 1961, Enroth realised another public painting on the basis of a commission made by the City of Tampere, for the new university building in Tampere. The private University of Social Sciences (*Yhteiskunnallinen korkeakoulu*) was moved from Helsinki to Tampere in 1960, and became the first institute of higher education in the city.⁵⁸ Again in triptych format, Enroth presented man as “the master of atom”. The dramatic composition was realised mostly in black and white, highlighted with the yellow sun, and it featured three human figures: a man with horns in his head playing with an atom, and a woman holding a flower, thus relating to nature, and, in the middle, a man reaching out for the sun; in the context of a university easily translating as the light of truth or knowledge. [Image 120.]

The subject of the painting was seen as opening with difficulties, and many newspaper critics cited a description prepared by “art experts”, likely the Tampere City Art Committee.⁵⁹ Considering its location, the imagery may not necessarily seem that extreme. Also the *Porthania* building of the University of Helsinki housed an early constructivist painting by Arvid Broms from 1957. [Image 131.] Indeed, these paintings can be seen as proper decorations for universities, the supposed cradles of highest knowledge and unconventional thinking in the society.

However, juxtaposing Enroth's painting to the other public painting acquired by the City of Tampere in 1962 for the University of Social Sciences, *Kalastajat* (Fishermen, 1958) by Allan Salo, its radical nature is emphasised.⁶⁰ [Image 121.] *Fishermen* is situated strongly within the conventions of postwar public painting, depicting people at work in a Finnish landscape. Two public paintings were placed also in the lobby of the *Porthania* building: *Kehrä* (Spindle), completed by Olli Miettinen in 1960, had the subject of young women greeting the sun. [Image 66.] These paintings hinder overflowing interpretations on the radical nature of public paintings acquired for universities.

The Finnish postwar public paintings suggested an image of a society of tradition and progress. The themes of construction work and rising cities testified to the ahead-looking orientation of the commissioner in question, even though they also hinted towards the reconstruction work that belonged to the past. For the public authorities, construction work offered a safe field of imagery since it associated with the postwar reconstruction—considered a joint effort of the whole nation. Thus, it opened interpretations of unification,



Image 120. Erik Enroth, *Tie (Road)*, 1961. Oil on hardboard, 400 x 580. University of Tampere. Photo: JR 2006.



Image 121. Allan Salo, *Kalastajat (Fishermen)*, 1958. Oil on canvas, 120 x 323. University of Tampere. NYMU. Photo: JR 2006.

not class division as other type of worker imagery might have opened. It was a civic, yet noble enough subject. Construction work suggested the continuing building of the new society.

Finnish postwar public paintings do not, however, merely celebrate progress. As the artworks commissioned for the universities exemplify, the body of Finnish public paintings does not suggest one, uniform message, but ambiguous imageries. The scenes of the paintings often suggest both a modern town and an agrarian idyll. On the one hand, the paintings underline construction work, rising cities. On the other hand, the mode of construction is that of manual labour: men working with saws and hammers, laying bricks and building of wood; in the fields, people harvest with their hands. Heavy machinery, and building from elements are largely missing from these paintings. Public paintings at the same time suggested the modernity and the advanced nature of Finnish society and emphasised the importance of its agricultural roots and traditional values.

Forgetting the War

Considering the closeness of the war and the context of postwar reconstruction, it is notable that the memory of war is largely absent from the body of Finnish postwar public paintings. The public paintings did not participate in the memorialising of the war; instead, they were used to stimulate forgetting.

Following World War II in Finland, there was a widely-spread tendency in the society to remain silent about the war. Even the word “war” (*sota*) was avoided, and different euphemisms were used instead. Jenni Kirves suspects that one reason for the silence was the lack of words: it was better to remain silent about something so difficult to address.⁶¹ As Paul Connerton writes, silencing may be, besides a form of repression, also a form of survival. The desire to forget may be essential for the process of survival.⁶² On a broader political level, the losing party of the war, Finland, remained cautious on issues, which could have affected its relations towards the Soviet Union. The need to forget the war was also politically motivated.

After the war, a blind eye was turned to a number of issues: the atrocities of the war; the German relations on political and personal levels; the pain for lost territories as well as the shattered dreams of “Greater Finland”. Due to the number of problematic issues, artists mainly avoided the subject of war. Kirves discusses the refusal of Finnish novelists to deal with war in their works; this seems to be the case also with other artists. According to Olli Valkonen, the refusal to depict the war in art—even in order to oppose it—implied a complete resignation from it.⁶³ During the postwar phase, monuments were designed in conventional ways, which did not aim to suggest ambiguous readings or induce problematic recollections from the viewing audience. In the field of public painting, artists mostly refrained from remembering the war at all.

The memory of war may have existed in artists’ plans but they rarely reached a visual form. Erkki Koponen has recalled that in preparing a sketch for the competition of the Finnish Cultural Foundation in 1955, he intended to visualise a subject arising from the “fateful years” of the country, “the wars, the victims, and the freedom that had remained”.⁶⁴



Images 122 a–b. Erkki Koponen, *Nuorta elämää* (Young life), sketches in the collection of the Museum of Public Art, Lund, Sweden. Photos: JR.



Image 123. Erkki Koponen, *Nuorta elämää* (Young life), 1958. Fresco. Helsinki School of Economics. Photo: JR 2006.

A series of sketches in the collection of the Museum of Public Art (*Skissernas Museum*) in Lund, Sweden, shows the transformation from the artist's original ideas to the final work. In the preliminary sketches Koponen outlined a nation in mourning, a man kneeling at a tombstone [images 122 a–b], and, in some versions, a funeral procession. In the final paintings (as it was commissioned twice), none of these themes is present. Instead, the final versions present an optimistic vision: a brand new Finland with white modern apartment buildings, white doves, and girls in clean white dresses. [Image 123.]

Subtle references to the war can be found, for example, in the public painting production of Erkki Heikkilä. Heikkilä's paintings depict weaponry as a part of the landscape, but it is shown both historical and distant. In the painting *Seasons*, from 1957, a historical cannon is depicted behind the harvesting couple, and the grey hats of the timber men resemble military outfits. [Image 100.] In *Life and sun*, painted for a bank in Jyväskylä in 1960, a stylised tank is depicted in the horizon, half silhouette in front of the large sun. [Image 124.] Even in *Tuhanten rantain partahilla* (On a thousand strands), painted as late as in 1982 for the Helsinki Railway Station, a soldier in the white winter uniform of the Finnish army patrols among the other figures. [Image 125.] The choice of including elements referring even distantly to war was, nevertheless, not common.

With this background, it is striking to encounter on the wall of the Jyväskylä Lyceum a painting by Helmer Selin from 1956 depicting a fallen soldier. The soldier in grey uniform, lying in the foreground, is being covered with a canvas by two of his companions, dressed in white winter uniforms. In the background, four men are depicted with their backs to the viewers, two of them handling a machine gun. A line of rifles leans on a wall to the right of the painting. [Image 126.] The image is a battle scene from the front, monumentalised to a static composition. It is a heroic image, glorifying the sacrifices made in war, but at the same time reminding of the personal losses. As many other artists, Selin had served on the front in the Continuation War.⁶⁵ The tilted head and the position of the hands of the dead man gives him an individual character, he is not just an idealised corpse.

In the art inventory of the Art Museum of Jyväskylä, the painting is described as a “sketch for a fresco” and, indeed, the painting is the outcome of a failed fresco project.⁶⁶ The fresco project had been initiated by a group of alumni of the school, and it was either originally or in the course of the project formulated as a celebration of the centennial of the school in 1958. Funding for the painting of the fresco was sought from the Finnish Cultural Foundation, which declined on the basis of the statements of Einari J. Vehmas and Sakari Saarikivi.⁶⁷ According to Selin, the project was politicised, and it encountered objections from the “far left” groups. This made him lose interest and withdraw from the project. The imagery was at least partly to blame. According to the artist, it was “frustrating to deal with these themes” at that moment. In the end, he donated the one-to-one size oil sketch (240 x 360 cm) to the school to be hung in the intended location of the fresco.⁶⁸ This war-themed public painting, then, actually testifies in support of the argument that war-themed public paintings were not realised in the postwar decades.

The phenomenon of postwar public painting was a product of the cultural atmosphere of the country at the end of the 1940s, but the producing of figurative, morally upright, and formally conventional public paintings continued long into the 1960s—and sporadically even later. *On a thousand strands* by Erkki Heikkilä is one such curious example within the body of Finnish public painting: formally and by its subject matter, the painting from 1982 seems like it could have been painted three decades earlier. [Image 125.] The composition of the painting as well as the grouping of the different roles of the human figures summarise the imagery of postwar public painting, yet the work lacks any touch of irony that the distance in time could have produced. The painting presents a dozen of people lined up in the front of the painting, while behind them, a view of a clear blue lake opens up with some distant factory pipes. The painting features a soldier in a white winter uniform, a man laying bricks, a man driving timber, a woman harvesting and a young couple planting a tree, as



Image 124. Erkki Heikkilä, *Elämä ja aurinko* (Life and sun), 1960. Oil on canvas, 200 x 420. Cooperative Bank of Central Finland (*Keski-Suomen Osuuspankki*), Jyväskylä. Photo: Teija Luukkanen-Hirvikoski.



Image 125. Erkki Heikkilä, *Tuhanten rantain partahilla* (On a thousand strands), 1982. Oil on canvas. Helsinki Railway Station. Currently in VR Head Office. Photo: JR 2012.



Image 126. Helmer Selin, *Pietà*, 1956. Oil on canvas, 240 x 360. Jyväskylä Lyceum. Jyväskylä Art Museum. Photo: JR 2010.

well as mothers with children. The painting, feeling strongly misplaced in time, shows how dominating the largely unwritten rules and conventions of the postwar public painting were.

In a newspaper article, Heikkilä pondered that he painted for the “Finnish people”, echoing postwar discourses. In the restaurant of the railway station, the painting would be seen by people brought by train from different parts of the country, Heikkilä envisioned, and hoped that “they find something familiar in the work, something they feel Finnish and specific to their environment.”⁶⁹ Undoubtedly, members of the audience would find familiarity in the painting, as the imagery Heikkilä laid out so strongly resonated with what had been defined as “Finnish public painting” in the past decades.

The Finnish postwar public paintings focused on imagining an ideal society. They were freed from depictions of conflict or disagreement, and the problematic memories of war were distanced from them. The postwar public paintings invented again and again homogeneous Finnishness with a clear gender division. The urbanisation and industrialisation of the society played an important part in the paintings but, at the same time, they suggested a nostalgic, agrarian image of the Finnish society. As Kerttu Tarjamo and Petri Karonen have argued, the spiritual reconstruction in postwar Finland was largely explicated as a desire to return to the values and norms of the time preceding the war, instead of seeking values that would be best suited for that moment.⁷⁰ The Finnish postwar public paintings also suggested this mentality: the paintings presented an ideal world, rooted in traditional values. With the depiction of the family as the central unit of the nation, these paintings addressed its continuing renewal. The progression of generations set the focus towards the future, similarly to the theme of incomplete construction sites. The paintings imagined a harmonious society, and its inhabitants as solemn and dignified, united in work for a common goal.

Chapter Eight

ABSTRACTION IN FINNISH PUBLIC PAINTING

Abstraction and the Public

Until the 1960s, figuration was strongly favoured in Finnish public painting. Although modernist features, such as flat picture plane, cubism-influenced geometric composition and large distancing from naturalism were considered appropriate and even necessary for monumental expression, abstract art took long to be accepted in public paintings. During the 1950s, artists who may have experimented with abstraction in their other production offered figurative sketches for public painting competitions. Abstraction dominated, however, one branch of discussion on public painting, that of combining art to architecture. At the turn of the 1960s, a clear shift towards abstraction was experienced in Finnish public painting along with the institutional acceptance of *art informel*. In *art informel*, a more “national” form of abstraction was found, in contrast to the earlier popular “French-oriented” concretism.

The question of abstract art was fervent in Finland in the 1950s, and juxtapositions of abstract and figuration were repeatedly raised in art discussions. In practice, the division of public paintings, or any genre of art, into two categories, such as “figurative” and “abstract”, is a massive oversimplification. Public paintings labelled as figurative may, and often did, incorporate a large degree of abstraction. Rarely the Finnish public paintings aimed for illusionist realism—this was not considered “monumental”. And vice versa, the “abstract” paintings may well feature hints of figurative elements, or refer to the real world. The artist Lauri Ahlgrén has suggested that, in the end, both figurative and abstract monumental paintings shared same spatial problems and demanded a similar approach.¹

In addition, it should be noted that what was referred to in individual writings by terms such as “abstract” or “non-figurative”, was not always clear. As Tuula Karjalainen has shown, the use of terminology was vague in the 1950s. “Abstract” (*abstrakti*) referred often to abstracted compositions, while emphasising epithets were used to suggest a “purely” non-figurative character of a painting.² Even more imaginative language was used: Petra Uexküll called Lars-Gunnar Nordström’s concretist compositions “concrete realism” and characterised Unto Pusa’s *Our homeland is Finland*, a figurative painting with a modernist form language, “conceptual art by means of abstract art”.³

Often, the supposed lack of artistic competence of “the people”, the public of public art, was presented as a justification for resisting abstract monumental paintings. Politicians

and even members of the artworld articulated abstract art not understandable for the larger audience. Especially for the children's world and comprehension, a narrative content was generally considered most fitting. In Turku, abstraction was discussed in the context of the Pääskyvuori School competition in 1961 after an abstract sketch by Otso Karpakka had been awarded the second prize in the competition.⁴ As the competition sought an artwork for a school, the painter Kalle Rautiainen argued that abstract pieces "do not speak to the kids of the outskirts. They don't even educate."⁵ Pääskyvuori School was "far from the Unesco Building" in Paris, Rautiainen reminded, referring to the decoration of the new Unesco Headquarters by artists such as Joan Miró, Jean Bazaine, and Alexander Calder. What decorated a prominent building in Paris, would not serve the children in Turku.

Arguments for the contrary had been heard also in Turku, articulating children well adaptable for "new" form languages. Indeed, "new" has to be placed in quotes as Sixten Ringbom used it in a newspaper critic in 1958: modern art was not new anymore. Ringbom was a young art historian, who would later gain recognition as a Kandinski scholar. In evaluating a public painting competition of the City of Turku in 1958, Ringbom argued that the children of the 1950s had grown up in a milieu where imagery inspired by modern art was used in advertising, industrial design, and so forth. Therefore, he continued, a ten-year-old child was more prepared for modern expression than a middle-aged man.⁶

In Jyväskylä, the public painting competition for Cygnaeus School in 1962 functioned as a frame for discussion on the possibilities of abstract art. The jury of the competition, with Allan Salo and Pentti Melanen as artist members, awarded an abstract composition *Äiti maa* (Mother earth) by Erkki Santanen on the first place. [Image 127.] Both the jury and the City Art Committee recommended the commissioning of the work from Santanen.⁷ Nevertheless, the Jyväskylä City Board decided to commission the painting from the second-prize winning Erkki Heikkilä, whose sketch was a more conventional figurative monumental composition.⁸

One layer to the controversy was the omitting of the first-prize winning artist *per se*. Helmer Selin, the chairman of the Jyväskylä Artists' Association, criticised what he considered a foul practice.⁹ Even Erkki Heikkilä stated that the painting should have been commissioned from Santanen, who had won the first prize. Heikkilä also belittled his own work, stating it had been sketched in a day and without knowing the location of the work.¹⁰

Furthermore, the controversy dealt particularly with the question of abstraction and its suitability for a school environment. In a letter to the City Board, the Art Committee justified its decision by stating that Santanen's painting was well suited for the location and "depicts what it has to say with full, high-spirited colours and by means of modern art *intelligibly for both children and adults*."¹¹ The chairman of the art committee, town clerk Reino Pöyhönen placed a dissenting opinion. According to Pöyhönen, since Heikkilä's painting was "clearer", it was better suited for the intended location, "especially taking into consideration the school environment".¹² In discussing the matter, the local newspapers did not fail to mention a previous occasion, when the newly established City Art Committee had been omitted by the City Board of Jyväskylä: the *informel* painting *Valkoinen maalaus* (White painting) by Ahti Lavonen had not been acquired by the city as had been suggested by the art committee. Why establish an expert body if its expertise is not given any value, the papers asked.¹³



Image 127. Erkki Santanen, *Äiti maa* (Mother earth), competition sketch, 1962. Oil on hardboard, 65 x 135. Jyväskylä Art Museum. Photo: JR.



Image 128. Erkki Heikkilä, *Nuoruus* (Youth), 1963. Oil on canvas, 197 x 605. Cygnaeus School. Currently in Palokka School, Jyväskylä. Photo: Jari Kuskelin, Jyväskylä Art Museum.

On the pages of *Keskisuomalainen* newspaper, a member of the Art Committee Seppo Niinivaara sarcastically praised the “rock-solid lack of expertise of the man in the street” represented by the City Board of Jyväskylä.¹⁴ As a follow-up, Kalle Keskinen, a member of the City Board, defended the opinion of the “man in the street”. According to Keskinen, public art should, indeed, be easily understood by the tax-paying people, and not need an interpreter, as Keskinen apparently thought was the case with Santanen’s piece.¹⁵ Keskinen was intertwined to the art controversies of the City of Jyväskylä, as the city had purchased a bear sculpture by Keskinen around the same time it had rejected the painting by Lavonen, a decision ridiculed by Niinivaara. However, according to Keskinen, his sculpture had not been acquired as art but as an example of stonework craftsmanship.¹⁶

The controversy, thus, focused on the question of whether children or “the people” understood abstract art, and whether it was suitable for public spaces. In defense of

Santanen's work, *Kansan Lehti* brought in "a Swedish expert" Hans Eklund to defend children's *natural* capacity for understanding abstraction:

"Adults, who often have an eye only for illusory, 'look-alike', do not embrace abstract matters with the same sensitivity as a child, whose imagination has not been spoiled by the civilisation."¹⁷

The paper further argued that, "child psychologists hope that the phase when a child loses one's direct, naive vision, and adopts the adult vision, could be postponed as far as possible." Conventional art—such as the painting by Heikkilä in this case—would, thus, be harmful for children as it guides children into conventional ways of seeing. On the contrary, children would most benefit from, and enjoy, art that breaks conventional boundaries.¹⁸

Ironically from the perspective of those arguing against Santanen's abstraction, the painting *Nuoruus* (Youth) realised by Heikkilä for the school premises differed significantly from the awarded sketch, and from the monumental language he had applied in his previous public paintings in the Jyväskylä region. [Image 128, compare to 100 and 124.] The painting for Cygnaeus School was strongly influenced by the then popular informal tendencies art, as a representative of which Heikkilä gained larger attention in the 1960s. The painting, nevertheless, incorporated a narrative through human figures, which likely was considered a merit. The Jyväskylä City Art Committee considered the piece as an independent artwork in respect to the sketch, artistically praiseworthy and appropriate for its location.¹⁹

In public art, abstraction was first introduced in "decorative" projects. According to Liisa Lindgren, in the context of sculpture, further stylising was more easily approved in "secondary" tasks, in pieces, which were understood as decoration or ornament, in contrast to art proper. In addition, a degree of playfulness and experimental form language was seen appropriate for sculptures placed in schools.²⁰ The same applies for public painting. Abstraction was first applied in "wall decorations", in restaurants, and also in schools in Tampere since 1957 [images 132–134], and only a few years later in "true monumental painting".

Art in Architecture

The relationship between architecture and art was in central focus in European modernism. Le Corbusier and Fernand Léger, among others, developed the ideal of a "synthesis of arts"—of architecture, sculpture, and painting—since the 1930s and, in postwar Europe, this synthesis was sought with a renewed enthusiasm. "Mural painting is painting which most directly merges with architecture," wrote the Danish artist Asger Jorn in *Konstrevy* in 1952. According to Jorn, there can "hardly be any doubt" about mural painting being the "natural and original" form of painting, and easel painting only secondary.²¹ The integration of art and architecture was among the central interests for the postwar concrete art, and it was propagated also in Finland by a circle of concrete artists. Importantly, the theoretical discussion centred on the possibilities of abstract public paintings, which were realised in few numbers in Finland in the 1950s.

The art historian Romy Golan has demonstrated a discursive crisis of mural painting in France and Italy in the mid-20th century. Golan resists the narrative of rupture in art following World War II that has often been suggested in art historical narratives, and shows a continuation in the discourse on the synthesis of art from the interwar to the postwar time. The synthesis of art was redefined in the postwar years, with an emphasis on humanism. According to Golan, tapestry, “the muralnomad”, was the most compelling response to the question of mural in the postwar years.²²

Paul Damaz, a Portuguese born architect residing in New York, argued in 1956 that the postwar climate in Europe favoured the development of integrating art and architecture:

“The psychological impact of five years of destruction and suffering brought about a reaction against the materialism that prevailed between the two wars, and a search for more lasting spiritual values. [...] Old European countries, having lost much of their economic and military strength, struggle to maintain their ascendancy in intellectual and artistic fields.”²³

These “more lasting spiritual values” could be manifested through a new synthesis of art.²⁴ In addition, Damaz referred to the disappearance of rich art collectors and the rise of public support for art. Artists, searching for new opportunities, had turned to architecture, and governments “recognised their responsibility”. “This movement is supported by educators and sociologist, who demand that art have a more direct contact with the people, in order to better their material surroundings and satisfy their emotional needs,” Damaz argued.²⁵ According to Romy Golan, Damaz’s book *Art in European Architecture* (1956), which he had hoped to become a handbook on the synthesis of art, became to testify its failure, and its moment of death.²⁶

In the context of European modernism, the Finnish success in the field of public painting was considered non-existent. According to Damaz, “[in] Finland, mural painting and sculpture are reduced to decorative vignettes or medallions having no connection with the architecture.” By contrast, Sweden was “outstanding for its number of interesting works,” which was explained by governmental and municipal sponsorship, and the development of abstract art in the country.²⁷ Indeed, the Swedish public painting production outnumbered Finland by all measures and especially regarding abstract works. The National Arts Council (*Statens Konstråd*) had been founded and a Percent for Art program established already in 1937.²⁸ In Norway, the number of realised public paintings was large but the outcome, according to Damaz, “questionable”.²⁹ Even though the eyes of the early Finnish modernists and concrete artists were mainly directed towards France, also the Swedish developments were closely followed.

The desire for an active relationship between architecture and abstract art was articulated in Finland at the turn of the 1950s, when abstract easel painting had just begun to frequent in art exhibitions. In 1950, the architecture critic Kyösti Ålander considered the contemporary relationship between architecture and visual arts “non-existent”. Furthermore, he estimated that in the “current phase of development” they could not be integrated. Ålander argued that such painting, which could be located to a modern facility such as the Viipuri Library designed by Alvar Aalto in 1935, had not yet been created in Finland.³⁰ Indeed, the Finnish public paintings of the time touched different registers than the modern architecture. Ålander considered Finnish visual arts as backward, and saw the

future of painting in abstract art—which, according to Ålander, belonged directly on the wall surface. “Perhaps the time of easel painting is over and the contemporary avoiding attitude of architecture towards it is essentially correct?” Ålander provoked.³¹ The artists needed to paint in contemporary fashion, abstract.

The cooperation of art and architecture was actively studied and promoted by the Finnish concrete artists: both the ideal of synthesis of arts and of concretism emphasised flat surface, two-dimensionality. A significant event for the Finnish discussion was the *Klar form* (Clear form) exhibition in Helsinki Kunsthalle in 1952. Abstract art had been executed and exhibited in Finland and by Finnish artists before this, but the exhibition of “Parisian contemporary art” with Edgard Pillet, Alberto Magnelli, Victor Vasarely, and others, launched a wide debate about the justification of abstract art, which lasted throughout the decade.³² One opportunity for this discussion was organised in Kunsthalle in conjunction to the exhibition, in an open talk in which Birger Carlstedt and Lars-Gunnar Nordström defended the idea of non-figurative art.³³ Also in conjunction to the exhibition, the French painter Edgard Pillet, one of the artists in the exhibition, visited Finland, and lectured about concretism in the Free Art School, the art school founded Maire Gullichsen in 1935.³⁴ An essay by Pillet was also published in *Arkkitehti* (Architect) journal in 1953, illustrated by his concretist mural for a printing house in Tours, France.³⁵

Pillet, the secretary to the French *Groupe Espace*, encouraged a group of Finnish concrete artists and architects to form an interest group to improve the opportunities of cooperation between architecture and art. The Finnish *Groupe Espace*, a local branch for the French organisation was established around 1952. Birger Carlstedt, Sam Vanni, Lars-Gunnar Nordström, and others promoted abstract art to be placed in the context of modern architecture, instead of figurative, “naturalist” paintings.³⁶

A recurrent argument during the postwar decades was that the architects needed to take art and artists into consideration at the designing phase of a building. This was rarely the case. Aarre Heinonen, the head of the School of the Fine Arts Academy, proposed already in 1948 common schooling for architects and artists, in order to learn the ideal of cooperation.³⁷ The monumental painter Onni Oja criticised the “purist thinking” of the architects, which forestalled them to include an artist in the “holy moment” of the first stage of designing a building.³⁸ Artists were most often approached only once a building was completed—they created paintings for spaces allocated to them.

The leading modern architect in Finland, Alvar Aalto, did not, for one, promote the cooperation between architects and artists. Instead, Aalto usually was responsible also for the designing of the interiors of his buildings.³⁹ He did pay attention to the colour schemes of his buildings and, for example, for the mortuary of the Paimio Sanatorium, Aalto realised an abstract mural together with Eino Kauria in the 1930s.⁴⁰ The painting consisted of three coniform, partly overlapping shapes, and has not found a place in art historical discourses. Abstract public paintings painted directly on the wall have often balanced on the border of being “mere decoration”.

Aalto had a long-time contact with Fernand Léger, but this did not lead to cooperation—even though Léger played with the idea in a postcard in 1934:

“Don’t you have a little bistro in plans I could decorate? Or a movie theatre? It would so please me. If not, I’ll come to decorate your hat.”⁴¹

An attempt at collaboration, but not in the form of mural painting, was tested with the Municipal House of Säynätsalo, a small industrial community. The building was designed by Aalto and built in 1950–52, and a painting by Léger for the premises was delivered in 1955, shortly after the artist had passed away. The Municipal Council of Säynätsalo had been of the understanding of receiving the painting as a gift, and refused to pay for the work.⁴² The price of the painting was a main argument, but the controversy also dealt with the question of modern art. The supporters argued that the space had been designed with this painting in mind. The painting would complement the modern—or “hypermodern”—architecture.⁴³ But, “the town folks do not understand such art that Legér’s painting represents,” the chairman of the Municipal Council argued, suggesting it should not be purchased.⁴⁴

Many modern architects were interested in the possibilities of abstract art, and they often had decisive roles in the acquiring of abstract public pieces. The early concrete public paintings, realised by Lars-Gunnar Nordström for cafés and restaurants since 1953, were initiated by the architects or the interior designers of the locations.⁴⁵ Also the commissioning of an abstract painting from Arvid Broms for the *Porthania* building of the University of Helsinki in 1957 can be credited for the architect of the building, Aarne Ervi.⁴⁶ The architect Aulis Blomstedt articulated in *Suomen taide* in 1957 the ideal of abstract art and architecture in support of each other. Blomstedt envisioned that the reduction of “secondary decorative elements” and narrative content led to “classical beauty” and spiritual content in art.⁴⁷ The essay was illustrated with concretist compositions by, among others, Sam Vanni. In 1959, Blomstedt participated in the jury that awarded Sam Vanni in a competition that sought a painting for a building he had planned, the Helsinki Workers’ Institute. [Image 136.]

Early attempts to create abstract public paintings also failed. Viljo Revell commissioned a large painting from Lars-Gunnar Nordström for the Industrial Centre (*Teollisuuskeskus*, 1949–52) in Helsinki but it was not, in the end, realised.⁴⁸ In 1953, when a public painting was planned for Meilahti School, designed by Revell, the architect expressed a wish for an abstract work. The painting was created as an outcome of a fresco course, and originally, the painting program included an abstract part.

“The available surface is 19.5x3.10 [metres], of which 7x3.10 is reserved for a fresco, which by its subject is suitable for an elementary school. Due to the wishes of the architect Viljo Revell, the rest has to be non-figurative or abstract, which is most profitable for the architecture.”⁴⁹

Such two-part composition was not, however, realised. Instead, Onni Oja’s fresco is painted on a separately primed area, on a red brick wall. [Image 51.] This way, the fresco does not fully take advantage of its possibilities in merging into the wall.

Some years later, in 1958, the Turku artist Otso Karpakka created a two-part composition of abstract and figurative mural painting for the Central Secondary School (now Puropelto School) in Turku. [Images 129–130.] Karpakka combined a pseudo-cubist figurative composition, painted with tempera on canvas glued to the wall, to an abstract composition that covers the whole wall of the school cafeteria. Karpakka had been working with abstraction for half a decade by 1958, and was able to create a composition, in which both parts are equally successful. However, in the evaluations of the time, the abstract wall composition was given a secondary value—it was excluded. For example Erik Bergh,



Image 129. Otso Karpakka, *Kalapoika* (Fishing boy), 1958. Tempera on canvas glued to the wall, 215 x 450. Central Secondary School, now Puropelto School, Turku. WAM. Photo: Toni Vuori, The Museum Centre of Turku.



Image 130. Otso Karpakka, *Kalapoika* (Fishing boy), and the surrounding wall decoration, 1958. As above.

writing in 1959, addressed the painting as a figurative one, representing “academic cubism”. He hoped that the artist would be given an opportunity for “fully abstract” monumental painting, but suspected this would not happen in Turku.⁵⁰ It did, in 1967.⁵¹ [Image 149.] Academic cubism was a phrase used also by Sixten Ringbom, another advocate for abstract public painting in Turku, in evaluating the competition sketch as “somewhat dry, but decent and clear”.⁵²

In defence of abstract public paintings, abstract art was formulated as being public art *par excellence* as well as being most fitted for wall spaces, outside of easel format. According to Sakari Saarikivi, people were easily startled by the “academic easel compositions” of abstract artists, but in a public painting the connection between the audience and abstract

art would be more easily succeeded. Saarikivi called non-figurative painting “architecture of painting” and argued that it “can follow and complete architecture better than figurative painting, which even in monumental size tends to remain its own separate entity.”⁵³

Abstract art was also formulated as something, which did not belong to the intimate atmosphere of home but in public space.⁵⁴ When Birger Carlstedt exhibited abstract paintings in a Savings Bank in Helsinki in 1956, Erik Kruskopf considered them being “in a milieu, where this kind of art truly seems to be at home.” On the other hand, Kruskopf argued that “a non-figurative image requires so much engagement from the viewer, so much concentration in front of the artwork itself” that this was not easily performed in a lively bank locality.⁵⁵

The discussion on the cooperation between modernist architecture and abstract art continued throughout the decade. In 1959, a French exhibition titled *Arkkitehtuuri ja kuvataide yhteistoiminnassa* (Architecture and art in collaboration) was shown in Helsinki Kunsthalle, exhibiting international achievements in the field, such as the Unesco Building in Paris. André Bloc, the leader of the French *Groupe Espace* and the editor of the journal *Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, had curated the exhibition.⁵⁶ The exhibition was organised at a critical moment when the idea of abstract public painting was ripening among many agents. Petra Uexküll credited the influence of this exhibition on Finnish architects for the abstract public painting commissions made from Birger Carlstedt for Houtskär School (1959) and the television station building in Helsinki (1961). Carlstedt exhibited sketches for these projects in Gallery Strindberg in 1960, and Uexküll commended the colours and compositions, and Carlstedt for being able to “vary geometric themes according to the demands of different tasks.”⁵⁷

Architects, indeed, held important positions in the public painting commissioning. The discussions on public painting reflected a shared understanding of art being subordinate to architecture and artist to the architect. Even artists articulated the relationship between architecture and art as a hierarchical one. Unto Pusa named the will of the architect, the will of the artist, and the function of the building as three major limits for public painting. “The interior, designed by architect, is the basis for the artist, and the function of the building is the reference for the composition of the artist [...] Artist is a servant,” Pusa argued.⁵⁸ Writing in the 1960s, Pusa did not express a preference for figurative or non-figurative monumental painting—both could be realised, as long as they were “plastically impeccable”. According to Pusa, the tools for an artist in creating a mural were colours, lines, surfaces, forms, structural effects, division of light, and the combination of these elements. However, the wall was a “surface, which must not be breached”. Essentially, according to Pusa, public painting was subordinate to the architecture of the building. At the same time, it completed the building—it “fills the emptiness of the interior”.⁵⁹

The negative influence of the architects on questions of public art has often been emphasised in Finnish art historical discourses. Also in the postwar concretist circles, the opposition from the part of architects, and the low appreciation for Finnish modern art, were seen as having a key role for the failure of the cooperation between architecture and art in Finland.⁶⁰ In fact, the credit for commissioning abstract public paintings could often be attributed to architects, but such projects were rarely materialised: the high ideals of a new union of art and architecture remained unrealised.

A Watershed for Art Historians

In the 1950s, the commissioning of an abstract public painting signalled somewhat radical ideas from the part the commissioner. Often, the early non-figurative public paintings were funded by private agents. For example Lars-Gunnar Nordström, one of the central figures of Finnish concretism, was given his first public commissions for restaurant spaces. According to Liisa Lindgren, modern, abstract sculptures became a means of building a dynamic and open image for the business world.⁶¹ For cafés and restaurants, this image suited especially well.

Examples of abstract public paintings from the 1950s are not numerous, but many of them have gained much larger visibility in art historical literature than their more common figurative contemporaries. Famed paintings of the era are first and foremost *Eteenpäin ja korkeammalle* (Onward and upward) by Arvid Broms in the *Porthania* building of the University of Helsinki from 1957 and *Contrapunctus* by Sam Vanni, painted for the Workers' Institute in Helsinki in 1959–60. [Images 131 and 136.] Their position was recognised already at the time of their execution. Unlike *Onward and upward*, which was donated to the university, *Contrapunctus* was commissioned by the municipality. “It meant victory for abstract painting,” assessed Erik Kruskopf in 1961.⁶² Tuula Karjalainen made the same evaluation in 1997: “The painting of this mural signified the official recognition and acceptance of abstract art in Finland,” since, “for the first time, an abstract work had won a public contest and was realised with the funding of a public institution.”⁶³

These were not, however, the only or even the first examples of abstract public painting in Finland. Lars-Gunnar Nordström realised public paintings for the restaurant Itä-Puisto in Pori in 1953 [image 132] and for the café Eerikin baari of the Tarmola cooperative society in Turku in 1956 [image 133], and a glass mosaic wall for the HOK Café (Helsingin osuuskauppa, Cooperative Society of Helsinki) in Helsinki in 1957.⁶⁴ In 1957, Kauko Salmi painted a Mondrian-styled wall decoration for Sampo School, a private secondary school in Tampere [image 134] and, in 1959, Birger Carlstedt executed a large concrete public painting



Image 131. Arvid Broms, *Eteenpäin ja korkeammalle* (Onward and upward), 1957. Oil/alkyd on canvas glued to the wall, 270 x 1450. Porthania, University of Helsinki. Photo: JR 2007.



Image 132. Lars-Gunnar Nordström, mural, 1953. Restaurant Itä-Puisto, Pori. Destroyed.
Photo: Museum of Sketches, Lund, Sweden.

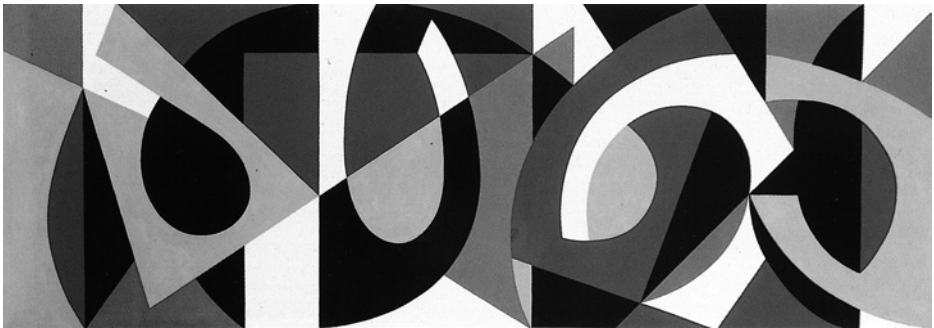


Image 133. Lars-Gunnar Nordström, *Kuperkeikka* (Somersault), 1956. Oil on hardboard,
70 x 200. Café *Eerikin baari*, Turku. Currently in the collection of Turku Art Museum.
(Karjalainen 1990, between pages 152–153.)



Image 134. Kauko Salmi, mural painting, 1957. Sampo School, Tampere. Photo: Mikko
Marjamäki, NYMU.

to the canteen of Houtskär School.⁶⁵ However, due to their remote and secondary localities (that is, in cafés and schools outside Helsinki), these painting have not received the fame of the first two mentioned examples.

Onward and upward by Arvid Broms is a notably large composition in various shades of blue and white, and it fills the entire wall on which it is painted (circa 3 x 15 m). [Image 131.] The painting is a rigid constructivist wall decoration, the kind of which had been executed in Sweden in large numbers and seen in Finland, for example, on the pages of *Konstrevy*. *Onward and upward* bears a resemblance to, for example, the ceramic decoration of Östersund Post Office by Lennart Rodhe, and to *Dygnets tempo* (The pace of the day) by Nils Nixon, both presented in *Konstrevy* in 1952.⁶⁶

The wall on which *Onward and upward* is painted is cropped between two floors of the otherwise high lobby space. The building was designed by Aarne Ervi, who was interested in using new materials in construction, and followed the latest trends in composing his buildings.⁶⁷ *Porthania* was among the first buildings in Finland where prefabricated construction method was used on a larger scale. Ervi planned the space for the painting and selected the artist for the job. The constructor donated the painting to mark an occasion, to honour “the memory of the ambitious element construction performed in this building”.⁶⁸ The message is carved to a metal plaque, fixed to Broms’ mural. The new expression used in the painting was in line with the ambitions and the pioneering attitude of the constructors.

Broms described the painting in narrative terms: it depicted spring wind and whirls, foam, mirages, and “perhaps something of the free fly of the Finnish blue-cross flag.”⁶⁹ Non-figurative art was often opposed as essentially foreign, French-influenced, and “unfamiliar to the Finnish character”.⁷⁰ Thus, the waving of the Finnish flag in the context of an early concrete public painting has to be seen as an attempt to imbed national character to the “foreign” work.

At the unveiling of the work, it was widely noted as the first non-figurative painting in an official space, and as one of the largest murals in the country. It was also nearly unanimously lauded. Sakari Saarikivi considered the piece “so encouraging that it ought to inspire constructors and architects to continue to cooperate with the artists.”⁷¹ *Ylioppilaslehti* estimated that Broms had made a “fortunate choice” in turning to abstraction, and considered the painting as the main work of his artistic career.⁷²

But why did Ervi commission the piece from Broms and not the more renowned concretist Lars-Gunnar Nordström, whom he also approached for the task?⁷³ Broms did not belong to the core group of Finnish concrete artists, but was better known as a surrealist. He had, however, exhibited abstract paintings in 1953, and received biting criticism especially from Einari J. Vehmas. Broms had painted only one monumental piece before this work, in 1950, an altar triptych for the Vaasa County Jail while serving time from theft and fraud in the establishment.⁷⁴ Markku Valkonen suggests that in Ervi’s view, the composition in green, black, and white, suggested by Nordström, would have been too dominating for the space. To opine for the contrary, Valkonen assesses Broms’ more delicate composition as “slightly boring” and “almost unnoticeable wall decoration”.⁷⁵

Despite being largely lauded, the *Porthania* piece did not bring Broms significant further commissions. In 1958, he painted a frieze *Lakeuden kansan vaellus* (The wayfaring of the people of the expanse) for Seinäjoki County Building (*maakuntatalo*). The work was done on a voluntary basis, in return for meals, and the outcome is an awkward progression of

human figures with pathetically patriotic roles. In 1968, as his last public piece, he painted a series of works for the restaurant at the Lappajärvi Municipal Office.⁷⁶ *Onward and upward* is the only abstract painting in the series, and also the main work, both from the perspective of prestige of the location and as an artwork.

During the course of the 1950s, non-figurative sketches were submitted to public painting competitions in growing numbers. Often, in the first instances, they were not awarded, and, in the case of being awarded, their execution was not considered an option. In the Amuri School painting competition in Tampere in 1955, the jury, with Sam Vanni and Unto Pusa as representatives of the Painters' Union, had suggested the acquiring of an abstract sketch *Elämä I* (Life I) by Pauli Pekala. According to the Tampere City Art Committee, the work was impossible to execute, for which reason it was contradictory to the competition rules, and should not be bought.⁷⁷ Instead, the committee decided to suggest the purchase of the sketch *Suomen suvi* (Finnish summer) by Allan Salo—a member of the committee—based on its “good artistic execution and *proper nature* of mural”. For the duration of the handling of this matter, Allan Salo was recorded as not being present.⁷⁸

The following year, the jury of the Tampere Swimming Pool mosaic competition, with the artist members Aale Hakava and Olli Miettinen, again articulated a positive attitude towards abstraction. The jury declared that a non-figurative piece could have decorated the space as well as a figurative one. However, it evaluated that among the sent sketches, the non-figurative ones had not been able to reach as “personally original and convincing character” or “uplifting effect” as the figurative ones, for which reason the awarded sketches were chosen among the figurative ones.⁷⁹

In 1959, in the “decoration competition” of the Saukonpuisto School, nearly all the sketches were “stylised in non-figurative or abstract manner”, and Kimmo Kaivanto won all three prizes with his geometric compositions.⁸⁰ The rules of the Saukonpuisto competition stated that the commission fee, 250,000 marks (5,300 euros), was paid for the *supervision* of the execution.⁸¹ The painting was executed by the City of Tampere, and the role of the artist was in designing the decoration. Accordingly, the fee was half of that of Tauno Hämeranta, who realised a monumental painting to the same school—incorporating a clear, narrative content.⁸² Kaivanto's painting is composed of solid colour fields, figures on a blue and brown base. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the figures is suggested as animate by the name of painting, *Ystävämme* (Our friends). [Image 135.]

The role of the non-figurative sketch in transforming the genre well exemplifies the agency of the competition entries. The non-figurative sketches that were submitted to public painting competitions in the 1950s were first set aside as unsuitable for public painting. Then, they were awarded. Judging by the controversies in the decision-making, this first occurred due to an active role taken by the artist members in the juries. They were still, nevertheless, labelled as unrealisable. From a competition to competition, a demand for “modern” public paintings grew, articulated by members of the artworld, until, with a favourable jury, an abstract work was awarded and realised for the first time with a particular commissioning body. In Helsinki, this happened in 1959 in the competition for the Helsinki Workers' Institute, as a result of which Sam Vanni's *Contrapunctus* [image 136] was commissioned. At this moment, an abstract public painting became a possibility, signalling that it was recommendable to offer abstract works for future competitions. Indeed, the number of competition entries based on the traditional monumental composing soon diminished—or,

if they were submitted, the juries did not consider them to be on the level of the abstract competition works.



Image 135. Kimmo Kaivanto, *Ystävämme* (Our friends), 1959. Oil on concrete. Saukonpuisto School, Tampere. NYMU. Photo: JR 2006.



Image 136. Sam Vanni, *Contrapunctus*, 1960. Oil, 150 x 450. Helsinki Adult Education Centre. HAM. Photo: JR 2006.

The public painting competition for the Workers' Institute in Kallio was, since an early moment, laid out as a markedly "modern" event. The designing architect of the building, Professor Aulis Blomstedt, was closely involved in the planning of the decoration of the building and an articulate supporter of abstract art. In the competition call, the subject of the work was defined as free, but it was added that "the handling of the painting should adapt to the modern architecture of the building".⁸³ Before the opening of the competition, *Ilta-Sanomat* reported in the words of the secretary of the Art Committee that "since the building in question is as modern as it is, it is unlikely that any reasonable artist will engage in any naturalist work." "Also abstract works may be considered," the article continued.⁸⁴

The realisation of an abstract painting does not seem, however, self-evident. Sam Vanni's *Contrapunctus* won the competition, but the two other awarded pieces were figurative. In addition, the director of the Workers' Institute, Professor T. I. Wuorenrinne wanted to record a dissenting opinion, placing the sketch *Lautta* (Ferry) by Aarne Nopsanen on the first place "since it both with its handling and content best corresponds to the needs and intentions of the Workers' Institute."⁸⁵ The chairman of the committee, Arno Tuurna, who at times disagreed with the artist members of the committee, concurred in the dissenting opinion. As a curiosity, it can be mentioned that Lars-Gunnar Nordström participated in the competition with as many as three suggestions but was not awarded. On the contrary, his sketch *Silmästä silmään* (From eye to eye) was placed in category C, that is, the bottom category.⁸⁶

"Non-figurative or abstract modern work does not always easily open to the viewer at first sight," pondered a writer under the pseudonym Yrjänä in *Uusi Suomi* in Vanni's atelier in September 1959.⁸⁷ Hence, the artist narrated the story of the three-part painting: from chaos, through human labour, to order. As much of the figurative public painting of the decade, the painting has a narrative of work, the moulding of chaos to order by man. Human figures are suggested with a few lines in the middle part of the triptych.⁸⁸ *Contrapunctus* is based on the interplay of colours and shapes. The wall in the hallway, where the painting is located, has two surface materials: one part is plastered and painted, and the other part is panelled with wood. The painting by Vanni is placed where these two materials meet and the division of the painting resonates with the change of wall material behind it.

Contrapunctus has been lauded in art historical writing, but the unveiling of the work seems to have gone by with fairly little attention in the press.⁸⁹ In *Hufvudstadsbladet*, Erik Kruskopf delightfully welcomed the piece, since non-figurative paintings had been "not exactly commonplace". Kruskopf commended Vanni for taking the space well into consideration, but also criticised the location with typical arguments: it did not offer enough viewing distance to the painting or enough light.⁹⁰

Sam Vanni was an important figure in the Finnish artworld, an abstract painter and theorist, educating generations of artists both in the main art school in the country, in the School of the Fine Arts Academy, and in the Free Art School, established as a counterpart to the first mentioned. Vanni had been invited to the Kauttua public painting competition in 1946 and shared the first prize with Unto Pusa.⁹¹ *Contrapunctus*, realised in 1960, was nevertheless Vanni's first public painting commission. Vanni executed, all in all, few public paintings, but three of them during a few years' time in the mid-1960s: relief-paintings for Tampere and Rovaniemi as state commissions and a mural for a Postal Savings Bank branch in Helsinki.

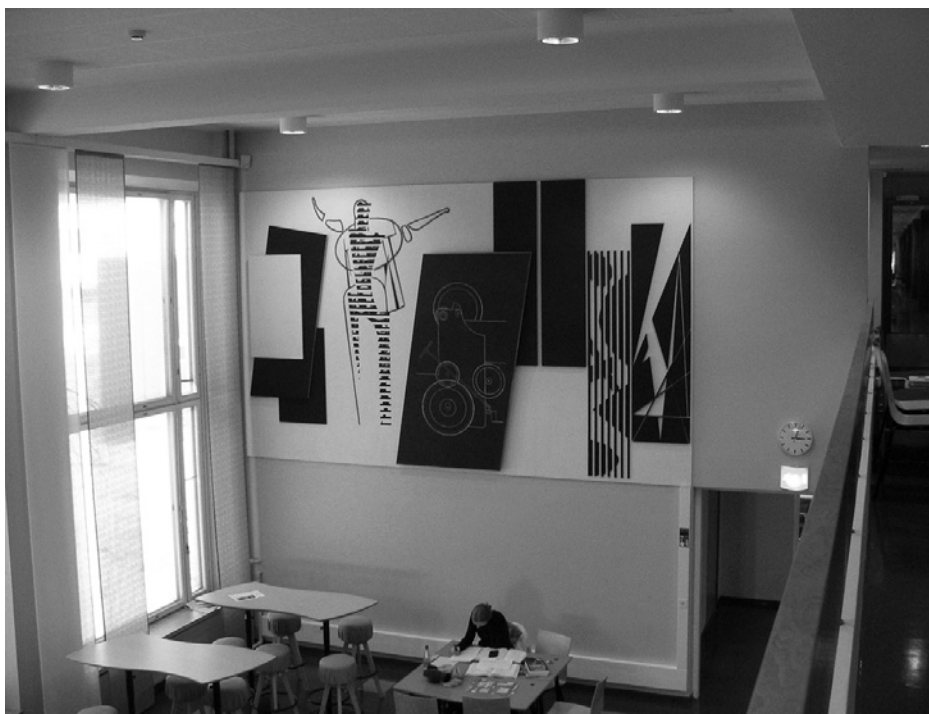


Image 137. Sam Vanni, *Höyrypannu* (Steam boiler), 1965. Oil, 286 x 500. Tampere Vocational School, now the University of Applied Sciences. State Art Collection. Photo: JR 2006.



Image 138. Sam Vanni, *Revontulten välkkeessä* (In the shine of the northern lights), 1966. Oil, 183 x 464. Lapland Vocational College, Rovaniemi. State Art Collection. Photo: JR 2010.

Both of the paintings for the state locations had a relief structure, and both of them were located in vocational schools, in environments where technical skills were taught. *Höyrypannu* (Steam boiler, 1965) in the contemporary Tampere University of Applied Sciences is based on the contrast of black and white, and it features also figurative elements, a man and a machine. [Image 137.] Similarly the painting *Työ ja perhe* (Work and family) for the Postal Savings Bank from the same year included human references combined to concretist form language, and the title of the work incorporated the two main elements of Finnish postwar public painting. The painting for Rovaniemi Vocational College (1966) reveals a play of white, red, blue, and orange from behind a relief grid formed in black and grey. This painting does not indicate human references, but it is thematically connected to its northern location with the title *Revontulten välkkeessä* (In the shine of the northern lights). [Image 138.]

Abstract public paintings were first seen in corporate, but soon after also in municipal and state locations. In the 1960s, abstract works, often employing ideals of the *art informel*, largely displaced figurative public paintings. Indeed, Tuula Karjalainen has considered Sam Vanni's *Contrapunctus* “a watershed” in the history of Finnish art.⁹² The early abstract public paintings have been considered significant for Finnish art precisely for their pioneering position—both during the time of their execution, and also in later evaluations on the Finnish art history. *Contrapunctus* was, indeed, significant in many ways, but I do not see a need for celebrating it as the “breakthrough” of abstract art. As I have pointed out, the boundaries between categories such as “figurative” and “non-figurative” or “monumental art” and “decorative painting” are not fixed, and can be defined in different ways.

Furthermore, the positioning of the concretist public paintings as “groundbreaking” is put to different context by a statement of Reima Pietilä in 1959, the year of the competition for Helsinki Workers' Institute. The architect Pietilä reported in *Suomen taide* on the radical, revolutionary “informal” painters of the Venice Biennale of 1958. Pietilä considered the supporters of geometric abstraction as “the social democrats of abstraction”, moderate radicals.⁹³ The choice of words is well in line with the fact that such works were now being accepted as public paintings. Hard-edged concretism was gaining a position of established modern art while the radical news came from the field of *art informel*, soon to become popular also in Finland.

Institutional Acceptance of the *Art Informel*

In *art informel*, both figurative elements as well as geometric abstract forms were abandoned. Instead, the expressionist possibilities of the materials were emphasised. The “informal” tendencies, or abstract expressionism, had dominated the Paris and New York based Western artworld throughout the 1950s, but it was at the turn of the 1960s that the “tidal wave of non-figurative expressionism” broke the Finnish “floodgates”, as Olavi Valavuori estimated in 1961. The Finnish art scene was, according to Valavuori, changed “abruptly, almost roughly”.⁹⁴ And not only according to him—the metaphors of break and rupture have frequented in discussions of the Finnish artworld at the moment, and in later ones dealing with it.

The popularity and fast institutional acceptance of *art informel* were also experienced in the field of public painting. There were few examples of concrete monumental paintings in the 1950s but a number of *informel* in the 1960s. *Art informel* became popular on a fast pace in Finland, but it was also protested against. The spontaneity incorporated in the ideals of the *art informel* aroused criticism on its alleged technical easiness.⁹⁵ A passionate proponent of the *art informel* was Einari J. Vehmas, one of leading art critics in Finland during this moment. Vehmas expressed his enthusiasm especially following the Venice Biennale of 1960. In the Biennale, he had felt as if “being on the watershed between two periods.”⁹⁶ In *art informel*, Vehmas saw dynamism and vitality, possibilities for cultural changes.⁹⁷

In Finland, the “triumphal march” of *art informel*—as Tuula Karjalainen has labelled it—was manifested especially through the exhibition *Ars 61* in Ateneum Art Museum, where it played an important role.⁹⁸ Karjalainen has explained the popularity of *art informel* in Finland through the “emotional charge”, which was now found in abstract art.⁹⁹ Importantly, *art informel* was connected to nature. For example Erik Kruskopf saw in Erkki Heikkilä’s *informel* paintings a deep connection to nature and landscapes—and also to history. “He depicts the landscape inside us, as we realise it, if we know enough of it, and as he himself experiences it in his mind that is so close to nature.”¹⁰⁰

The connection to nature facilitated the acceptance of *art informel*.¹⁰¹ Nature served, like many times before, as an important means to justify new artistic tendencies in Finland, and to create national content in art. The *informel* paintings were seen as continuing a tradition of landscape painting, and this was often reflected in the titles of paintings. “Inner landscapes”, as suggested by Kruskopf, was a frequently used term. The *informel* artists sought to make art “not according to the nature, but as nature.”¹⁰²

In 1961, the year of the *Ars* exhibition, the Finnish Parliament proceeded to arrange a second round of competition in search of a monumental painting for the Room of the Grand Committee. The competition was announced thirty years after the first one, and only months after the death of J. S. Sirén. Nevertheless, his son was present in the jury as a representative of the Finnish Association of Architects (*Suomen Arkkitehtiliitto*). In the jury, Heikki Sirén also continued his father’s legacy by opposing the execution of any of the works.¹⁰³ The competition closed in March 1962, and repeated the results of the first competition: first prize was not given out, and none of the works were realised. As a consequence, Olli Valkonen argued in *Helsingin Sanomat* that the repeated competitions either understated Finnish artists or overstated the importance of the mission.¹⁰⁴

The competition entries numbered 57, and included both figurative and non-figurative sketches. The second prize was divided between three artists: Anitra Lucander, Erkki Hervo, and Arvo Naatti. All of the winning sketches employed light tones and more or less *informel* abstract language, an expression, which would not dominate the site in question.¹⁰⁵ Figurative paintings were not awarded in or acquired from the competition, with the exception of Heimo Riihimäki, whose dark composition suggested a landscape of trees, and flowers, dotted by human skulls—a bold choice for the intended locality. Also Lucander’s abstract composition incorporated hints of human figures. [Image 139.]

Among the bought sketches was also *Ydin–keskus–periferia* (Core–centre–periphery) by Unto Pusa, which was, exceptionally for him, without any figurative elements. [Image 140.] The hard-edged, bright palette monumental expression of Pusa was considered strong



Image 139. Anitra Lucander, *Kevätkangastus* (Spring mirage), competition sketch, 1962. Oil on canvas, 81 x 195. Parliament's Art Collection. Photo: Simo Rista, Parliament of Finland.

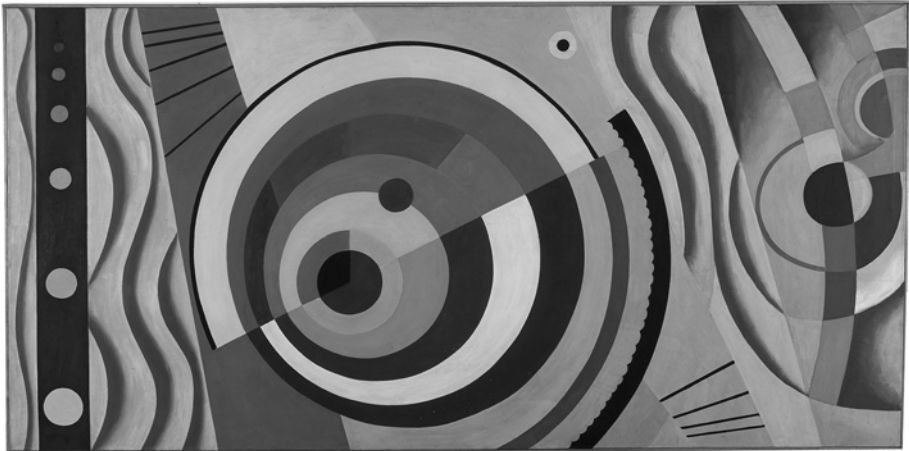


Image 140. Unto Pusa, *Ydin-keskus-periferia* (Core-centre-periphery), competition sketch, 1962. Oil on canvas, 140 x 280. Parliament's Art Collection. Photo: Simo Rista, Parliament of Finland.



Image 141. Jouni Lompolo, *Aurora*, competition sketch, 1962. Oil, 110 x 280. Parliament's Art Collection. Photo: Titus Verhe, Parliament of Finland.

and effective, but also “obsolescent”, and the compositional elements “much used”.¹⁰⁶ Pusa, indeed, did not flirt with the fashionable *informel*, but evaluated it “as decadently inartistic as naturalism at one time, since it looks at things only from one, utterly narrow point of view.”¹⁰⁷ The key to monumental art for Pusa was in “plastic composing”, the relationship between colours, forms, and the space.

In addition to Pusa, sketches were purchased from Anna Räsänen, Heimo Riihimäki, and Jouni Lompola, a true surprise as Lompola was an unknown student of architecture. In the press, the Matinpalo case was recalled as, again, the jury was rumoured to have mistaken Lompola’s work for that of Sam Vanni.¹⁰⁸ [Image 141.] The jury suggested that the final painting could be commissioned on the basis of any of the awarded works, except for Heikki Sirén, who placed a dissenting opinion, and considered none of the sketches fit for execution.¹⁰⁹

Even the old master Lennart Segerstråle participated in the competition with a modification of his theme from the competition of 1930. Segerstråle again aimed for a national, patriotic content, and the allegorical figure of Finland had a central role in his proposition. As a sign of the changing preferences in the field of public painting, the sketch was not awarded in the competition. The proposal was, nevertheless, realised for the Swedish Vocational School in Jakobstad in 1962, with funds collected by local workers.¹¹⁰

The Room of the Grand Committee remained without a painting for two more decades: a tapestry, which had been favoured by J. S. Sirén since the beginning, was acquired from Oili Mäki in 1976. The dark composition was widely criticised, and it was relocated to another space in 1980 when Pekka Halonen’s *Tukinuitto* (Log floating) from 1925 was returned to Finland from Switzerland. [Image 12.] *Log floating* had been a gift from the Finnish State to the *International Labour Organization*, and its return was offered to Finland as it was facing destruction in its location. Finally, then, a painting by an old national master was accepted by various authoritative voices as being suitable, noble enough, for the difficult space. It “fulfils the mission, whose importance had prevented the earlier intentions of locating art,” Liisa-Maria Hakala[-Zilliacus] estimates.¹¹¹

Art informel was not, in the end, realised in the Parliament House. However, non-figurative sketches began to dominate the public painting competitions, and a large number of public paintings, which can be categorised under the label of *art informel*, were executed, especially in larger artistic centres. In Tampere, Kimmo Kaivanto, who had designed the abstract decoration for Saukonpuisto School [image 135], also got to pioneer in the field of abstract monumental painting, art proper, with the painting *Niin hyville kuin pahollekin* (For the good and bad alike), realised for the Koukkuniemi Retirement Home in 1962. [Image 142.] The second and third awards in the competition of 1961 were given out to figurative propositions—the second prize to a 16-years-old high-school student Timo Vuorikoski—but the commission was made on the basis of Kaivanto’s winning sketch.¹¹²

The vertical composition reaches from floor to ceiling in a lobby for an auditorium, and the canvas is recessed in a brick wall—not placed on top of the wall surface, as often was the case. The colour scale is notably soft with broken shades of white, red, blue, green and yellow. It was reported that the inhabitants of the retirement home “truly liked” the new painting, as an evidence of which one of the inhabitants thanked Kaivanto by shaking his hand.¹¹³ The emotional possibilities found in *art informel* were reflected in the speech of Vilho Halme at the unveiling of the painting: “Since this work does not depict any specific



Image 142. Kimmo Kaivanto, *Niin hyville kuin pahoillekin* (For the good and bad alike), 1962. Oil on canvas, 460 x 220. Koukkuniemi Retirement Home, Tampere. NYMU. Photo: JR 2006.

event, it precisely for that reason gives room for the viewers' thoughts [...] it incorporates brightness of the eternity, that which stays."¹¹⁴

Art informel opened up new possibilities also for ecclesiastic art at the same time as for municipal public painting: in 1961, an *informel* altar relief was realised by Kain Tapper for the Orivesi Church and, in 1962, an *informel* monumental painting for the Hyvinkää Church by Jaakko Somersalo [image 65]. Somersalo's red paintings of the early 1960s were lauded by the art critic Einari J. Vehmas as the "most fully-developed" achievements of Finnish *art informel*.¹¹⁵

Lauri Ahlgrén's massive secco painting for the Kuopio Theatre (1963) is an important example of *informel* public painting working together with the architecture. The commission was planned together with the architects of the building, and funded by the Finnish Cultural



Image 143. Lauri Ahlgrén, *Yhtäaikaisia tapahtumia sinisessä tasossa* (Simultaneous events on a blue level), 1963. Secco, 630 x 1235. Kuopio Theatre. Kuopio Art Museum. Photo: JR 2009.



Image 144. Anitra Lucander, canvas application, 1967. 700 x 1000. Roihuvuori School, Helsinki. HAM. Photo: JR 2010.

Foundation. Ahlgrén has lauded the process, as he could participate in the designing of the colour scheme of the whole interior, in which his *Yhtäaikaisia tapahtumia sinisessä tasossa* (Simultaneous events on a blue level) was located.¹¹⁶ [Image 143.] Also in Helsinki in 1967,

the artist Anitra Lucander was given larger responsibilities in decorating a public building, the Roihuvuori School designed by Aarno Ruusuvuori. The City of Helsinki commissioned a monumental canvas application from Lucander for the central lobby of the school. [Image 144.] In addition, Lucander designed the colour scheme for the school, and abstract painting compositions for lengthy parts of the walls, both inside and outside of the building.¹¹⁷

As discussed before, architects often had decisive roles in support of or in resisting public paintings. In 1964, the architects of the Kallio Office Building, Kaija and Heikki Sirén, argued against the concept of public art competitions.

“The selection of an artist is always a difficult task, since it is hard to find an artist, whose art’s essence would by its spirit fully connect to the basic nature of each architectonic destination. A good result is often reached via competition but as often they completely fail, since the level of a competition is often heterogeneous, and the composition of the jury has an essential influence on the outcome.”¹¹⁸

The architects, thus, considered art subordinate to the architecture, and feared the interfering of the members of the Art Committee. To “facilitate the decision”, Heikki and Kaija Sirén listed artists they considered able to reach a desirable outcome for their building. They appealed that 110,000 marks (180,000 euros) of the construction budget should be used to commission works from the suggested artists.¹¹⁹ Their plan was accepted, and artworks were commissioned for the building from a group of vanguard artists, including leading figures of the Finnish *art informel*. Public paintings were realised for the building by Ahti Lavonen (*Kaksi kirjettä*, Two letters) [image 145] and by Erik Enroth (*Meksikolainen tori*, Mexican market), a relief *Vaihtuvat voluumit* (Changing volumes) by Kauko Räsänen, and a sculpture *Kevät ihmisessä* (Spring in man) by Laila Pullinen.¹²⁰

The *informel* approaches became more common by the mid-1960s. In Tampere, the City Art Committee commissioned public paintings that can be characterised as *informel* from Kimmo Kaivanto, Pentti Hartelin, and Lauri Laitala for Pellervo School, executed in 1965–66. [Images 146–147.] A large *informel* painting (180 x 430 cm) was purchased from

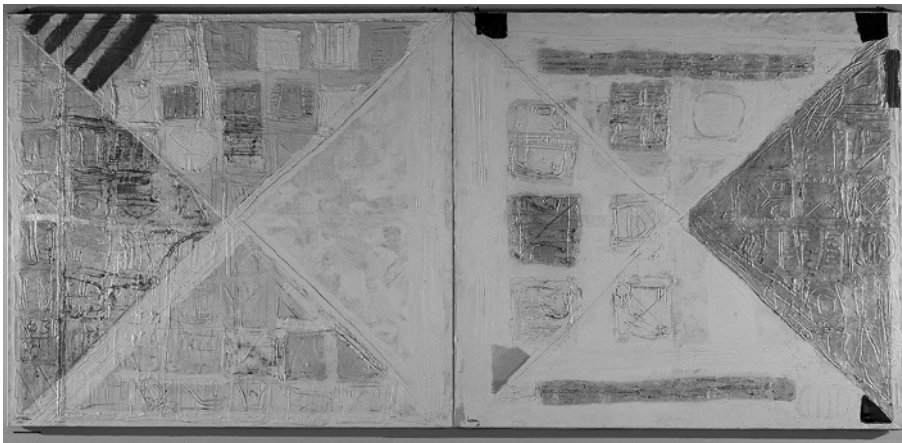


Image 145. Ahti Lavonen, *Kaksi kirjettä* (Two letters), 1965. Oil on canvas, 233 x 500. Kallio Office Building. Currently in storage. HAM. Photo: Museokuva.



Image 146. Kimmo Kaivanto, *Kesäkuvia* (Summer images), 1966. Oil, 238 x 319. Pellervo School, Tampere. NYMU. Photo: JR 2006.



Image 147. Pentti Hartelin, *Aamu* (Morning), 1965. Mixed media, 149 x 190. As above.



Image 148. Lauri Laitala, *Talvileikki* (Winter play), 1968. Oil, 290 x 250. Tesomajärvi School, Tampere. NYMU. Photo: JR 2006.



Image 149. Otso Karpakka, *Peinture*, 1967. Oil on canvas, 180 x 500. Western Secondary School, now Rieskalähde School, Turku. WAM. Photo: Toni Vuori, The Museum Centre of Turku.

Laitala in 1966, and placed in the Tampere City Office Building, and a relief-painting by Laitala was commissioned also on the basis of a public painting competition, arranged for Tesomajärvi School in 1967.¹²¹ [Image 148.] In Turku, an abstract public painting was first acquired from Eero Hiironen for the Workers' Institute in 1965, and in 1967 Otso Karpakka realised a large *informel* painting *Peinture* for Western Secondary School (now Rieskalähde School) on the basis of an open public painting competition—the last of its kind in Turku.¹²² [Image 149.]

Karpakka had been an active participant in the postwar public painting competitions in Turku, and he had been awarded in or his sketch had been bought from nearly all the municipal competitions. He received two commissions: *Fishing boy* for Central Secondary (Puropelto) School in 1958 [images 129–130] and *Peinture*.¹²³ While his competition sketches during the 1950s had differed greatly from his other, abstract, production, and carefully employed the conventions of figurative monumentality, his monumental compositions of the 1960s closely related to his free production of the time. The 1960s were a successful period in Karpakka's artistic career, and he exhibited with the artists' group *Arte* and alone in Helsinki and around Finland, receiving laudatory critics. The transition from geometric abstraction to a more *informel* expression was seen as a profitable move for him.¹²⁴ Despite Karpakka's position in the Turku artworld at the moment, *Peinture* did not create much interest in the media. An abstract public painting was not a source of controversy anymore, and perhaps the news value of public paintings had faded in any case.

In many municipalities the organising of art policies did not take place until the 1960s, and monumental paintings were commissioned with a continued interest especially during the first half of the decade. Even thematically, a stream of figurative “postwar public painting” stretched long into the 1960s. At the same time, there was a growing tendency of radical thinking in the society in the 1960s—questioning the basic values of the society, such as religion and patriotism. The student movement in Finland did not quite reach European or American measures but, for example, the Vietnam War evoked protest movements also among Finnish students and young artists.¹²⁵ Artists took more radical positions, and realised more controversial pieces, as a consequence of which, in the end of the 1960s, some artists were faced with the charges of blasphemy, and convicted.¹²⁶ Pop art and happenings had been introduced into the Finnish artworld, and underground groups were born towards the end of the decade. As a consequence, abstraction became a safe language, which could easily be applied even to official public painting.

In the early 1960s, the authorities may have hoped to suggest being capable and willing of follow the changes in art and support different kinds of art and artists with the commissioning of abstract public paintings. Nevertheless, the spread of abstraction to municipal public painting may be seen as a last step in its institutionalisation and unradicalisation. Importantly, abstraction was applied in official public painting more widely only after the institutional breakthrough of art *informel* in Finland. From the radical news in the 1950s, abstraction transformed during the 1960s into an “apolitical” expression in a more and more politicised field of art.

IV
CONCLUSIONS

Chapter Nine

PUBLIC PAINTINGS AS MATERIAL AND POLITICAL AGENTS

A Continuing Tradition

Public painting was a significant genre of art in postwar Finland. The process of creating a national genre of public painting participated in the defining of municipal and state art politics in the country, and paintings functioned as vehicles of carrying out the agenda of the commissioning bodies. In the formation of the municipal art policies in Finland in the 1950s, public painting connected to the same tendency of democratising art as the founding of public art museums. Public painting commissions also functioned as an arena of competition and a means of support for the artists. Public paintings were judged and commissioned within the realm of political decision-making, and they suggested the values of the decision-making groups, generally conveyed as the values of the society.

In my research, I have indicated large networks of institutional agents, who acted in the production of public paintings. Important agents were the municipal art committees that functioned as commissioners and assessors of public artworks; they arranged public painting competitions and often functioned as their juries. However, the municipal boards and councils held the final ruling power over the artworks to be realised. With private corporations, the decision-making was confined within the management of the company in question. Also the artists' associations had an important role in the production. Their appointed members were included in the juries and they controlled the competition institution by defining a set of rules different commissioners had to comply with in order to receive suggestions from the members of the associations. Artists frequently adopted agency in different positions, and the same individuals took turns in judging competitions and receiving awards, as the discussed example of Olavi Valavuori indicates. The competition sketches were main agents in art competitions, and public paintings acted both in the field of art politics as well as in their environments, as material objects to be confronted.

Besides the prevalent importance of public painting in the postwar period, I have shown how it continued much earlier ideologies and traditions, and connected to the international phenomenon of creating a national genre of public art. The production of public paintings was throughout the time frame of this research much more common in Finland than what has been assessed in previous research. Even public paintings by acknowledged artists, such as Tyko Sallinen, have been omitted from the art historical narratives, not to mention the works by lesser-known artists.

An ideological basis for public painting production had been laid in Finland during the nationalist project of the 19th century, and the establishment of the genre can be dated to the turn of the 20th century, when the first public monumental paintings were commissioned from well-known artists. Many early commissions, most importantly for the University of Alexander in 1890 and for the Finnish Pavilion in the Paris World Fair in 1900, incorporated a nationalist agenda. These early public paintings—especially those by Akseli Gallen-Kallela—have been celebrated in Finnish art historical narratives, while the following production has not been.

In the 1910s, the popular post-impressionist ideals were expressed also in Finnish public painting. This approach was considered problematic by many influential art critics, and it was soon replaced in public painting with other, classicist and more emphatically national ideals. In particular during the 1930s, the hope of creating national art through monumental painting was articulated by art critics and in public painting competition calls. Nevertheless, public painting found only moderate support during the interwar period and the realised works have been little appreciated in Finnish art histories. Public paintings were rarely planned for nationally significant locations, and in the cases they were, the results were not encouraging. Importantly, the competition for the Parliament House in 1929–30 failed as none of the sketches was realised. Generally public paintings were commissioned for schools and for environments of leisure, suggesting lighter subjects. Such paintings have often been omitted as decorations, and not been discussed in art historical contexts. During the interwar period, public painting struggled to achieve a position of national art, which sculpture had already adopted.

The discussion on the benefits of public art and public painting peaked at the end of the 1930s. An exhibition of Norwegian fresco painting was arranged in Helsinki Kunsthalle in 1937, and several agents, including high political authorities, expressed hopes for a similar national public painting production to be realised in Finland. A Percent for Art resolution was accepted in the Finnish Parliament in 1939 but it has never been put to effect on a national level. The postwar public painting production must be seen as an outcome of this discussion, despite the slight delay due to the war efforts of the country. Following the war, the long-circulated ideological discussion found resonance also on a financial level among municipalities and in state art policies.

Public paintings were realised in moderate numbers even during the war years, and it was programmatically used since the late 1940s—for example in the efforts of reconstructing the destroyed Rovaniemi following the War of Lapland. The commissioning of public paintings was established as a standard practice in municipalities during the first half of the 1950s, peaking in the middle and end of the decade, and the State Art Commission was established in 1956 to commission art for state locations. In its early years, the committee did not have a budget of its own and it did not systematically commission public paintings; yet, ten of them between 1956–64.

During the first half of the 20th century, private agents were the main commissioners of public paintings, and the Art for Schools Association in particular had an important role in the production. Even though the association suffered from a lack of resources, it commissioned a small number of significant works and inspired other agents to participate in its mission. Importantly, the association advocated the need for public painting in the Finnish society during a time when public spending on art was scarce. The private

commissioning continued significant also in the postwar decades, but with the establishing of the municipal and state art committees, the production of public paintings was taken more closely into official control. As a sign of the changing practices, the state stopped funding the Art for Schools Association in 1958. Importantly, however, the official public painting commissioning largely followed practices promoted by the association.

To suggest a continuing tradition in Finnish public painting does not mean an argument for a linear or continuing development in it. However, it has proved difficult to avoid the modernist paradigm of tracing the “first moments”, while addressing a large body of artworks executed during a long time-span. The chronological structure, which may emphasise this narrative, was selected to facilitate the future use of this study as the first handbook on Finnish 20th century public painting—still lacking the last third of the century. From the large material, in which every case has its own specificities, I have indicated general lines of production. This research is a beginning on an unexplored terrain, with the hope of opening passages for further investigations.

The Paradox of Public Painting (for Art Historians)

The production of public paintings, or public art in general, can be justified from a number of different viewpoints, and the versatile nature of public painting explains why it has been used by different political systems. From the bourgeois point of view of the late 19th century, public art was seen as a “burden” of the upper classes and the enlightened artists to civilise and enhance the lives of the less privileged masses. According to the socialist view, art in public spaces belonged to the proletariat, in contrast to the private spaces of individual owners. In democratic societies, the same idea has been formulated as art being democratic since it is at the reach of “everyone”. And, in a plural society, public art can be justified from several viewpoints at the same time. Public art has been considered useful for a long time but the definitions of its uses have changed radically.

It is noteworthy that the 19th century, the century of “monumentomania” in Europe, was also the century when ideals of art for art’s sake were nurtured. While art was to be credited merely for its intrinsic values, for pure artistic pleasure, public art was cherished as a separate genre of art with established political and social functions. Continuing in the 20th century, what distinguished public art from other genres of art was not only its placement but also the belief in its capacity to act in the society. Furthermore, the “public” of public art was generally defined as the large (and uncivilised) masses, in contrast to the privileged few who composed the audience for the art for art’s sake. In postwar Finland, the belief in the agency of art justified its public placement and public funding—it was acceptable to spend public money on art that was beneficial for the public and the society at large.

As this research demonstrates, public painting was connected to the democratising ideals in Finnish society during the postwar period, and forwarded in conjunction to the creation of the Finnish welfare state. The demand for public painting was justified, essentially, with the educational character art was seen to incorporate. The educational character was emphasised through the placing of artworks, as schools were the main

locations for municipal and state public painting commissions, and it functioned in benefit of all the parties involved. The public of the works was to be civilised and educated through the encounter with a high-quality artwork. In other words, public art was to better the quality of life of the viewers. Consequently, by commissioning proper artworks to be publicly displayed, the society was to profit from having more civilised citizens. And, a growing audience for art was also to work in advantage of the artworld.

Public paintings have been excluded from art historical narratives for a number of reasons. First, even though public painting was differentiated by form and function from easel painting in the 19th century, it has often been evaluated with the same criteria as art for art's sake. From this paradox rises the situation where it has been labelled as old-fashioned and uninteresting, and omitted in art historical narratives that have concentrated on the development of the avant-garde. As functional, commissioned art, situated in locations not generally associated with high art, public paintings did not typically pioneer as forerunners of artistic experimenting. In the 1950s, when the postwar public painting production peaked in Finland, the artworld buzzed with modernist novelties but the process of producing public paintings did not encourage bold experimenting.

Second, previous generations of art historians have struggled with the boundaries between high-art monumental painting and use-art decorative painting. Realised, at least in theory, in close relationship with interior architecture, public painting has balanced on the border of decoration—characterised by art historians as low or even non-art. For this reason, the concept of public painting has proved useful: it abolishes the problematic distinction between high and low art and allows the focusing on the artworks themselves.

And, third, art critics and historians have not considered Finnish public paintings of the interwar and postwar periods reaching the high ideals the genre was allocated. Throughout the first half of the 20th century and continuing strongly in the 1950s, public painting was seen to encompass the possibility of artistic greatness, comparable to the one detected in the Finnish art of the Golden Age. This prospect was not, nevertheless, seen as being realised. Art critics repeatedly claimed that the Finnish artists had not had enough practice, and waited for the masterpieces of the genre in vain. Such arguments were expressed, among other moments, by Einari J. Vehmas and Alf Krohn in the context of the large-scale competition arranged by the Finnish Cultural Foundation in 1955.

An explanation for the commonly felt disappointment has to be sought from the paradoxical expectations allocated for public art. Public paintings were to apply a rather strict set of formal conventions. At the same time, they have been seen to fail as high art due to questions relating to originality and avant-garde. Public painting was also allocated a task of national art but it was not commissioned for nationally significant spaces. As a local practice, painted by local artists for local municipal spaces and often suggesting local themes, the paintings were unfit to the category of national.

In order to overcome the undervaluation of public paintings, new approaches are needed. A more valid set of criteria than the one used for “free art” could be sought from the given tasks of public painting and the ways in which paintings encounter their audiences. This, nevertheless, is a much more difficult task—especially since the public of the paintings was not attributed agency at the time of the production of these works. The public was a target, a subject to change. Furthermore, “public” always referred to a large number of people, not individuals engaging with an artwork.

The production of nationally oriented public art and public painting was an international phenomenon during the 19th and 20th centuries, and the international developments were frequently referred to in Finnish discussions. Finnish artists sought education in monumental painting abroad, and the Finnish production was, up to a large degree, inspired by its European, and especially Northern European counterparts. In Finland, the whole chapter on figurative public painting of the 20th century has been missing from art history, and a question arises whether the same situation applies, and a comparable forgotten production could be indicated in other European countries.

Historians and art historians have in the past decades been highly interested in the questions of memory, the role of which has been particularly emphasised in the field of public art due to the crucial historical position of the memorial monument. However, as my research indicates, also forgetting relates to public art and can be a useful research tool. Postwar public painting in Finland dealt with forgetting on several levels. Thematically, it was geared towards forgetting the war. The genre was first neglected and then forgotten among Finnish art historians. And, the paintings often become forgotten, unseen, in the daily lives of their audiences.

The invisibility of public paintings unavoidably screams out a paradox in the intended functions of the paintings and their realisation: can any of the noble goals of public art production be fulfilled if the artworks are not seen? My research has addressed the level of production of public paintings, its justifications and outcomes. I have studied the political goals behind the production and the high standards attributed to public art, as well as their visual realisations. The literary documentation from the time of the production, the ponderings of the municipal art committees, the jury minutes, the more rare publicly articulated views of the artists, and often also the newspaper critics dealt with the intentions of these paintings. However, the realisation of the intended functions is impossible to evaluate from the available material. It does not indicate answers for questions such as whether the school children learned from the paintings, or whether the nation became more cultivated through the presence of these paintings in the daily lives of the people.

The agency of the audience is a central question, which cannot be addressed with the material of this research. An important follow-up of this research would be one where the relationship between public paintings and their audiences is addressed in a critical way, asking how members of the audience confront and engage with the paintings, and what kind of affective potential the paintings incorporate. Audience engagement with these works from the time of their production is not available for research, but contemporary audiences may answer questions on the continuing importance of Finnish public paintings.

Nostalgia and a New Society

The figurative postwar public painting production in Finland from the late 1940s to the mid-1960s addressed a unified nation with strong family values. It created an image of a developing society and, at the same time, suggested nostalgia to an agrarian world, in a form it had never existed: an ideal national home. Even though at times articulated as such, public

paintings are not to be seen as documents of the time of their production. Nevertheless, the image of Finnishness they portrayed had an institutional mandate. The participation of official agents in the production allocated a position of official art to the genre.

As the material for the research indicates, the municipal, state and private public painting productions were intertwined. Official bodies and private corporations justified their art acquisitions largely in the same way and the realised paintings created a rather coherent body of works. With the commissioning of public paintings, corporations manifested their old patronage position in the society and, at the same time, positioned themselves as socially responsible members of the new welfare society.

There is no specific agent responsible for the coherence in contents of the body of Finnish postwar public paintings. On the contrary, it is a consequence of complicated processes of production, of similarities in the articulated ideologies of the commissioning bodies, of the limited size of the pool of executing artists, and of the control held by the artists' associations. The art competition institution defined the field in significant ways, and made the collective production of art clearly visible. Through the realised public paintings and their evaluations in the media, members of the society gained a cumulating understanding on the attributes of a "good public painting". Artists experimented within and also outside of these boundaries, and juries and municipal councils ruled which of these experiments were to be realised. The competition institution often did not encourage for large distancing from the well tried conventions. However, after gaining a commission, an artist did not necessarily follow the original competition sketch, but took liberties in painting the final work. The core subject of the work was, nevertheless, rarely changed.

As an arena where political agents entered in discussion with members of the artworld, public painting competitions often revealed contradictions in the artistic criteria used by the different agents. Frequently, as the case of the Cygnaeus School competition in Jyväskylä in 1962 exemplifies, political agents favoured more traditional approaches than the competition juries. The controversy in Jyväskylä focused on the possibilities of abstract art, and its intelligibility for the public. In these kinds of discussions, the needs and tastes of the "common people" were frequently referred to. Politicians took the position of representing the "man in the street" and, at the same time, defined the public as was suited for their own purposes. The controversies were also tied to economic questions and power relations between the different agents in the field, as the case of acquiring a mosaic decoration for Pyynikki Swimming Pool in Tampere in 1956–58 demonstrates. Importantly, the artists' associations took the position of guarding that "wrong" artist were not awarded in anonymous competitions. The awarding of an unknown artist or the bypassing of experienced ones was considered an insult towards the Finnish artworld and a sign of the inexperience of the jury in question, as was seen following the awarding of the prior unknown L. A. Matinpalo in the Nordic Union Bank competition of 1951.

The commissioners of public paintings imposed on the artists their expectations on the content and form of the realised artworks. However, the commissioning body can rarely be deduced from the contents of the Finnish public paintings, and for example party politics rarely explicitly entered in public paintings. There had been individual cases by private commissioners from the interwar period that supported right-wing political agenda, notably by Eric O. W. Ehrström for the Vocational School of Kymi Corporation in Kuusankoski from 1933, and there were some in the postwar period suggesting left-wing orientation, for

example *The course of life in the shadow of the factory*, painted by Sven Grönvall for the Varkaus Retirement Home in 1953. Nevertheless, most often the public painting production in postwar Finland supported an image of uniformity culture, of everyone working for a common goal.

Work was indeed among the main themes of postwar public paintings, and working men among the most commonly depicted figures. The depicted fields of work generally related to agriculture that connected with the agricultural past of the country, or construction that associated with the postwar reconstruction. Reconstruction was understood as a joint effort of the whole nation and, thus, images of construction opened interpretations of unification instead of a class division. Likewise, the image of family suggested a union, a close relation of especially mother and children. In postwar public paintings family was indicated as a basic unit of the nation. Furthermore, the figure of a mother was often translated more allegorically as the mother of the nation. In schools, children were the main protagonists of public paintings: they participated in the common work or, at least, performed useful activities. The upright children played and studied, developing into responsible members of the society.

The imagery of postwar public paintings emphasised traditional construction methods, slowness, and manual work. Paintings omitted the reality of the past war and implied a return to the world that had preceded it. At the same time their focus was directed to the future with the incomplete construction sites and families renewing the nation, connected to the discourse of newly found national unity. The paintings combined the time levels of past, present and future into a nostalgic and seemingly unchanging image of Finnishness. Importantly, they created an image of an ideal society. Postwar public paintings did not refer to conflict or disagreement, and the problematic memories of war were distanced from them. The failed fresco project by Helmer Selin for Jyväskylä Lyceum from the second half of the 1950s exemplifies the problems surrounding the depiction of war within the genre.

In figurative postwar public painting, the conventions of monumentality differed fundamentally from the compositional expectations in easel painting. The main tools for creating a monumental painting were the avoiding of linear perspective, reducing of excessive details, and aiming for a flat picture plane, as well as the combining of different elements onto the composition. Most typically, the paintings featured human figures in the foreground, and a landscape with some recognisable local elements in the background. Besides these features, the settings of the scenes in the paintings were frequently largely abstracted. A degree of repetitiveness—the employment of the same elements—that can be indicated from the body of paintings was hard to avoid due to the conventional understanding of the genre.

As I have suggested in my research, the spread of abstraction to officially funded public painting may be seen as a final indication of the institutionalisation and un-radicalisation of abstract art in the Finnish society, happening at a comparably late moment, at the turn of the 1960s. The first examples of abstract public painting, in the 1950s, represented concretism, but abstraction became more common in official public painting only once the *art informel* gained a significant position in the Finnish artworld. *Art informel* was formulated as a national form of abstraction, connected to Finnish nature and the tradition of landscape painting. Through this dimension of national, *informel* paintings connected to the ideological background of public painting. Furthermore, in the 1960s, abstraction was

positioned as an “apolitical” approach in a more and more politicised field of art. The vast spread of abstract public paintings redefined the field of public painting in significant ways, the full implications of which demand further scholarly attention, as does the whole area of Finnish public painting from the 1960s onwards.

Finnish public paintings have mainly been located inside public buildings, and the interior architecture of their sites forms one of the paintings’ main contexts. According to the definitions of public painting in the postwar decades, artworks were supposed to be in a dialogue with the architecture of their locations. The integration of a painting to its location, two-dimensionality and a flat surface were central demands for a public painting. In addition, paintings were to address the function of the building, as well as the public, which was defined in relation to this function. These ideals were, nevertheless, strived for with varying intensity. The cooperation between an architect and an artist, which was considered ideal, rarely materialised. Furthermore, public painting competitions were at times arranged with little or no information on the future location of the painting. Fresco technique was considered a superior form of integrating art with the architecture, but due to its demanding nature it was rarely employed. Often, Finnish public paintings did not literally integrate into the wall but were hung on it as independent objects.

Nevertheless, regardless of their relationship with the interior space of their locations, postwar public paintings participated in the creation of a new kind of public space, a democratic space, the aim for which was suggested also in architecture. During the postwar decades, the everyday environments were directed much attention, with prominent architects designing school buildings and other public facilities. In these premises, public paintings suggested an image of new citizenship in a new society, stressing the emphasis given on the everyday life.

Finnish postwar public paintings are often today encountered in different locations from where they were originally created for. How the paintings function in relation to their surrounding architecture and what kinds of social and public spaces they create are important themes for future research. To deepen these themes, and further question the role of public paintings in art history and in the society, critical attention needs to be directed to the travelling adventures of these paintings.

Through the material of this research, postwar public painting is seen as an agent in a society searching for a new identity. Public painting production participated in the creation of the Finnish welfare society as indications of a humane society. Public paintings promoted the new national narrative of unification by creating an image of a homogeneous society with a harmonious communal life. The paintings laid out an image of Finnishness that was modern but rooted in its agrarian past and suggested a model where all members of the society had their own roles, performing their tasks in the service of the society. The paintings referred to a society that was based on hard work, and provided for its members a good life. The fact that everyone worked translated as the basic principle for a functioning society. Postwar public painting was art with a mission, and it created an image of a society with a mission.

NOTES

All the quotes from Finnish and Swedish in this volume are translated by JR.

The value of Finnish mark in different years is converted to equal the value of euro in 2008 by using a converter provided by the Statistics Finland in 2009. The converter is based on the Finnish cost-of-living index, calculated by the same institute. The figures in euros are usually rounded to the next hundred euros. Tilastokeskus, accessed 16.10.2009.

Preface: Re-visioning the Invisible

¹ Musil 1987, 61.

² Huyssen 1999, 195–198.

³ Vainio-Rantanen 14.10.2003.

1. The Politics of Public Painting

¹ See e.g. Mitchell 1992; Baca 1995; Phillips 1998 [1992]; Knight 2008.

² Lacy 1995, 19–20.

³ Lippard 1997, 264.

⁴ Gamboni 1997, 52.

⁵ Young 2003, 245.

⁶ According to the institutional art theory, the existence of an artworld is a prerequisite for an understanding of art. See Dickie 1997 and Becker 1984.

⁷ Warner 2005, 26–30.

⁸ Arendt 1958, 28.

⁹ Habermas 2004 [1961], 60–61.

¹⁰ Finkelpaarl 2001, x–xi.

¹¹ Ridell, Kymäläinen & Nyysönen 2009, 7.

¹² Eräsaari 2002, 11–12. See also Ruohonen 2010, 81.

¹³ See Lefebvre 1991; Deutsche 1996, 49–65.

¹⁴ Massey 2008, 27–28, 56–64.

¹⁵ Ridell, Kymäläinen & Nyysönen 2009, 15; Saarikangas 2006, 14.

¹⁶ Lähdesmäki 2007, 441.

¹⁷ Ibid., 463; Lindgren 2000, 137.

¹⁸ See Senie 2002 on the controversy surrounding the case.

¹⁹ Kwon 2004.

²⁰ Arendt 1958, 28, 50–58.

²¹ Habermas 2004 [1961], 15–16, 52 and passim.

²² Nieminen 2006, 27–42, 159.

²³ Pon 2005, 686.

²⁴ See pages 49–53.

²⁵ Warner 2005, 123.

²⁶ Lee 1999, 13–14.

²⁷ Warner 2005, 65–68, 73.

²⁸ Ibid., 87–90.

²⁹ Lindgren 2000, 12.

³⁰ Knight 2008, 20.

³¹ Phillips 1995, 285–286. Emphasis by Phillips.

³² Belfiore and Bennett 2008, 40, 54–55.

³³ Ibid., 141–145.

³⁴ Phillips 1995, 285–286.

³⁵ Knight 2008, x. Emphasis by Knight.

³⁶ Ibid., 131.

³⁷ Ibid., 20.

³⁸ See also Ruohonen 2012, 159.

³⁹ Ilvas 2002, 38.

⁴⁰ Examples of such foundations are: *Art Foundation Merita* (established in 2002), the *Fortum Art Foundation* (2005), *Enso Fine Arts Foundation* (2006), and *UPM Kymmene Cultural Foundation* (2006). Association of Finnish Fine Arts Foundations, accessed 16.4.2012.

⁴¹ Waenerberg 2001, 49. See also Valkonen 1992, 8; Schauman 1994, 54.

⁴² Suomen evankelis-luterilinen kirkko, accessed 4.1.2012.

⁴³ Hanka 1995, 34–35. See also Kallio 2002a, 170–171.

⁴⁴ Hiekkänen 2007, 29.

⁴⁵ Stewen 1989, 129–131.

⁴⁶ Kontinen 1996, 310; Stjernschantz 1907, 4–5.

⁴⁷ Viljo 2006, 28.

⁴⁸ See Wolff 1993 [1981], 32–48; Becker 1984.

⁴⁹ See page 83.

⁵⁰ See Bourdieu 1993, 106–111.

⁵¹ Benjamin 1999 [1934], 777.

⁵² Bishop 2006, 11.

⁵³ Ibid., 12.

⁵⁴ Bourriaud 2002, 21.

⁵⁵ Whybrow 2011, 5, 15. Emphasis by Whybrow. See also Bishop 2006.

⁵⁶ Gell 1998, 17.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 13–17.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 33–34.

⁵⁹ Latour 2005, 63–86.

- ⁶⁰ Latour 1991, 104–110.
- ⁶¹ Viljo 2006, 23.
- ⁶² See *ibid.*, 22.
- ⁶³ Young 2003, 237.
- ⁶⁴ See Connerton 2008 and 2011, 33–50. I have dealt with these questions also in Ruohonen 2011b.
- ⁶⁵ Halbwachs 1980 [first published posthumously in 1950].
- ⁶⁶ Hutton 1993, 9.
- ⁶⁷ Huyssen 2003, 3–4.
- ⁶⁸ Nora 1989, 7–9, 19–20.
- ⁶⁹ Ashton, Hamilton & Searby 2012, 11.
- ⁷⁰ Young 2003, 237–238. See also Nora 1989.
- ⁷¹ Michalski 1998, 201–210; Young 2003, 239–240.
- ⁷² Connerton 2011, 40.
- ⁷³ The categorisation of the different types of forgetting is by Connerton 2008 and 2011.
- ⁷⁴ Peltonen 2003, 221–227.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 236. See also Hoppu 2008a. The memories of the civil war continue to be sensitive and debated. The 90th anniversary of the events in 2008 raised discussion on various levels, such as among the Evangelic Lutheran Church concerning its role in the civil war. Furthermore, the burial sites of the Reds, which had been left without a Christian blessing during and after the civil war, have been blessed in the 21st century.
- ⁷⁶ See Rolston 1991 on Northern Ireland; Gruber 2008 on Iran; and Cockcroft et al. 1998 on the community mural painting in the US.
- ⁷⁷ Cohen 2009, 74–78.
- ⁷⁸ Gordon 2001, 3. See also Connerton 2011, 41–45.
- ⁷⁹ See Karonen 2006, 12.
- ⁸⁰ Ursin 1980, 332–333. See also Nummela 1993 and Helamaa 1983, 66.
- ⁸¹ See Nummela 1993, 37–40.
- ⁸² Jussila 1990, 25.
- ⁸³ Hannikainen & Heikkinen 2006, 168.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 167. See also Hjerpe & Jalava 2006, 46–47.
- ⁸⁵ In the 1980s, the state commissioned 17 public paintings for its localities, 13 in the 1990s, and ten between 2000–09. (Ahmio 2009b. SAC.) *Valtion taideteostöimikunta* governs the State Art Collection, and it has also been translated as the “Finnish State Art Collection Committee”. I have chosen to use the translation State Art Commission, which more closely follows the Finnish wording (literally State Artwork Commission). The Finnish State Art Collection, accessed 17.4.2012.
- ⁸⁶ Léger 1980; Pusa 1982. In 1986, *Rakentajain kustannus* (Publishing house for builders) published a guide book for commissioning public art for one’s premises. Valkonen 1986.
- ⁸⁷ Available online: Kuvataiteilijamatrikkeli, accessed 15.1.2005–17.1.2012.
- ⁸⁸ See pages 49–53.

- ⁸⁹ In 2004–12, I have visited Hamina, Heinola, Helsinki, Hyvinkää, Hämeenlinna, Jyväskylä, Karjaa, Kemi, Kokkola, Kotka, Kuopio, Lahti, Lohja, Loimaa, Naantali, Oulu, Porvoo, Raisio, Rovaniemi, Seinäjoki, Tampere, Turku, Vantaa, and Varkaus, documenting roughly 220 public paintings. I have also documented and studied in situ a number of public paintings in Sweden, Norway, and United States.

2. Public Painting in Art History

- ¹ For example in the competition for the Normal Lyceum in 1932, the size for the paintings was established at 175 x 240 cm. “Kilpailu Suomen taiteilijoille.” *HS* 9.12.1932. See pages 88–89.
- ² Bottai 2011, 165.
- ³ At the time Axel Gallén. Gallén changed his name into more Finnish spelling Akseli Gallen-Kallela in 1907 according to the contemporary fashion. For simplicity’s sake, the spelling Gallen-Kallela is used throughout this volume.
- ⁴ The industrialist F. A. Jusélius commissioned the mausoleum in 1898 in remembrance of his daughter who had passed away at the age of 11. Pekka Halonen painted decorations for the vestibule while Akseli Gallen-Kallela realised the painting program for the main hall. The frescoes deteriorated rapidly, and were destroyed in a fire in 1931. See Kaisla 1991 and Gallen-Kallela-Sirén 2001b, 286–290, 304–306.
- ⁵ Aspelin 1891, 69. Also the word “sommitus” was later established in the Finnish language as “sommitelma” (composition).
- ⁶ See for example Giedion 1958 [1944], 28.
- ⁷ Wohl 1999, 925.
- ⁸ Huyssen 1999, 198–199.
- ⁹ Mumford 1938, 438.
- ¹⁰ Giedion 1958, 48.
- ¹¹ Young 2003, 237.
- ¹² I have found one case, that of Lindström 1964, 308.
- ¹³ Aquilino 1989, 12.
- ¹⁴ Berggren 1999, 562–563.
- ¹⁵ Gamboni 1997, 27, 31–32.
- ¹⁶ Kalha 1997, 267.
- ¹⁷ Okkonen 1945, 404–405. Onni Okkonen was the Professor of Art History at the University of Helsinki (1927–48) and an art critic for the newspaper *Uusi Suomi* 1926–45, with a very authoritative voice in the Finnish artworld. He strongly emphasised the national character of art, and shunned foreign influences. See Reitala 2000, 335–337; Kallio 1997.
- ¹⁸ Okkonen 1945, 340.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 407.
- ²⁰ Kallio 2001, 26.

- ²¹ Ibid.; Huusko 2001, 48. *Kalevala* is a volume based on the Finnish folklore, edited by Elias Lönnrot from the poems he collected in the 1830s in Karelia, the most eastern province in Finland. *Kalevala* offered the Finnish myth of origin, and was used especially in the late 19th century to evidence the long span of Finnish civilisation. The “*Kalevalan*” past was a way of separating both from the Russian rule and the Swedish history. Also the remote—remote from Turku or Helsinki—Karelia, where the poems had been collected, served as an inspiration for artists seeking national landscapes and genuine Finnishness.
- ²² Lukkarinen 2007.
- ²³ Loos 2000 [1910], 289.
- ²⁴ Le Corbusier 2000 [1925], 214.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 215.
- ²⁶ Golan 2002, 186.
- ²⁷ Léger 1980 [1950], 28.
- ²⁸ Pusa 1982 [1954], 148–149.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Pusa 1982 [1967, 1954], 139–141, 148–149.
- ³¹ Tampere City Council 22.9.1954, n:o 17. Tampere CA.
- ³² Tampere City Art Committee 12.12.1970, §4. Tampere CA.
- ³³ Pusa 1982 [1954], 148–149.
- ³⁴ Aquilino 1989, 12.
- ³⁵ Hedström 2004, 33–34.
- ³⁶ Berman 1989, 87.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 70–71.
- ³⁸ Facos 2003, 229.
- ³⁹ Golan 2002, 186.
- ⁴⁰ Bowlt 1980, 184.
- ⁴¹ Belfiore & Bennet 2008, 148–151. On official patronage in Italy, see Stone 1997.
- ⁴² Golan 2009, 58.
- ⁴³ Bowlt 1980, 184–187.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 192.
- ⁴⁵ Siqueros et al. 2003 [1922], 406. Emphasis by Siqueros. According to Rochfort (1993, 220) the manifesto was first proclaimed in December 1923.
- ⁴⁶ Siqueros et al. 2003 [1922], 407.
- ⁴⁷ Rivera 2003 [1932], 424.
- ⁴⁸ Sironi 2003 [1933], 425.
- ⁴⁹ Rochfort 1993, 33, 81–84.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 24–25, 30.
- ⁵¹ Askeland 1966, 39–41.
- ⁵² Cahill 1973, 38–39; Harris 1995, 24.
- ⁵³ Park and Markowitz 1984, 3.
- ⁵⁴ The programs were the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP, 1933–34), the Works Progress Administrations Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP, 1935–43), the Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP, 1935–39), and the Section (1934–43). Ibid., 6–7. See also Marling 1982 and Harris 1995.
- ⁵⁵ Harris 1995, 24.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 68.
- ⁵⁷ Park and Markowitz 1984, 22. See also Beckham 1989, 300; Marling 1982, 242–243.
- ⁵⁸ Doss 1991, 279.
- ⁵⁹ Askeland 1966, 11.
- ⁶⁰ Berman 1989, xviii.
- ⁶¹ Askeland 1966, 194.
- ⁶² Ibid., 192.
- ⁶³ Ødegaard 1998, 216–217.
- ⁶⁴ Damaz 1956, 83, 85.
- ⁶⁵ E.g. “Oslolaisten syntymäpäivälahjoja itselleen” 1950.
- ⁶⁶ Stensman 1987, 192–193. See Hedström 2004 on the public art production in schools preceding 1937.
- ⁶⁷ Alanko 1935. AFSA.
- ⁶⁸ A collection of 167 books from Toivola’s and Karpakka’s library was donated to the library of the University of Turku in 2006. The collection includes dozens of volumes from the 1950s or earlier. However, the year of purchase is not known to me.
- ⁶⁹ Redaktionen 1950; Maehle 1950. See also Wessman 1997, 17–18.
- ⁷⁰ Andrenius 1951.
- ⁷¹ Saha [Theodor Schalin]. “Hilkka Toivola ja Otso Karpakka—harmooninen taiteilijapariskunta.” *Uusi Aura* 3.1.1954; see also Ruohonen 2006, 34.
- ⁷² Ibid.; Huovinen 1973, 14.
- ⁷³ Valorinta 1982, 23.
- ⁷⁴ Schildt 1992, 133–138.
- ⁷⁵ See pages 117–118.
- ⁷⁶ Lennartsson & Lennartsson 1975, 4.
- ⁷⁷ Cockroft et al. 1998.
- ⁷⁸ Sachs 1984, [1]. Translation JR.
- ⁷⁹ See Rolston 1991 and 1998.
- ⁸⁰ See Gruber 2008.
- ⁸¹ Virve Kähkönen. “Katutaide näyttää kieltä vallalle: Ateenan anarkistikaupunginosassa velkakriisi kääntyy graffiteiksi.” *HS* 20.2.2012.
- ⁸² Golan 2009, 181.
- ⁸³ Ibid., 249.
- ⁸⁴ Willsdon 2000, 26.
- ⁸⁵ Earlier, 19th century public painting has been studied, for example, in Germany by Magdalena Droste (1980) and Monika Wagner (1989), in France by Stefan Germer (1988) and in Italy by Susanne von Falkenhausen (1993). See Hedström 2004, 14.
- ⁸⁶ Park and Markowitz 1984, xviii; see also Harris 1995, 1–2.
- ⁸⁷ Rochfort 1993, 8.
- ⁸⁸ Lippard 1997, 267. See also Cockroft et al. 1998.
- ⁸⁹ See Reitala 2000, 326–330.

- ⁹⁰ Palin 2010, 16–17.
- ⁹¹ Aspelin 1891, 1. The booklet was written to be an appendix for *Taiteen historia* (The history of art) by W. Lübke, which had been translated from German (*Grundriss der Kunstgeschichte*) into Finnish.
- ⁹² Öhquist 1912; Wennervirta 1927; Okkonen 1945. See also Tikkanen 1925; Lindgren 2000, 30.
- ⁹³ Valkeapää 2000, 93–97; Hiekkänen 2007, 8.
- ⁹⁴ Wennervirta 1933, 388.
- ⁹⁵ Levanto 1997, 47. Wennervirta was even more right-wing than Okkonen, and had deep national socialist sympathies. Reitala 2000, 334–335.
- ⁹⁶ Anttonen 2006, 74–75.
- ⁹⁷ “Monumentaalitaide on kansakunnan taidekulttuuritahdon näkyvä ilmaus.” *Karjalainen*, 16.1.1938.
- ⁹⁸ Okkonen 1945, 110–111. See also Okkonen 1952, 6, 22–23.
- ⁹⁹ Okkonen 1945, 404–405.
- ¹⁰⁰ Valkonen, O. 1985, 11, 20–21; Kallio 2002b, 273. See also Huusko 2001, 50.
- ¹⁰¹ Okkonen 1955, VII, 740, 820–824.
- ¹⁰² Nummelin 1978, 285.
- ¹⁰³ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁴ Valkonen, O. 1985, 37; Valkonen, M. 1985, 7, 22.
- ¹⁰⁵ Valkonen, O. 1985, 25–27.
- ¹⁰⁶ Reitala 1990, 242–243; See also Reitala 1973, 6.
- ¹⁰⁷ Kruskopf 1990, 83.
- ¹⁰⁸ Valkonen, M. 1985, 22, 26–28.
- ¹⁰⁹ Kruskopf 1990, 93–94.
- ¹¹⁰ Ilvas 1989, 26.
- ¹¹¹ Vieru 2000, 83.
- ¹¹² See e.g. Okkonen 1945, 240; Reitala 1993, 80. On Segerstråle, see also Sariola 1973, Uusikylä 1996, Ylimartamo & Uusikylä 2005, and Jaakkola 2006.
- ¹¹³ Hienonen 1983.
- ¹¹⁴ Sakari 1988; Wessman 1997; Ruohonen 2004, 2006, 2010, 2011b, and 2012.
- ¹¹⁵ See Tiirakari 2007. Public paintings in schools have been studied, for example, in Sweden by Per Hedström 2004 and in the United States by Heather Becker 2002 and by Michele Cohen 2002, 2009.
- ¹¹⁶ Kantokorpi 2012, 45. Translation JR.
- ¹¹⁷ See Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art, accessed 3.4.2012; Julkiset taideteokset Jyväskylässä, accessed 20.1.2012; Helsingin taidemuseo, accessed 20.1.2012; Oulun taidemuseo, Julkiset ulkoveistokset, accessed 3.4.2012. In Varkaus, also indoor public paintings have been included in the listing of public art in the city. Taidetta Varkaudessa, accessed 13.11.2009.
- ¹¹⁸ *A Guide to Chicago's Murals* by Mary Lackritz Gray, presenting 181 mainly indoor murals with maps, photos, and short descriptions, makes an intriguing city guide, despite the fact that the sites of all the featured paintings cannot be visited. Gray 2001.

¹¹⁹ Lindgren 1996, 6–8.

¹²⁰ Kalha 1997, 26.

3. Picturing Ideologies

¹ Hiekkänen 2007, 32. The dating of medieval Finnish churches has been under debate. I shall not enter this discussion, but use Markus Hiekkänen's dating of the churches and their paintings. Hiekkänen dates the paintings in the Jomala Church as being from 1275–85, and in Lemland Church from 1280–90—both in Åland—and considers them the oldest known monumental paintings in Finland. The painters came from Denmark or Sweden.

² Nieminen 2006, 18–19, 190.

³ Anderson 2006 [1983], 5–7.

⁴ Alapuro & Stenius 1987, 12–18; Nieminen 2006, 62–63.

⁵ Jussila 2000, 41–43.

⁶ See Lindgren 2000, 26–30.

⁷ Konttinen 2001, 21; See also Nieminen 2006, 119.

⁸ Nieminen 2006, 195.

⁹ Valkonen 1984, 12.

¹⁰ The Academy of Turku was the preceding institution of the contemporary University of Helsinki. The institution was relocated to Helsinki in 1828, while the capital status had been moved from Turku to Helsinki, closer to Russia, slightly earlier, in 1812.

¹¹ Pöykkö 1991, 12–13.

¹² The desire to establish first moments often presents problems: for example, the Danish Gotthelf Borup had executed *Väinämöinen* for the park of Monrepos in Viipuri as early as 1831, but for example for Ludvig Wennervirta (1927, 320), this was not *Finnish* sculpture. Sjöstrand, on the other hand, was Swedish but he resided in Finland. The monumental tombstones and memorials for imperial visits realised during the 19th century have generally not been understood as public sculpture or monuments (or art). Lindgren 2000, 24.

¹³ Ervamaa 1981, 97–102.

¹⁴ Lindgren 2000, 24–26.

¹⁵ Ervamaa 1981, 54–61.

¹⁶ Ibid., 108–109.

¹⁷ Hovinheimo 2004, 283.

¹⁸ See Lukkarinen 2001, 195.

¹⁹ The decoration project, which spans from 1890 to 1920 was multi-phased and complicated. See, for example, Hovinheimo 2004, 284 and Lindström 1964, 310.

²⁰ Koho 2003, 73.

²¹ Gallen-Kallela-Sirén 2001a, 71.

²² Konttinen 2001, 280–286.

- ²³ Panneaus were painted by Albert Edelfelt, Magnus Enckell, Juho Rissanen, Pekka Halonen, Väinö Blomstedt, Albert Gebhard, and Venny Soldan-Brofeldt. *Ibid.*, 283.
- ²⁴ Gallen-Kallela-Sirén 2001b, 282.
- ²⁵ Berggren 1999, 562–563.
- ²⁶ Huuhtanen 1984, 129–143.
- ²⁷ Cohen 2002, 11–12.
- ²⁸ Quoted in Willsdon 2000, 169; See McKay 2002, 20.
- ²⁹ McKay 2002, 21.
- ³⁰ Cohen 2002, 11–12; Hedström 2004, 59, 289. In Belgium, the association *L'Art Public* promoted art not only for schools but for public spaces more widely. Hedström 2004, 59.
- ³¹ *Art in the Classroom* 1953, 2.
- ³² Konttinen 2001, 120–121; Konttinen 1996, 310–312. The painter Hanna Cederholm had written in 1904 in *Hufvudstadsbladet* suggesting for the establishing of a similar association as in Sweden for Finland. Konttinen 1996, 309–310.
- ³³ Konttinen s.a. AFSA. Juhani Aho was known as Johannes Brofeldt until 1907. It was customary among the Fennomans to adopt Finnish names.
- ³⁴ Tuomikoski-Leskelä 1979, 272.
- ³⁵ Konttinen 1996, 311. Konttinen quotes Antti J. Aho, 1951. *Juhani Aho: Elämä ja teokset. Jälkimmäinen osa*. This donation has not been recorded in the papers of the association, while other smaller donations were. The value of mark is converted to equal the value of euro in 2008. Tilastokeskus, accessed 16.10.2009.
- ³⁶ Annual report 1912; Konttinen s.a. AFSA; Somerkivi 1977, 362.
- ³⁷ Konttinen s.a. AFSA.
- ³⁸ Stjernschantz 1907, 16–17.
- ³⁹ Konttinen s.a. AFSA.
- ⁴⁰ In 1948, the membership fee for schools was 200 marks (8 euros) and for individuals 50 marks (2 euros). (Annual report 1948. AFSA.) In 1959 the membership fee for schools was 800 marks (18 euros). EL. “Valtionapu poistettiin Taidetta Kouluihin ry:ltä.” *AL* 22.2.1959.
- ⁴¹ The state subsidy was, after the war, raised to 200,000 marks (14,440 euros in 1946), and in 1955 and 1956 the subsidy was 400,000 (11,000 euros in 1956). In 1957 the subsidy was nearly halved to 250,000 and, in 1958, it was cut off. Tiirakari 2007, 377; Ministry of Education to State Treasury 22.1.1947 and 12.4.1947. AFSA.
- ⁴² For schools in Helsinki, the association commissioned paintings by Pekka Halonen (1906, Töölö School), Verner Thomé (1912, Ratakatu School), Yrjö Ollila (1914, Tehtaankatu School), Marcus Collin (1922, Topeliuksenkatu School), Alvar Cawén (1929, Kaisaniemi School), Anton Lindfors and Alvar Cawén (1934, Finnish Normal Lyceum), and Erik Enroth (1949, Swedish Lyceum, now Lönkan School). Outside Helsinki, the association donated public paintings to Tammela School in Tampere (by Verner Thomé in 1929) and to Jakobstad (Pietarsaari) High School (by Gösta Diehl in 1931).
- ⁴³ T. Stz [Torsten Stjernschantz]. “Pekka Halonens nya tafla.” *HBL* 22.2.1907. Translation JR.
- ⁴⁴ Lukkarinen 2007, 57–63.
- ⁴⁵ See page 236.
- ⁴⁶ “Förening ‘Konstverk till skolan’ och herr Halonens tafla.” *HBL* 18.2.1907.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ T. “Föreningen ‘Konstverk till skolan’.” *Nya Pressen* 24.2.1907.
- ⁴⁹ Bestyrelsen för Föreningen Konstverk till Skolan. “Föreningen Konstverk till Skolan.” *Nya Pressen* 26.2.1907.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁵¹ Tiirakari 2007, 348.
- ⁵² T. Stz [Torsten Stjernschantz]. “Pekka Halonens nya tafla.” *HBL* 22.2.1907. Ville Lukkarinen (2007, 94) has assessed that this explanation was mediated from the artist himself.
- ⁵³ T. Stz [Torsten Stjernschantz]. “Pekka Halonens nya tafla.” *HBL* 22.2.1907.
- ⁵⁴ Art inventory card 198K/213/1. HAM. See image in Somerkivi 1977, 347.
- ⁵⁵ Simpanen 1997, 80.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 80–84.
- ⁵⁷ The paintings were *Sieniretki* (Mushroom trip, 1925) by Martta Helminen, *Porotokka* (Reindeer herd, 1927) by Gabriel Engberg, and *Veneen vetäjät* (Pulling the boat, 1929) by Kalle Löytänä. Rossi 1950, 294–297.
- ⁵⁸ Tarjanne 1998, 70.
- ⁵⁹ Hovinheimo 2004, 83; Lukkarinen 2007, 94.
- ⁶⁰ S. F. [Sigurd Frosterus]. “Magnus Enckells panneau i Universitetsbiblioteket.” *Helsingfors Posten* 27.3.1904.
- ⁶¹ Okkonen 1955, 673–677. See Kalha 2005 on how the colourist painting of Magnus Enckell has systematically been undervalued in comparison to his pre-1910 production.
- ⁶² Högström 1996, 44–47. According to Hilka Högström, the painting was hung after the opening of the restaurant in 1922. Yet, it is not seen in a postcard dated from 1927.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 17.
- ⁶⁴ The artists pondered were Hugo Simberg, Juho Rissanen, Magnus Enckell, Wilho Sjöström, Yrjö Ollila, Antti Favén, Eero Järnefelt, and Verner Thomé. Annual report 1912. AFSA.
- ⁶⁵ Saarikivi 1955, 27–28.
- ⁶⁶ Valkonen, O. 1985, 21; Pennanen 1988, 56. The grand stone castle on Kasarminkatu 40 now houses a nightclub. Nylands Nation, husets historia, accessed 11.2.2010.
- ⁶⁷ Anttonen 2006, 55. Ludvig Wennervirta had a significant role in creating this understanding.

- ⁶⁸ Okkonen 1945, 307.
- ⁶⁹ H. T-t. [Heikki Tandefelt]. “Thomé’s nya väggmålning.” *Dagens Tidning* 17.9.1912.
- ⁷⁰ In 1912, the gathered interests of Ärts’ bequest were taken out the first time. Also the next commission was funded with Ärt’s bequest. Annual reports 1912 and 1914. AFSA.
- ⁷¹ H. T-t. [Heikki Tandefelt]. “Thomé’s nya väggmålning.” *Dagens Tidning* 17.9.1912. See Ojanperä 2001a on the painting series of bathing boys.
- ⁷² Puokka 1949, 123.
- ⁷³ See also Kalha 2005, 90, 122–123.
- ⁷⁴ E. R-r [Edward Richter]. “Taidetta kouluihin.” *HS* 15.9.1912. There is a photograph by Signe Brander (1913) where the painting is partly visible in its original location in a gymnastic hall. It was hung fairly low on the long wall of the hall, with a central but also vulnerable position. Image in Makkonen 2004, 33.
- ⁷⁵ Annual report 1914. AFSA.
- ⁷⁶ Tarjanne 1998, 42–44. See Ashby 2007 on the Finnish banking architecture at the turn of the 20th century.
- ⁷⁷ Lindström 1964, 308–309. The premises were sold to the City of Helsinki in 1961. Eeva Järvenpää. “Privatbankenin pankkisalista tuli Jugendsali.” *HS* 6.5.2006. Currently the location houses a café.
- ⁷⁸ Okkonen quoted in Elmgren-Heinonen 1943, 103.
- ⁷⁹ Nieminen 2006, 195.
- ⁸⁰ Ilvas 1989, 16–17. The work was destroyed in 1962–63. The painting is visible in a photograph from 1912, which is the basis for the dating of the work. Alanen is mainly recognised as a Kalevala artist, with an interest towards the decorative painting and crafts, such as rugs. See Ilmonen 1973 and Ollikainen 2009.
- ⁸¹ Ilmonen 1973, 96; Joenniemi 1975, 20.
- ⁸² Ilvas 1989, 10–11, 16.
- ⁸³ Anttonen 2006, 59.
- ⁸⁴ Facos 2003, 236–238.
- ⁸⁵ Hentilä 1999, 91–94; Hoppu 2008b, 176. See also Ruohonen 2011b, where I have discussed the themes of this chapter.
- ⁸⁶ Eloranta & Kauppila 2006, 231–232.
- ⁸⁷ Alapuro 1998, 9–10.
- ⁸⁸ Tarjamo and Karonen 2006, 387.
- ⁸⁹ Sevänen 1998, 308. For a short period earlier, in 1927, the government of Väinö Tanner had been formed only by the Social Democratic Party. Valtioneuvosto, accessed 22.2.2010.
- ⁹⁰ Aguilar 1999, 86.
- ⁹¹ Peltonen 2003, 236–243; Kormanen 2001, 34.
- ⁹² Kormanen 2001, 36–37.
- ⁹³ Reitala 1973, 2; Viljo 2001, 20.
- ⁹⁴ Peltonen 2003, 222.
- ⁹⁵ Viljo 2001, 5–6, 19–25.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19–21.
- ⁹⁷ See, for example, Kallenautio 2007, 6–8, 16–18.
- ⁹⁸ Amberg 1998, 106.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid.* See also Niinikoski 2001, 90.
- ¹⁰⁰ Anttonen 2006, 24.
- ¹⁰¹ Joenniemi 1975.
- ¹⁰² Nummelin 1978, 285.
- ¹⁰³ Joenniemi 1975, 20.
- ¹⁰⁴ See Ruohonen 2011b, 212–214.
- ¹⁰⁵ Hakala-Zilliacus 2002, 217, 321.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 272–274, 321–323.
- ¹⁰⁷ Hakala 1994, 29–30. See e.g. E. R-r [Edward Richter]. “Eduskuntatalon veistoskilpailu ratkaistiin eilen.” *HS* 21.5.1930. The commission had been negotiated with Aaltonen prior to the competition. Hakala 1994, 25–27.
- ¹⁰⁸ Jury minutes 1930, §2. FP.
- ¹⁰⁹ E. R-r [Edward Richter]. “Eduskuntatalon maalauskilpailu.” *HS* 25.2.1930.
- ¹¹⁰ Jury minutes 1930, §4. FP.
- ¹¹¹ Lindgren 1996, 149.
- ¹¹² Hakala-Zilliacus 2002, 217–220. The sketches were not systematically photographed but some photos have been presented in the newspapers. The titles are listed in the jury minutes. Jury minutes 1930, §3. FP.
- ¹¹³ Hakala-Zilliacus 2002, 321.
- ¹¹⁴ Jury minutes 1930, §7. FP; “Monumentaalimaalaus istuntosaliin ratkaistiin eilen.” *HS* 19.2.1930.
- ¹¹⁵ The jury was formed by architects Onni Tarjanne, Lars Sonck and J. S. Sirén representing the building committee in the jury, and painters Gabriel Engberg and Ilmari Aalto representing the Finnish Artists’ Association. Hakala-Zilliacus 2002, 217–220.
- ¹¹⁶ Jury minutes 1930, §7. FP.
- ¹¹⁷ Hakala-Zilliacus 2002, 220–221.
- ¹¹⁸ O. O-n. [Onni Okkonen]. “Eduskuntatalon maalauskilpailu.” *US* 28.2.1930.
- ¹¹⁹ E. R-r [Edvard Richter]. “Eduskuntatalon maalauskilpailu.” *HS* 25.2.1930.
- ¹²⁰ Painters’ Union to the Building Committee of the Parliament House [1930]. FP; “Eduskuntatalon maalauskilpailu: vastalause sanomalehtien arvostelijoille.” *US* 22.3.1930.
- ¹²¹ “Eduskuntatalon maalauskilpailu: vastalause sanomalehtien arvostelijoille.” *US* 22.3.1930.
- ¹²² E. R-r [Edvard Richter]. “Eduskuntatalon maalauskilpailu.” *HS* 25.2.1930.
- ¹²³ “Målarna mot arkitekterna.” *Svenska Pressen* 19.2.1930; O. O-n [Onni Okkonen] “Eduskuntatalon maalauskilpailu.” *US* 28.2.1930.
- ¹²⁴ Vihanta 2000, 358.
- ¹²⁵ Anttonen 2006, 85, 96.
- ¹²⁶ Hirn 1996, 118–120.

- ¹²⁷ Bäcksbäcka 1943, 43; Ojanperä 2001b, 140–141; Laurila Hakulinen 1997, 20.
- ¹²⁸ Hyvinkää, Elokuvatheateri Arena, accessed 10.2.2010; Hyvinkään taidemuseo, accessed 27.4.2012.
- ¹²⁹ Tarjanne 1998, 67; Kulmanen 2011, accessed 14.5.2012.
- ¹³⁰ Koho 2003, 67–83. The artists working on the frescoes were Väinö Hervo, Rudolf Koivu, Erkki Kulovesi, Yrjö Ollila, Oskari Paatela, and Bruno Tuukkanen.
- ¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 107.
- ¹³² S. [Sigrid Schauman]. “Plafondmålningarna.” *Svenska Pressen* 27.4.1932. See Kontinen 2010, 162–164.
- ¹³³ Koho 2003, 99; Tarjanne 1998, 133.
- ¹³⁴ Säteri 1983, 28–30.
- ¹³⁵ Karjalainen 1990, 38–40.
- ¹³⁶ Hämäläinen-Forslund 1999, 58; see also Nummelin 1978, 285.
- ¹³⁷ Kauria 1971, Kauria 1983. Pirkko Kauria’s archives; Kauria files. Design Museum.
- ¹³⁸ Högström 1999, 24; “Alvar Aalto, Paimion Parantola 1928–1933,” accessed 9.6.2010.
- ¹³⁹ Säteri 1983, 24; Ericsson 1983, 11–12.
- ¹⁴⁰ Anttonen 2006, 72.
- ¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 64–71, 81–83; Karjalainen 1990, 26–27.
- ¹⁴² Anttonen 2006, 83.
- ¹⁴³ Hannikainen & Heikkinen 2006, 176; Eloranta & Kaupilla 2006, 224.
- ¹⁴⁴ Hjerpe & Jalava 2006, 42–43.
- ¹⁴⁵ Valkonen, O. 1985, 36–37; see also Ilvas 1989, 26.
- ¹⁴⁶ National Council for Visual Arts 25.2.1931, appendix 3; 31.3.1932 §5. NCVA.
- ¹⁴⁷ Kontinen 1996, 309.
- ¹⁴⁸ Kontinen s.a. AFSA.
- ¹⁴⁹ Alanko 1935. AFSA. Translation JR. Later that year, Alanko published a slightly reformulated version of the speech in the right-wing publication *Välvoja-Aika* (no 4), with the title “Taiteemme tulevaisuus” (The future of our art).
- ¹⁵⁰ Alanko 1935. AFSA.
- ¹⁵¹ Kilpailu Suomen Taiteilijoille (Competition for Finnish Artists), 2.12.1932. AFSA.
- ¹⁵² Annual report 1933. AFSA.
- ¹⁵³ Art for School Association 26.9.1928, §1. AFSA.
- ¹⁵⁴ “Normaalilyseon seinämaalauskilpailu.” *HS* 18.4.1933.
- ¹⁵⁵ “Yhdistyksen Taidetta kouluihin puheenjohtajan Uuno Alangon puhe Suomalaisessa Normaalilyseossa [...]” (Speech by Uuno Alanko at the Finnish Normal School) [1934]. AFSA.
- ¹⁵⁶ Division of Art 26.10.1932, §2; 15.12.1932, §10. AKF.
- ¹⁵⁷ Division of Art 22.10.1934, §2; 26.10.1934, §1. AKF.
- ¹⁵⁸ Kilpailu Suomen taiteilijoille (Competition call), 2.12.1932. AFSA; Division of Art 26.10.1934, appendix; Art for Schools Association to Kordelin Foundation, 30.11.1934. AKF.
- ¹⁵⁹ Division of Art 1.2.1926, §3. AKF.
- ¹⁶⁰ Division of Art 12.5.1926, §2. In the monumental painting competitions of 1935 and 1938, the awarded sketches were included in the art collection of the foundation. AKF.
- ¹⁶¹ Annual report 1929, 1. AKF.
- ¹⁶² Annual report 1937, 16–17; Annual report 1938, 14–15. AKF.
- ¹⁶³ The title *Rest* is used by Lindström (1964, 325–326), *By the fire* by the Helsinki Art Museum.
- ¹⁶⁴ Lindström 1964, 325–326; Linder 1999, 81. The Women’s Hospital is located in the Meilahti Hospital Area of the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS).
- ¹⁶⁵ Karjalainen 1999, 16; See also Kallio 1999.
- ¹⁶⁶ National Council for Visual Arts 12.4.1929, appendix 4. NCVA.
- ¹⁶⁷ National Council for Visual Arts 23.3.1934, appendix 5. NCVA.
- ¹⁶⁸ Valkonen M. 1985, 7.
- ¹⁶⁹ E. g. Bäcksbäcka 1960; See also Hallikainen 2007, 102. Sallinen realised also another public painting, *Kyntäjä* (Ploughman), for the Savings Bank of Hyvinkää in 1949. The painting is a depiction of agrarian work in monumental size, but disregarding the compositional expectations of monumentality.
- ¹⁷⁰ Saarikivi 1960, 22–23. The commission of the Freemasons is not characteristically “public painting”: it is not monumental in size, and the Grand Lodge of the Freemasons is a private club with a restricted entrance policy. The racial characters of the figures in the painting Sallinen delivered for the Freemasons raised a controversy. As a consequence, the banker and art collector (and freemason) Ane Gyllenberg bought the first triptych and Sallinen painted a new version for the Freemasons with figures with slightly softer features. Häme 2006, 52–53.
- ¹⁷¹ “Taiteilija Mäkelän freskon paljastus keskuskansakoulussa eilen.” *Kaleva* 4.10.1936.
- ¹⁷² “Kuinka uudelle koululle saatiin fresco.” *Kaleva* 9.10.1936.
- ¹⁷³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷⁴ “Taiteilija Mäkelän freskon paljastus keskuskansakoulussa eilen.” *Kaleva* 4.10.1936.
- ¹⁷⁵ “Satu Koivusta ja tähdestä Mäkelän freskomaalauksena.” [---] 3.10.1936. Press cutting collections of Oulu Art Museum; “Fresko on valmis ja paikoillaan.” *Kaleva* 4.10.1936.
- ¹⁷⁶ “Oulun keskuskansakoulu sai eilen suojiinsa kauniin freskon.” *Liitto* 4.10.1936.
- ¹⁷⁷ “Kuinka uudelle koululle saatiin fresco.” *Kaleva* 9.10.1936. Translation JR.

- ¹⁷⁸ “Maalarinkisällistä Pohjanmaan lakeuksien kuvaajaksi.” *Seura* n:o 20, 1936; “Fresko on valmis ja paikoillaan.” *Kaleva* 4.10.1936.
- ¹⁷⁹ *Norjan uudempaa monumenttaalimaalaustaidetta* [sic] 1937; “Monumentaalitaide on kansakunnan taidekulttuuritahdon näkyvä ilmaus.” *Karjalainen* 16.1.1938; “Nya uppgifter för bildkonsten.” *HBL* 1.11.1938; N-i T. “Norjalaiset Taidehallissa.” *Kirjallisuuslehti* n:o 3, 3.11.1938.
- ¹⁸⁰ Vingt-et-un. “Norskt i Konsthallen.” *HBL* 5.4.1937. See Uusikylä 1996, 78.
- ¹⁸¹ Ylimartamo & Uusikylä (2005) list 13 religious frescoes. See also Uusikylä 1996, 94–97.
- ¹⁸² Uusikylä 1996, 65–75.
- ¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 77–80; Jaakkola 2006, 55–56. The library is now a part of the Art Museum of the Gösta Serlachius Fine Arts Foundation.
- ¹⁸⁴ See images in Pitkänen 1997, 52–63.
- ¹⁸⁵ See Golan 2009, 123–162.
- ¹⁸⁶ “Monumentaalitaide on kansakunnan taidekulttuuritahdon näkyvä ilmaus.” *Karjalainen* 16.1.1938.
- ¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸⁸ “Vetoamus.” *US* 1.11.1938.
- ¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* The Percent for Art program means that a percentage—often between 0,5 and 2—of building costs is allocated to the artistic decoration of the building in question. See Kekäläinen 2010 on the application of the program in Finland.
- ¹⁹⁰ Koroma 1951, 4.
- ¹⁹¹ Association of Finnish Fine Arts Foundations, accessed 16.4.2012.
- ¹⁹² “Vetoamus.” *US* 1.11.1938. For example the Social Democratic minister Väinö Tanner and the Member of the Parliament Väinö Hakkila signed the petition.
- ¹⁹³ “Sotamarsalkka Mannerheimin ratsastajapatsas.” *US* 12.4.1938; “Kansalliskeräys Mannerheimin patsaan pystyttämiseksi.” *HS* 26.4.1938. Those who were on both lists were Oskari Mantere, Jacob von Julin, Mauri Honkajuuri, R. Walden, John Grundström, Risto Ryti, G. Serlachius, E. Erkkö, Amos Andersson, Alexander Frey, M. R. Palojärvi, and S. J. Pentti.
- ¹⁹⁴ “Kansalliskeräys Mannerheimin patsaan pystyttämiseksi.” *HS* 26.4.1938.
- ¹⁹⁵ “Ratsastajapatsas.” *IS* 6.4.1938.
- ¹⁹⁶ National Council for Visual Arts 4.5.1938, appendix 9. NCVA. Translation JR.
- ¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹⁸ “Monumentalmålningar i Fiskars.” *HBL* 17.12.1938.
- ¹⁹⁹ E. R-r [Edvard Richter]. “Maalauskilpailuluonnokset Kivelän sairaalaa varten.” *HS* 11.12.1938.
- ²⁰⁰ E. “Kivelän sairaalan seinämaalauskilpailu.” *US* 8.12.1938.
- ²⁰¹ The school and the painting have moved to new premises in Etelä-Haaga in 1972.
- ²⁰² Hovinheimo 2007, 50.
- ²⁰³ Reitala 1990, 243; see also Okkonen 1945, 345.
- ²⁰⁴ Anttonen 2006, 96.

4. Public Painting in the Reconstruction

- ¹ Tepora 2008, 104–105.
- ² Raivo 2000, 156.
- ³ Reitala 1975, 13–14.
- ⁴ The German relations have been especially problematic in the Finnish history writing and public discourse. Contemporary research has, however, opened up questions that have previously been passed over in silence. See, for example, Silvennoinen 2008 and Näre & Kirves 2008.
- ⁵ Raivo 2000, 155.
- ⁶ Merridale 1999, 62.
- ⁷ Kormano 2001, 38.
- ⁸ Peltonen 2003, 235; Tepora 2008, 104–105.
- ⁹ Lindgren 2000, 197–198.
- ¹⁰ Kotkavaara 2009, 40.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 67.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 79–80.
- ¹³ Pettersson 1944, 7.
- ¹⁴ Belik 2009, 94, 101–103.
- ¹⁵ Kotkavaara 2009, 67.
- ¹⁶ “‘Valkoinen kenraali takaisin Suomeen’: Antti Favénin kallisarvoinen maalaus Suomen upseeriliitolle.” *US* 26.9.1954.
- ¹⁷ See Hoppu 2008a.
- ¹⁸ The controversial nature of the history of Mannerheim was, for example, exploited in the Soviet propaganda for the Finnish soldiers. Kirves 2008a, 28.
- ¹⁹ “‘Valkoinen kenraali takaisin Suomeen’: Antti Favénin kallisarvoinen maalaus Suomen upseeriliitolle.” *US* 26.9.1954; “‘Mannerheimin päämaja 1918’ Upseeriliiton hallintaan.” [---] 1954. The press cutting archive of the Central Art Archives, Helsinki.
- ²⁰ See Kontinen 1989 on the monument, and Hirvonen 2004 on its reception in the leftist newspapers.
- ²¹ Kormano 2001, 40.
- ²² Lindgren 2000, 205–209.
- ²³ Kormano 2001, 40, 46–47.
- ²⁴ See also Ruohonen 2011b, 216–218.
- ²⁵ See Reitala 1983, 142–144.
- ²⁶ Segerstråle 1943, 4.
- ²⁷ Reitala 1983, 144.
- ²⁸ Segerstråle 1944, 8.
- ²⁹ Reitala 1983, 144. See also Segerstråle 1944, 11–12.

- ³⁰ Segerstråle 1944, 26–27.
- ³¹ Okkonen 1945, 340.
- ³² Nummelin 1978, 289.
- ³³ Reitala 1993, 80.
- ³⁴ Kruskopf 1990, 83.
- ³⁵ Ahto 1980, 10–11.
- ³⁶ Karonen 2006, 20.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ³⁸ “Myös henkistä jälleenrakennusta suoritetaan täällä tarmokkaasti.” *Pohjolan Sanomat* 20.10.1953.
- ³⁹ Nätkin 2002, 176–178; Karisto 2005, 20–22.
- ⁴⁰ Vehviläinen 2002, 70, 113, 157–158. In Finland, the burden was \$80 per capita, while in Hungary it was \$30 and Romania \$15. After the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947, and the warming up of the Finnish relationships with the old adversary, the Soviet Union abolished half of what was left of the reparations. (Nummela 1993, 183, 187.) Unlike many European countries, Finland did not receive Marshall Plan assistance. Vehviläinen 2002, 163.
- ⁴¹ Tepora 2008, 112.
- ⁴² Helamaa 1983, 66–67; Nummela 1993, 121–123, 129, 140.)
- ⁴³ Nummela 1993, 122–124, 130–131; Ursin 1980, 47, 333. Also different statistics have been presented, where the numbers for Rovaniemi have been a “mere” 74% for the rural district of Rovaniemi, and 87% for the town, meaning 653 buildings. (Runtti 1997, 339.) 90% of road bridges were destroyed, and most of railway bridges. (*Ibid.*, 342.)
- ⁴⁴ As throughout the complex issue of studying war and art, there is an ethical issue in concentrating on the losses of artistic artefacts while also human life has been lost. My choice is not to undervalue the losses of human life. Instead, as Dickran Tashjian (1996, 716) has argued, “the loss of life [...] is tied to the loss of culture and the forms of expression that make us human.” Concentrating only on life itself would be a loss of profound cultural values.
- ⁴⁵ Kuusamon kirkot, accessed 31.5.2010.
- ⁴⁶ Wessman 1997, 32; Sund 2000.
- ⁴⁷ Heinämies s.a., accessed 11.6.2010.
- ⁴⁸ “Yliopiston juhlasali ei kaippaa lisäkoristelua.” *IS* 27.3.1948.
- ⁴⁹ General Assembly of the Painters’ Union 3.3.1959, §5; 2.2.1960, §7. PU.
- ⁵⁰ “Kopioko Edelfeltin seinämaalauksesta Yliopiston juhlasaliin?” *Sosialidemokraatti* 5.3.1959
- ⁵¹ Hustich 1946, 126. Translation JR.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 14.
- ⁵³ Runtti 1997, 346–348, 354–355.
- ⁵⁴ Ursin 1980, 334.
- ⁵⁵ Runtti 1997, 354.
- ⁵⁶ Ursin 1980, 197. In 1946, when the reconstruction plan was revised, the updated sum of 548 million marks equalled only 39.5 million euros. Due to the severe inflation, the value of money changed fast. Tilastokeskus, accessed 16.10.2009.
- ⁵⁷ “Lääninhallitus sijoittuu uuteen taloonsa.” *Lapin Kansa* 2.12.1947.
- ⁵⁸ In the collections of the Regional Museum of Lapland, there is a photograph by Pekka Kyytinen from the 1950s where the large decoration is visible. I thank Päivi Rahikainen from the Regional Museum of Lapland for bringing this to my attention.
- ⁵⁹ The paintings have been photographed by Mauno Mannelin in 1948. *Talojen tarinat* database 2003, Regional Museum of Lapland.
- ⁶⁰ Onni Oja to Sodankylä Municipality 5.6.1949; Sodankylä Municipal Council 7.6.1949, §8. SMA.
- ⁶¹ Sodankylä Municipal Council 28.6.1949, §13. SMA.
- ⁶² Sodankylä Municipal Council 27.9.1949, §23. SMA.
- ⁶³ Poutvaara 1951, 11; Rautanen 22.12.2010. The *Sallansuu* painting has been relocated in Kemi and the *Pohjanpirtti* painting damaged beyond repair. Hovinheimo 19.9.2010.
- ⁶⁴ “PYP:n Rovaniemen konttori saanut suurikokoisen monumentaalimaalauksen [sic] pankkisaliin.” *Lapin Kansa* 11.11.1950.
- ⁶⁵ According to Nummela (1993, 157), 120 schools were destroyed in Lapland. Paula Tuomikoski (1970, 71) states that 46 schools were planned to be reconstructed in 1947–48.
- ⁶⁶ The painting is signed A. Salmenlinna and P. Leinonen, and in the art inventory card of the Rovaniemi Art Museum, the second artist has been recorded as Pekka Leinonen. Based on the continuing collaboration between Salmenlinna and Paavo Leinonen, this can be assumed as mistaken. See Hanka 1995, 36 and Junttila 1995, 27–38.
- ⁶⁷ Hautajärvi 1994, 65–66.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 71; Lukkarinen 1998, 77–87.
- ⁶⁹ Hautala-Hirvioja 1999, 130, 150, 153.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 61–63.
- ⁷¹ See Elo 2004, 48–49.
- ⁷² Ylimartamo & Uusikylä 2005, 62.
- ⁷³ Toikka-Karvonen 1953, 4–5.
- ⁷⁴ E. R-r. [Edvard Richter]. “Tyttönormaalilyseon freskomaalaus.” *HS* 14.10.1947. See also Saarikivi 1945, Saarikivi 1947, and “Pieni nainen suuren työn ääressä” 1947.
- ⁷⁵ S. [Sigrid Schauman]. “Höstens monumentalmålningar I.” *Nya Pressen* 31.10.1947.
- ⁷⁶ “Kauppakorkeakoulun ylioppilaskunnan seinämaalauskilpailun tulos” 1945, 173.
- ⁷⁷ Rautiainen 14.6.2010.
- ⁷⁸ “Kauppakorkeakoulun ylioppilaskunnan seinämaalauskilpailun tulos” 1945, 173. The artist members of the jury were Lennart Segerstråle and Uno Alanko.
- ⁷⁹ Karjalainen 2007, 24; S. [Sigrid Schauman]. “Monumentalmåleriet II.” *Nya Pressen* 11.11.1947.
- ⁸⁰ See pages 220–225.

- ⁸¹ Hienonen 1983, 38.
- ⁸² Kilpailu Suomen Taiteilijoille (Competition call) 22.11.1947; “Yhdistyksen taidetta kouluihin” maalauskilpailu [1948]; Annual report 1948. AFSA. Enroth was paid 100,000 (4,100 euros in 1948) for the execution.
- ⁸³ Lennart Segerstråle to Hilikka Toivola 31.7.1947. Quoted in Hujala 2006, 106.
- ⁸⁴ See pages 197–200.
- ## 5. A Joint Effort
- ¹ Nummela 1993, 290–291, 302.
- ² Eloranta & Kauppila 2006, 219.
- ³ Hjerpe & Jalava 2006, 62–63.
- ⁴ Ibid., 46–47; Eloranta & Kauppila 2006, 235. The European level refers to the GDP of the fifteen countries that comprised the European Union in 1995–2004.
- ⁵ Helin 2002, 543–544.
- ⁶ Eloranta & Kauppila 2006, 220.
- ⁷ Häkkinen et al. 2005, 76–77; Kela, Äitiysavustuksen historiaa, accessed 24.6.2010.
- ⁸ Kettunen 2006, 300–302.
- ⁹ Ålander 1945, 6–7.
- ¹⁰ Pusa 1982 [1945], 18.
- ¹¹ *Kuva: taidelehti* (Picture: Art magazine) was published in 1937–54; *Taiteen maailma* (The world of art) in 1945–53. *Taide* was published by Kustannusaitta in 1945–52, and from 1960 by the Finnish Artists’ Association. An important publication was also the *Suomen taiteen vuosikirja* (The yearbook of Finnish art), published in 1943–47, and again from 1953 onwards. The yearbooks were published first by WSOY and from 1970 by the Finnish Artists’ Association.
- ¹² Mantere 1946, 11. Translation JR.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Kara. “Yksityisten mesenaattien aika on ohi, yhteiskunnan on astuttava tilalle.” *TS* 25.3.1949.
- ¹⁵ Koroma 1951, 4.
- ¹⁶ K. “Tikanojan taidekodin luovutustilaisuus Vaasassa.” *US* 23.12.1951.
- ¹⁷ “Maamme toinen kunnallinen taidemuseo avattiin H:linnassa.” *Hämeen Kansa* 25.5.1952.
- ¹⁸ “Hämeenlinnan taidemuseo.” *Hämeen Kansa* 24.5.1952; “Maamme toinen kunnallinen taidemuseo avattiin H:linnassa.” *Hämeen Kansa* 25.5.1952.
- ¹⁹ “Taidemuseo symbolisoi karjalaisten ja hämäläisten yhteistoimintaa.” *Hämeen Sanomat* 25.5.1952.
- ²⁰ Tampere Artists’ Association to Tampere City Council 10.1.1946. NYMU.
- ²¹ Tampere Artists’ Association to the Tampere City Board 9.3.1950. NYMU.
- ²² Simpanen 1992, 120–122.
- ²³ Turku City Board 18.11.1952, §1270, appendix 1. Turku CA.
- ²⁴ Helsinki City Board 25.11.1954, §3175, appendix 1. Helsinki CA.
- ²⁵ Helsinki City Art Committee 18.3.1955. HAM.
- ²⁶ Turku City Board 11.1.1955, §68, appendix 1 [Finnish Artists’ Association 30.11.1954]. Turku CA.
- ²⁷ Helsinki City Board 25.11.1954, §3175, appendix 3 [Directive of the Helsinki City Art Committee]. Helsinki CA.
- ²⁸ National Council for Visual Arts 1.3.1957, §5. NCVA. The activities of the association ended in 1980, and it was officially terminated in 1989. Konttinen s.a. AFSA; Tiirakari 2007, 378.
- ²⁹ Harisalo et al. 2007, 86; Kolbe 2002, 40–43.
- ³⁰ Kolbe 2002, 18–21.
- ³¹ Harisalo et al. 2007, 86–87.
- ³² Kolbe 2002, 13–17.
- ³³ Painters’ Union to its members 23.2.1953, PU. Translation JR.
- ³⁴ Ibid.
- ³⁵ Ibid.; Painters’ Union to the Jenni and Antti Wihuri Foundation 7.7.1953, PU; “Innostuneita freskomaalareita Meilahden uuden koulun suojissa.” *US* 31.5.1953.
- ³⁶ Painters’ Union to the Helsinki City Board 21.3.1952. PU; Helsinki City Board 12.2.1953, n:o 8, §469; appendixes 1, 2, 3. Helsinki CA.
- ³⁷ “Pienoisfresko sopii myös yksityiskotiin: 17 taiteilijaa freskomaalauksilla.” *HS* 15.11.1957.
- ³⁸ Tolvanen 1956, 120; “Turkulaisilla taiteilijoilla maan ensimmäiset freskokurssit.” *Uusi Aura* 12.11.1957. The title of the newspaper article claims the course in Turku as the first in the country, which, obviously, was not the case. See Saari 1980 on the proceedings of the fresco courses in Turku.
- ³⁹ The locations for competitions were Aurora Hospital, Myllykallio School, Vocational School for Boys, Käpylä School, and Taivallahti School.
- ⁴⁰ “Taideteoksia Helsingin julkisiin rakennuksiin.” *HS* 11.5.1956.
- ⁴¹ Tampere Artists’ Association, annual report 1949–50; Tampere City Board 15.2.1950, §103, appendix 93 (agenda); 8.5.1950. NYMU.
- ⁴² Tampere City Art Committee 14.1.1953, §5; 29.1.1953, §4.
- ⁴³ Tampere City Art Committee to the Painters’ Union 6.12.1956. PU.
- ⁴⁴ Tampere City Art Committee 12.2.1959, §1. Tampere CA; “Suurikokoinen taideteos hankitaan Tampereen kaupungille.” *AL* 31.1.1962.
- ⁴⁵ The competitions were for Koukkuniemi Retirement Home in 1962, Sampola School in 1964 and Tesomajärvi School in 1966–67.

- ⁴⁶ The following public painting competition after 1967 was arranged in 1990 for the Tampere House. Kaipainen 2005. NYMU.
- ⁴⁷ Board of the Painters' Division of the Turku Artists' Association 8.11.1949; Painters' Division of the Turku Artists' Association 12.12.1949. Turku CA.
- ⁴⁸ The competitions were: in 1952 for Vasaramäki School, 1953 for the Turku Harbour, 1954 for Luolavuori Retirement Home, 1958 for Central Secondary (Purapelto) School, 1961 for Pääskytuori School, 1965 for the Workers' Institute, and in 1966 for Western Secondary (Rieskalähde) School. In 1973, a closed competition between three artists was arranged for Runosmäki Retirement Home.
- ⁴⁹ The first prize was given to Eero Hiironen, and two other paintings, by Hilikka Toivola and Viljo Suurhasko, were located in Luolavuori School and Kuuvuori Nursery, respectively. Turku City Board 2.3.1965, §582; 28.9.1965, §2337. Turku CA.
- ⁵⁰ The locations were Kypärämäki School in 1948 and Päivärinte Kindergarten in 1953; Aholaita Kindergarten in 1959, and Cygnaeus and Keljo Schools in 1963.
- ⁵¹ In 1952, Tauno Gröndahl painted a mural and a glass painting for the Niirala Kindergarten, funded with privately collected funds. -via. "Seinä- ja lasimaalaus Niiralan lastentalossa. [...] 2.2.1952. Kuopio Art Museum. Sinikka Miettinen (1992, 25) has recorded that Aappo Härkönen realised murals for the new childrens' department of the library in 1951.
- ⁵² "Tuiran keskikoulu saanut lahjana upean maalauksen." *Kaleva* 14.11.1955. The painting project for the Teuvo Pakkala School was organised by the Board of Schools. Board of Schools 24.4.1958, §69; 7.3.1959, §71. Oulu CA.
- ⁵³ T. E. K-n. "Mottilan baariin seinämosaiikki." *Koillis-Häme* 17.3.1959.
- ⁵⁴ Koroma 1956, 120; Koroma 1957, 114. In the inquiry, it was asked to list funds allocated for: 1. Grants, 2. Art purchases and commissions, 3. Art competitions, 4. Artists' associations, 5. Art societies, 6. Art clubs, 7. Artists' homes, 8. Art museums, 9. Art schools and courses, 10. Artists' ateliers, and 11. Other. Letter from the Finnish Artists' Association to municipalities 3.8.1956, PU.
- ⁵⁵ Koroma 1956, 120; Koroma 1957, 114. Vaasa came in fourth, right after Helsinki, with 12.8 million, and Lahti was fifth with 10.2 million marks.
- ⁵⁶ At the completion of the work, she was paid the amount that completed the fee of 380,000 marks (11,000 euros). Irja Soini, Contract of employment Irja Soini, Dn 194/ 5.3.1954. The Museum Centre of Turku.
- ⁵⁷ Koroma 1957, 112.
- ⁵⁸ Kekäläinen 2010, 50; Tampere City Art Committee 25.2.1965, §6; Jyväskylä City Art Committee 9.9.1970, n:o 5, §19. Jyväskylä CA; Junttila 1995, 67–68; Oulun taidemuseo / prosenttitaide Oulussa, accessed 17.4.2012.
- ⁵⁹ Turku City Board 11.1.1955, §68, appendix 1 [Finnish Artists' Association 30.11.1954]. Turku CA.
- ⁶⁰ Iisalo 1988, 174. Generally, in reference to names of the schools in this volume, the term "school" refers to *kansakoulu* elementary schools, while the names of the secondary schools have been translated to point out their nature: for example "coeducational school" for *yhteiskoulu*.
- ⁶¹ Kuikka 1991, 86–87.
- ⁶² Ahonen 2003, 10, 71–108.
- ⁶³ Ibid., 106–108.
- ⁶⁴ Iisalo 1988, 181.
- ⁶⁵ Jetsonen 1994a; Jetsonen 1994b, 45.
- ⁶⁶ Jetsonen 1994a, 52; Palva 1966, 120.
- ⁶⁷ In Turku, the number of pupils grew from 4,500 pupils in the school year 1944–45 to over 11,000 in the year 1955–56. (Annual reports 1944–1956. Board of Schools. Turku CA.) In Helsinki, the number tripled, from 14,550 in 1945 to nearly 36,000 in 1955. (Somerkivi 1977, 77.) These figures exclude the total number of children in the secondary schools.
- ⁶⁸ Somerkivi 1977, 338–340.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., 344–345.
- ⁷⁰ Helsingin seudun aluesarjat, accessed 28.7.2007. In 1970, Helsinki proper inhabited 221,000 people, whereas the population of Helsinki had grown to 523,700, close to the number it is today.
- ⁷¹ Schulman 2000, 25. See also Lahti 2006, 45–46, 62–64.
- ⁷² Norri 1994, 11.
- ⁷³ Jetsonen 1994b, 45.
- ⁷⁴ Somerkivi 1977, 339; Merenmies 1989, 62.
- ⁷⁵ Jetsonen 1994b, 46.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., 46–48; See also Jetsonen 1994a.
- ⁷⁷ Jetsonen 1994b, 46, 50.
- ⁷⁸ Ålander 1966, 30–33.
- ⁷⁹ Painters' Union to its members 23.2.1953, PU.
- ⁸⁰ E. R-r. [Edvard Richter], "Tyttönormaalilyseon freskomaalaus." *HS* 14.10.1947.
- ⁸¹ Turku City Board 18.11.1952, §1269, appendix 1. Turku CA.
- ⁸² State Art Commission to the National Board of Building 29.5.1968. SAC.
- ⁸³ State Art Commission 18.6.1956, appendix B. SAC.
- ⁸⁴ State Art Commission 13.10.1956, §4. SAC.
- ⁸⁵ State Art Commission 18.6.1956, appendix A. SAC.
- ⁸⁶ State Art Commission 13.10.1956, §2. SAC.
- ⁸⁷ State Art Commission 29.11.1956, §2. SAC.
- ⁸⁸ State Art Commission 4.11.1957, §2. SAC.
- ⁸⁹ Vionoja had painted altar paintings for Ullava Church in Kokkola (at 18 years of age in 1928, then Veikko Laine) and Haukivuori Church in Mikkeli (1950). The year of the competition (1957)

- he realised a painting for Kannus Central School. Huusko 2009, 152–154.
- ⁹⁰ State Art Commission 8.9.1959, §2. SAC.
- ⁹¹ Ahlgrén 27.9.2006.
- ⁹² State Art Commission 7.12.1957, §1. SAC.
- ⁹³ State Art Commission 8.7.1958, §1. SAC. Sculptures by Terho Sakki and Armas Tirronen were commissioned for school buildings in Lappeenranta and Savonlinna.
- ⁹⁴ Ahlgrén 27.9.2006. See also Karjalainen 1990, 112.
- ⁹⁵ Ahlgrén 27.9.2006.
- ⁹⁶ State Art Commission 9.11.1960, §7, appendix A. SAC.
- ⁹⁷ On Linnovaara's public paintings, see also Ruohonen 2011a, 116–119.
- ⁹⁸ See Wessman 1997, 101–103.
- ⁹⁹ State Art Commission 30.11.1960, §1. SAC.
- ¹⁰⁰ State Art Commission 1.11.1963, §1; 9.11.1963, §1; 4.1.1964, §5. SAC.
- ¹⁰¹ State Art Commission 22.11.1963, §1; 23.10.1964, §1. SAC.
- ¹⁰² See pages 233–242.
- ¹⁰³ State Art Commission to the National Board of Building 29.5.1968. SAC.
- ¹⁰⁴ “Taiteilijat tyytymättömiä valtion taidetoimikuntiin.” *HS* 20.1.1968.
- ¹⁰⁵ State Art Commission 31.12.1969, §2, appendix A. SAC.
- ¹⁰⁶ Later on higher education facilities and especially universities have become more emphasised. Ahmio 2009b, SAC.
- ¹⁰⁷ Harisalo et al. 2007, 155–156.
- ¹⁰⁸ Juholin 2003, 22.
- ¹⁰⁹ Davis 1960, quoted in Carroll 1999, 271.
- ¹¹⁰ These paintings were executed by Tauno Hämeranta (Rovaniemi, 1950), Yrjö Saarinen (Joensuu, 1950), Yngve Bäck (Kemi, 1950) Harry Henriksson (Turku, 1950) and Unto Pusa (Lahti, 1954). Further paintings were realised in 1954, for the head office in Helsinki by Tove Jansson, and by Olavi Laine for the Hämeenlinna branch, and by the same artist in 1955 for the Kuopio branch.
- ¹¹¹ Ilvas 1989, 30–36; Kohvakka-Viinanen 2012, 37–40.
- ¹¹² Ilvas 1996, 17; Ilvas 1989, 28.
- ¹¹³ “Taidetta pankkiin.” *Uusi Aura* 13.5.1956.
- ¹¹⁴ “Erkki Heikkilän seinämaalaus paljastettiin J. kylän Seudun Osuuskassassa.” *Keskisuomalainen*, 23.10.1960.
- ¹¹⁵ “Erkki Heikkilän maalaus paljastettiin Jyväskylän seudun Osuuskassassa.” *Jyväskylän Sanomat* 23.10.1960. Translation JR.
- ¹¹⁶ O. L. [Osmo Laine]. “Seinämaalaus paljastustilaisuus.” *TS* 11.4.1953. Currently the painting is located in the canteen of Inka Oy, Kyminkoski.
- ¹¹⁷ “Liikelaitokset luovan taiteemme tukena.” *TS* 1.11.1949.
- ¹¹⁸ Schauman 1994, 54.
- ¹¹⁹ See Valkonen 1992, 7.
- ¹²⁰ Leena Linnovaara 7.10.2010.
- ¹²¹ Soikkanen 1963, 727.
- ¹²² See Karjalainen 2007.
- ¹²³ Art Inventory Card appendixes, inv. n:o 484 (Sven Grönvall), Varkaus Art Museum; Linnovaara 2008, 141–144. The sketch belongs to the art collection of the Maire Gullichsen Art Foundation in Pori Art Museum.
- ¹²⁴ The process of acquiring the work is unknown. The work was “found” in 1969 in the storage of the department store. (Männistö 1969. Varkaus Art Museum.) In 1982 the work was donated to the city and placed in the Päiviönsaari School. Miettinen 26.10.2009.
- ¹²⁵ Gunvor Meinander to Katarina Dunér 20.1.1962, Sven Grönvall files. MPA. Commissioned for the General Director's office, the painting was not exactly “public”. Currently the painting is in storage.
- ¹²⁶ See also pages 200–201.
- ¹²⁷ Amberg 1998, 63.
- ¹²⁸ See page 148.
- ¹²⁹ From 1960, the church taxes have been collected together with general taxation. *Valtion ja kirkon taloudelliset suhteet* 1997, 8.
- ¹³⁰ Wessman 1997, 92.
- ¹³¹ See *Ibid.*, 93; Ylimartamo & Uusikylä 2005, 68–70; Valkonen 1992, 28–46.
- ¹³² During the 1950s, Lehtinen executed altarpieces for the churches of Lahti (1950), Pylkönmäki (1952), Suonenjoki (1955), Konnevesi (1957), and Somerniemi (1960), as well as glass paintings for Lahti (1950) and Äänekoski (1958) churches. Kuvataiteilijamatrikkeli, accessed 3.5.2012.
- ¹³³ “Urho Lehtisen suuri seinämaalaus Keskuskansakouluun valmistunut.” *Jyväskylän Sanomat* 12.4.1956. Lehtinen participated in the Parliament House competition in 1930, and has been described hugely disappointed for not being awarded. Lahti, Sironen & Markkanen 2007, 63.
- ¹³⁴ Nummela 1993, 157–158.
- ¹³⁵ Ursin 1980, 198. The value of the euro is calculated with the value of the mark in 1950—the inflation affected the value of mark considerably in the postwar years. Tilastokeskus, accessed 16.10.2009.
- ¹³⁶ Elo 2004, 50.
- ¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 47–48.
- ¹³⁸ Hautala-Hirvioja 1999, 153; Ylimartamo & Uusikylä 2005, 67.
- ¹³⁹ Ylimartamo & Uusikylä 2005, 67.
- ¹⁴⁰ Toikka-Karvonen 1953, 4–5.
- ¹⁴¹ Ylimartamo & Uusikylä 2005, 65.

- ¹⁴² Jetsonen 1994b, 48.
- ¹⁴³ Wessman 1997, 96–97.
- ¹⁴⁴ Mellais 2003, 343–345; Lindgren 1996, 56.
- ¹⁴⁵ Ojanperä 2010, 206; Crusell 2011, 101.
- ¹⁴⁶ Hanka 1995, 43.
- ¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 36–37.
- ¹⁴⁸ Kemin seurakunta, accessed 16.10.2009.
- ¹⁴⁹ Hanka 1995, 37–38.
- ¹⁵⁰ “Monumentaalityillä oma osasto taiteilijain 61. vuosinäyttelyssä.” *HS* 17.2.1955.
- ¹⁵¹ Pohls 1989, 28–33.
- ¹⁵² Osmo Laine. “Monumentaalityidettä.” *TS* 27.12.1955.
- ¹⁵³ Pohls 1989, 123–125.
- ¹⁵⁴ Väinölä 1964, 63.
- ¹⁵⁵ “Kulttuurirahasto julistaa kilpailun taidemaalareille.” *US* 6.2.1955.
- ¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*; Jury minutes 1.12.1954, §2. FCF.
- ¹⁵⁷ “Kutsu maalauskilpailuun.” *HS* 6.2.1955.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*; Jury minutes 13.12.1954, §2. FCF.
- ¹⁵⁹ Läh. Lehdistölle (Press release) 12.10.1955. FCF.
- ¹⁶⁰ Jury minutes 15.12.1955; Call slips / Documents related to the competition of 1955. FCF. The foundation has archived the slips, with which the sketches were submitted and later recollected, indicating the authors of several competition sketches.
- ¹⁶¹ Due to inflation, the value of prizes given out in 1955 was higher than that of the artistic grants given out between 1956–60. Tilastokeskus, accessed 16.10.2009.
- ¹⁶² Sketches were purchased from Tapani Jokela, Stig Fredriksson, Pentti Melanen, Liisa Tanner, and Yngve Bäck. Jury minutes 15.12.1955. FCF.
- ¹⁶³ Appendix to the jury minutes, Ragnar Ekelund 14.12.1955. FCF; Osmo Laine. “Monumentaalityidettä.” *TS* 27.12.1955.
- ¹⁶⁴ Jury minutes 15.12.1955. FCF; E. J. V [Einari J. Vehmas]. “Kulttuurirahaston seinämaalauskilpailu.” *US* 28.12.1955.
- ¹⁶⁵ Jury minutes 15.12.1955; Board of the Finnish Cultural Foundation 13.1.1956, §51. FCF.
- ¹⁶⁶ E. J. V [Einari J. Vehmas]. “Kulttuurirahaston seinämaalauskilpailu.” *US* 28.12.1955.
- ¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*; Alf Krohn. “Seinämaalauskilpailu.” *HS* 22.12.1955; Jury minutes 15.12.1955. FCF.
- ¹⁶⁸ Board of the Finnish Cultural Foundation 25.1.1956, §3; 9.4.1958, §14; 3.5.1958, §8; 26.11.1958, §12; 5.4.1961, §8. FCF. Puzzlingly, the painting in Joensuu is signed in 1954, even though it was commissioned only in 1956.
- ¹⁶⁹ Board of the Finnish Cultural Foundation 5.4.1961, §8. FCF.
- ¹⁷⁰ Board of the Finnish Cultural Foundation 18.5.1956; 7.11.1956, §3. FCF.
- ¹⁷¹ Board of the Finnish Cultural Foundation 27.5.1959, §3. FCF; Wessman 1997, 135–137.
- ¹⁷² See Vuolukka 2009, 16 and Kaisanlahti 1971, 26–29 on the school.
- ¹⁷³ Vuolukka 2009, 23, 46–47.
- ¹⁷⁴ Wessman 1997, 140–141.
- ¹⁷⁵ O. O. “Suuri Seinämaalaus napapiirin takana.” *AL* 25.9.1960.
- ¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷⁷ E. J. V. [Einari J. Vehmas]. “Kulttuurirahaston seinämaalauskilpailu.” *US* 28.12.1955.
- ¹⁷⁸ Alf Krohn. “Seinämaalauskilpailu.” *HS* 22.12.1955.

6. Competing Art

- ¹ Kaipiainen 2006, 8–11.
- ² Lindgren 2000, 21; Lindgren 2009, 70–81.
- ³ See pages 60, 69–72, and 88–90.
- ⁴ Kuopio City Art Committee, 23.5.1956, §3. Kuopio Art Museum.
- ⁵ Turku City Board 14.4.1953, §490; 21.4.1953, §530; 28.4.1953, §571. Turku CA.
- ⁶ Veli Villehartti [Arvo Suominen]. “Nöyränä miehenä vakavin mielin ja pyrkimyksin Taiteen edessä.” *TS* 10.5.1953.
- ⁷ Kallinen asked 230,000 marks (6,670 euros), Paavola 250,000 marks. Turku City Board 28.4.1953, §571, appendixes 1 and 2. Turku CA.
- ⁸ Turku City Board 18.11.1952, §1269; agenda for the meeting 14.4.1953. Turku CA.
- ⁹ Art Committee of Helsingin maalaiskunta 15.2.1963, §4. Vantaa CA.
- ¹⁰ The same view was included also, for example, in Wilho Sjöström’s fresco for Privatbanken in 1916. [Image 20.]
- ¹¹ Art Committee of Helsingin maalaiskunta 15.2.1962, §8; Kilpailukutsu (Competition call) 12.9.1962. Vantaa CA.
- ¹² General Assembly of the Painters’ Union 3.1.1956, §5. PU.
- ¹³ Painters’ Union to the City Board of Kuhmoinen 13.8.1955. PU.
- ¹⁴ Kivijärvi 7.6.2007.
- ¹⁵ See Ruohonen 2012. In Helsinki, the bought competition sketches were not always included in the art collection. Oksanen 23.9.2010.
- ¹⁶ Wessman 1997, 97, 178.
- ¹⁷ “Taiteellinen skandaali vai uusi suuri taiteilija.” *HS* 24.10.1951.
- ¹⁸ Taidemaalariiliitto. “Pohjoismaiden yhdyspankin seinämaalauskilpailu.” *HS* 23.10.1951.
- ¹⁹ Valkonen 1992, 38.
- ²⁰ Taidemaalariiliiton kilpailusäännöt (Competition rules of the Painters’ Union) 1956. PU.

- ²¹ This happened again in 1967 with Antti Nieminen. Turku City Art Committee 19.4.1968, §1, appendix IV [Artists' grants 1958–67]. Turku CA.
- ²² Tampere City Art Committee 9.5.1955, §5. Tampere CA.
- ²³ Tampere City Art Committee 16.6.1955, §8. Tampere CA. Tampere had, in the past five years, arranged competitions for Kaleva (now Kissanmaa) School, Nekala Kindergarten, Kaupinoja Sanatorium, and Amuri School.
- ²⁴ Tampere City Art Committee to the Tampere City Board 26.1.1956. Tampere CA.
- ²⁵ Board of the Painters' Union 3.5.1960, §5. PU.
- ²⁶ See pages 79–81.
- ²⁷ Ahlgrén 27.9.2006.
- ²⁸ Saha [Theodor Schalin]. "Hilkka Toivola ja Otso Karpakka—harmooninen taiteilijapariskunta." *Uusi Aura* 3.1.1954.
- ²⁹ Taidemaalariliiton kilpailusäännöt (Competition rules of the Painters' Union) 1956. PU.
- ³⁰ Board of the Painters' Union 29.12.1955, §5, 8.5.1956, §3, 19.12.1956, §9. PU.
- ³¹ General Assembly of the Painters' Union 5.3.1957, §10; 2.4.1957, §10; 7.5.1957, §4. PU. As Pusa had been nominated to the committee by the Painters' Union, it was criticised within the union that he was expelled by the Artists' Association, which, then, exercised power over its subdivision.
- ³² Helsinki City Board to Finnish Artists' Association 9.12.1955 (no 1414); Finnish Artists' Association to the Painters' Union [December 1955]; Painters' Union to the Finnish Artists' Association 5.1.1956. PU.
- ³³ Tampere City Art Committee 6.9.1956, §5. Tampere CA. The members appointed by the Painters' Union were Aale Hakava and Olli Miettinen.
- ³⁴ Board of the Painters' Union, 8.5.1956, §5; 27.4.1956, §3. PU. Olli Miettinen functioned also in the jury of this competition, with Ragnar Ekelund.
- ³⁵ Board of the Painters' Union, 23.5.1956, §10; 4.9.1956, §2. PU.
- ³⁶ Tampere City Art Committee 10.10.1956, §2. Tampere CA.
- ³⁷ Tampere City Art Committee to Painters' Union 6.12.1956. PU.
- ³⁸ Board of the Painters' Union, 19.12.1956, §6; 12.2.1957, §8; 2.5.1961, §5. PU.
- ³⁹ Tampere City Art Committee 6.9.1956, §5. Tampere CA.
- ⁴⁰ Helsinki City Art Committee 11.4.1956, n:o 3, §15; 11.12.1955, n:o 22, §100, appendix 1; "Taideteosten hankkiminen kaupungin [...]". HAM.
- ⁴¹ Tampere City Board 26.11.1956, §2973, Tampere CA; Kustannusarvio (Cost estimate) [Valavuori, 1956]. NYMU.
- ⁴² Helsinki City Art Committee 26.5.1956, n:o 9, §41, appendix 1; "Taideteosten hankkiminen kaupungin [...]". HAM.
- ⁴³ Tampere City Board 26.11.1956, §2973 [Jury minutes]. NYMU.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ Tampere City Art Committee 10.10.1956, §5. Tampere CA.
- ⁴⁶ Tampere City Art Committee 13.12.1957, §2. Tampere CA.
- ⁴⁷ Tampere City Art Committee 21.1.1958, §5. Tampere CA.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Tampere City Art Committee 25.9.1958, §3. Tampere CA.
- ⁵⁰ Kaupunginjohtaja Oiva Kaivolán paljastuspöytäkirja uimahallissa (Speech of Mayor Oiva Kaivola at the Swimming Pool) 1.11.1958. NYMU.
- ⁵¹ Turku City Board 3.10.1967, §2517.
- ⁵² Kuopio Art Committee 23.5.1956, §3. Kuopio Art Museum.
- ⁵³ Jury for the mural competition for the Haapaniemi School 18–19.9.1956, §8. Kuopio Art Museum.
- ⁵⁴ "Lähetysasema, nimimerkki, huom" [1956]. Kuopio Art Museum. The towns, from which the competition sketches were sent, were recorded together with the pseudonyms. The anonymity of the authors was not, then, fully respected. Even some names of artists were listed. However, I do not know whether this has been done before or after the competition.
- ⁵⁵ "Kilpailut kehittävä taidemaalareita." *Savon Kansa* 22.9.1956.
- ⁵⁶ Jury for the mural competition for the Haapaniemi School 18–19.9.1956; Jury of the mural competition for the Männistö School 22–23.9.1958. Kuopio Art Museum.
- ⁵⁷ Hannula 1991, 21.
- ⁵⁸ Ahlgrén received 300,000 marks (6,200 euros) in 1961 and 1,000,000 (19,000 euros) in 1963 for the preparation of the work. (Väinölä 1964, 136, 140.) Ahlgrén adds that, as a consequence, he lost the possibility to apply funds for his private works from the Finnish Cultural Foundation for years on. Ahlgrén 27.9.2006.
- ⁵⁹ A hand-written note in a local artist's press cutting collections. "Teatteritalon seinämaalauksen valmistus syksyyn mennessä." [1963] Niskanen press cutting collections, Kuopio Art Museum.
- ⁶⁰ Ahlgrén 27.9.2006.
- ⁶¹ "Kilpailu Kuopion kuvataiteilijoille." *Savo* 12.1.1964.
- ⁶² Rissanen, Seppo. "Arvoisa Toimittaja." [Press release, 1964]. Kuopio Art Museum.
- ⁶³ Jury for the mural competition for Särkiniemi library, 26.5.1964, §8. Kuopio Art Museum.
- ⁶⁴ ip. "Männistön kirkon alttaritaulu valmis." *Savon Sanomat* 23.1.1964.

- ⁶⁵ Sjö Lind 2006, 66, 82–83, 91–104.
- ⁶⁶ See *ibid.*, 79–81.
- ⁶⁷ “Juhani Tarna voitti seinämaaluskilpailun.” *AL* 24.5.1966. On the realised painting, see Tarna 2010, 54–55.
- ⁶⁸ Helsinki City Board 20.5.1965, §1400, appendix 4. Helsinki CA.
- ⁶⁹ Valavuori & Tissari 1986, 140.
- ⁷⁰ Traviato. “Hilkka Toivolan Turkua esittävä temperamaalaus.” *TS* 1.10.1961.
- ⁷¹ Pusa 1982 [1967], 139.
- ⁷² Nieminen 2006, 84–99.
- ⁷³ Hedström 2004, 86.
- ⁷⁴ S. R. [Sixten Ringbom] “Miljöskapande formspråk.” *Åbo Underrättelser* 22.3.1958.
- ⁷⁵ Helsinki City Art Committee, working committee (työjaosto) 22.10.1955, §1. HAM.
- ⁷⁶ Helsinki City Art Committee 25.10.1955, §73; 2.11.1955, §78. HAM.
- ⁷⁷ The building where the paintings are located is not a children’s hospital anymore but a psychiatric one. Interestingly, a copy of Jansson’s staircase painting has been painted to the contemporary Children’s Hospital (*Lastenklinnikka*) in the Meilahti Hospital area, suggesting a well-liked nature for the work.
- ⁷⁸ See Kruskopf 1992, 276.
- ⁷⁹ Helsinki City Art Committee 4.5.1955, §29. HAM.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.* The therapeutic possibilities of art were not frequently raised in public discussions (See Ruohtula 1948.) For example in the United States in the 1930s, the beneficial character of mural painting in a hospital environment had been recognised and exploited. Harris 1995, 79–83.
- ⁸¹ Helsinki City Art Committee, working committee 22.10.1955, §1. HAM.
- ⁸² Helsinki City Art Committee 4.5.1955, §29; 11.4.1956, §15. HAM.
- ⁸³ Helsinki City Art Committee, working committee 22.10.1955, §1. HAM.
- ⁸⁴ Helsinki City Art Committee 11.4.1956, §15; 25.10.1955, §70, appendix 1. HAM.
- ⁸⁵ The Hyvinkää painting was commissioned on a basis of a competition between Onni Oja and Olli Miettinen. Both artists submitted two sketches but none of them was considered good enough for execution. The commission was nevertheless given to Oja, who was to further develop his proposal. Hyvinkää Town Board (kauppalanhallitus) 22.11.1954, §8. PU.
- ⁸⁶ “Puuveistos ja seinäkoristelu paljastettu Koukkuniemessä.” *AL* 2.10.1957.
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.* The work was understood as “decorative painting” by the City of Tampere. It was painted by the artist Petäjä directly onto the wall, using house paint. Linder 1991, 41.
- ⁸⁸ “Kansakoululaiset äänestivät Amurin seinämaaluskilpailun luonnoksista.” *AL* 13.5.1955.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ See, e.g. Osmo Laine. “Upean mosaiikkityön luovutustilaisuus eilen sataman huoltorakennuksessa.” *TS* 27.4.1955.

7. Imagining Finnishness

- ¹ O. L. [Osmo Laine] “Kilpailutoita näytteillä.” *TS* 1.5.1955. Translation JR.
- ² Ahlgrén 27.9.2006.
- ³ Hienonen 1984, 23.
- ⁴ Another example of the employment of the rays of light is the painting by Helge Stén for the premises of Kutomo & Punomo in Turku from 1953. O. L. [Osmo Laine] “Seinämaalauksen paljastustilaisuus.” *TS* 11.4.1953.
- ⁵ Kivijärvi 7.6.2007.
- ⁶ Edv. E. [Edvard Elenius] “Vasaramäen kilpailumaalaukset.” *Uusi Aura* 26.4.1953.
- ⁷ “Olle Nymans fris i Klingsborgskolan i Norrköping.” 1952. See Ruohonen 2012, 164–167.
- ⁸ See page 218.
- ⁹ The image has been composed of two photographs.
- ¹⁰ Helsinki City Art Committee 23.11.1955, n:o 16 a, §1. HAM.
- ¹¹ A photograph of the sketch is found in “Avgjord tävling om freskomålning.” *HBL* 15.12.1955. According to the practices of the time in Helsinki, the awarded sketches were not included in the city’s art collection.
- ¹² In the painting competition for Haapaniemi School in Kuopio in 1956, the competition rules stated that the sketches had to be recollected from Kuopio at a rather short notice. (Kutsu maalauskilpailuun. [Competition call, 1956]. Kuopio Art Museum.) Many sketches were not recollected, but remained in Kuopio. They were not included in the city art collection, yet placed on the walls of public buildings, from where they have recently been “rediscovered”. Talvitie 15.12.2009.
- ¹³ Jury for the mural competition for the Haapaniemi School 18–19.9.1956, §5. Kuopio Art Museum.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ Mäkelä 1954, 219–222.
- ¹⁶ Hirvonen 1993, 20.
- ¹⁷ Nätkin 2002, 177.
- ¹⁸ See Saarikangas 1987, 206–207.
- ¹⁹ See Valenius 2004 on the visual embodiments of the Finnish Maid, and the uses of the figure in the construction of the Finnish nation.
- ²⁰ Warner 2000 [1985], xix–xxii.
- ²¹ Petra Uexküll, “Turkulaiset ovat romantisia.” *IS* 26.4.1957.
- ²² Traviato. “Hilkka Toivolan Turkua esittävä temperamaalaus.” *TS* 1.10.1961; K. R. [Kalle

- Rautiainen] “Uusi julkinen taideteos Turussa.” *Uusi Aura* 1.10.1961.
- ²³ Postal Savings Banks were through various phases merged into contemporary Danske Bank. Despite numerous attempts in contacting Sampo Bank, its predecessor, I was not able to find out the current locations of the public paintings commissioned for the Postal Savings Bank
- ²⁴ K. R. [Kalle Rautiainen] “Uusi julkinen taideteos Turussa.” *Uusi Aura* 1.10.1961.
- ²⁵ “Erkki Heikkilän maalaus paljastettiin Jyväskylän seudun Osuuskassassa.” *Jyväskylän Sanomat* 23.10.1960.
- ²⁶ Hovinheimo 2007, 98.
- ²⁷ “Kaunis fresco hankittu Karihaaran kansakouluun.” *Pohjolan Sanomat* 21.9.1956. The painting was born out of the initiative of the art teachers Vanas and Rautiainen. It was recorded as being realised with funds collected by the students and teachers of the school. The work of the artists was, however, unpaid. (Ibid.; Liisa Rautiainen 19.5.2010.) Later on, at the turn of the 1970s, Liisa Rautiainen led mural projects in Palosaari School, where the students themselves planned and executed public paintings. Also, in 1970, she pioneered in Finnish outdoor public painting with a pair of murals she executed for the Kemi fire station.
- ²⁸ “Kaunis fresco hankittu Karihaaran kansakouluun.” *Pohjolan Sanomat* 21.9.1956.
- ²⁹ “Tampereen Säästöpankin seinämaalaus on valmistunut.” *AL* 9.5.1956.
- ³⁰ Saarikivi 1947, 17.
- ³¹ Helsinki City Art Committee 1.12.1956, n:o 14, §58. HAM. Picture in Wessman 1997, 100.
- ³² Wessman 1997, 152.
- ³³ Birger Carlstedt to Ragnar Josephson 18.5.1953. Birger Carlstedt files, MPA.
- ³⁴ “Raholan kansakoulun taiteellinen koristelu valmistumisvaiheessa.” *AL* 10.9.1956.
- ³⁵ Tampere City Art Committee 6.9.1956, §3. Tampere CA.
- ³⁶ Tampere City Board 18.6.1956, §1622; appendix. Tampere CA.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ See image in Ilvas 1989, 29. Currently the painting is located in Rovaniemi Theatre. A full-size version, or sketch of the painting is located in Porvoo High School (*Borgå Gymnasium*).
- ³⁹ See Kuusamo (2011 [2008], 123–136) on time and tempo in art.
- ⁴⁰ Kolbe 2002, 70.
- ⁴¹ See Hovinheimo 2007, 50–51.
- ⁴² “Erkki Heikkilän maalaus paljastettiin Jyväskylän seudun Osuuskassassa.” *Jyväskylän Sanomat* 23.10.1960.
- ⁴³ A female factory worker is featured also in Olavi Laine’s painting for Mensa factories from 1957. See image in *Olavi Laine 1922–1983* 2001, 58–59.
- ⁴⁴ Sinisalo 1980, 8. Sinisalo refers to Einari J. Vehmas, writing in *Uusi Suomi* in 1953, making the same comparison.
- ⁴⁵ Enroth was awarded in the competitions for the Nordic Union Bank in Rovaniemi in 1949, Kaupinoja Sanatorium in Tampere in 1954, and Amuri School in Tampere in 1955. He was invited to the closed competition of Hämeenlinna Savings Bank in 1954, and took part in the competition of the Nordic Union Bank in Lahti in 1951 but was not awarded. *Erik Enrothin maalauksia, piirustuksia ja grafiikkaa Sara Hildénin säätien kokoelmista* 1980, 14–15.
- ⁴⁶ Kruskopf 1992, 274–276. These were Jansson’s first public painting commissions. They were removed in the 1960s, and donated to the Helsinki Art Museum.
- ⁴⁷ See Wessman 1997, 140–141 on Pusa’s case.
- ⁴⁸ Tampere City Board 14.10.1957, §2604, appendix 1; Tampere City Art Committee 29.8.1957, §8; 19.9.1957, §6. Tampere CA.
- ⁴⁹ Kettunen 2006, 304–307.
- ⁵⁰ Rossi 1956, 228–229.
- ⁵¹ Joenniemi 1985, 4.
- ⁵² Ibid., 4–6.
- ⁵³ See page 160 and Wessman 1997, 129–132.
- ⁵⁴ Wessman 1997, 108. Wessman has recorded that the painting was removed from its location in 1983. It was later bought by the Sampo Group, and it is currently placed in the lobby of the headquarters of Mandatum Life Insurance Company in Helsinki—in a markedly different architectonic setting.
- ⁵⁵ “Kookas seinämaalaus Hatanpään sairaalaan.” *AL* 23.11.1965; Tampere City Council 25.9.1967, §1956. Tampere CA.
- ⁵⁶ Other examples of vertical public paintings with the theme of construction are Yrjö Lalla’s *Rakentajat* (Builders), painted for the KOP Bank branch in Mynämäki in 1959 (see Ilvas 1989, 29) and Erik Enroth’s *Rakentajat* (Builders, 1967), painted for a vocational school (now *Varia*), Vantaa.
- ⁵⁷ Tampere City Art Committee 6.5.1958, §1. Tampere CA.
- ⁵⁸ In 1966, the institute transformed into a multidisciplinary University of Tampere, and in 1974 it became a state institute. Tampereen yliopisto, accessed 20.8.2010.
- ⁵⁹ T. J. “Kovalevymaalaus.” *Satakunnan kansa* 9.9.1962; See also “YKK:n suuri seinämaalaus paikoillaan.” *AL* 11.7.1962; Y. “Seinämaalaus paljastetaan tänään YK:ssa.” *Kansan Lehti* 10.9.1962; T. P. “Nokikolarista tuli katedraali: taiteilija ja hänen aiheensa.” *Kansan Lehti* 2.8.1962. “Erik Enrothin seinämaalaus on valmistunut.” *AL* 4.9.1962.
- ⁶⁰ “Suurikokoinen taideteos hankitaan Tampereen kaupungille.” *AL* 31.1.1962.
- ⁶¹ Kirves 2008b, 381–382, 417–418.

- ⁶² Connerton 2008, 68. See also Ruohonen 2011b.
- ⁶³ Valkonen 2000, 8–9. See also Reitala 1994.
- ⁶⁴ Erkki Koponen to amanuensis Katarina Dunér, 4.11.1961. Erkki Koponen files, MPA.
- ⁶⁵ Selin 12.3.2012.
- ⁶⁶ Art inventory no 11064, Jyväskylä Art Museum.
- ⁶⁷ Selin 12.3.2012; Board of the Finnish Cultural Foundation 9.4.1958, §15; 3.5.1958. In this context, the fresco proposal was called *Myötäeläminen* (Empathy), while the Lyceum painting is known as *Pietä*. According to Selin (12.3.2012) he did not have other large-scale projects on-going at the same time.
- ⁶⁸ Selin 12.3.2012. Currently, the painting is not located in the main hall of the school as it was supposed to. Instead, it is located at a less prominent place, a staircase on the second floor.
- ⁶⁹ Marja-Leena Kalaja. “Erkki Heikkilä maalaa: Suomalainen maisema ja sen syvät tunnot.” [---] 10.10.1982. Press Cutting Collections, Jyväskylä Art Museum.
- ⁷⁰ Tarjamo & Karonen 2006, 387.
- ¹⁵ Kalle Keskinen. “Vastinetta ‘Eskon puumerkkejä’ kirjoittajalle herra S. Niinivaaralle.” *Keskisuomalainen* 13.7.1962.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.; S. Niinivaara. “Eskon puumerkkejä.” *Keskisuomalainen* 16.6.1962.
- ¹⁷ “Taideostolautakunta syrjäytettiin taas.” *Kansan Lehti* 16.6.1962. Translation JR.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Jyväskylä City Art Committee 2.9.1963, §8, Jyväskylä CA.
- ²⁰ Lindgren 1996, 58.
- ²¹ Jorn 1952, 205–207.
- ²² Golan 2009, 235–247.
- ²³ Damaz 1956, 69.
- ²⁴ Ibid.; See also Golan 2002, 186.
- ²⁵ Damaz 1956, 69.
- ²⁶ Golan 2009, 249.
- ²⁷ Damaz 1956, 83.
- ²⁸ Stensman 1987, 192–193.
- ²⁹ Damaz 1956, 83.
- ³⁰ Ålander 1950, 1, 5.
- ³¹ Ibid., 2–3.
- ³² Karjalainen 1990, 61–63.
- ³³ “Nonfiguratiivinen taide kiivaan keskustelun aiheena eilen Taidehallissa.” *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* 16.2.1952. See Karjalainen 1990, 61–64.
- ³⁴ Karjalainen 1990, 46.
- ³⁵ Pillet 1953.
- ³⁶ Karjalainen 1990, 161–162.
- ³⁷ Heinonen 1948, 83.
- ³⁸ Onni Oja. “Monumentaalimaalauksen työtävät.” *US* 16.12.1959.
- ³⁹ See Lindgren 1996, 59.
- ⁴⁰ Paimion parantola, accessed 9.6.2010.
- ⁴¹ Schildt 1992, 134. Translated from a Finnish translation by JR.
- ⁴² “Säynätsalo menettää Legerin nonfiguratiivisen maalauksen.” *Kansan Lehti* 15.11.1955; “Mielipiteet käyvät ristiin Leger’n työn lunastamisasiassa.” *Keskisuomalainen* 13.12.1955.
- ⁴³ “Leger’in työ kuuluu Säynätsalon kunnantalon.” *Keskisuomalainen* 10.12.1955.
- ⁴⁴ “Mielipiteet käyvät ristiin Leger’n työn lunastamisasiassa.” *Keskisuomalainen* 13.12.1955. See also Schildt 1992, 137.
- ⁴⁵ See Karjalainen 1990, 153.
- ⁴⁶ Petra Uexküll. “Abstrakti taide kipusi Porthanian aulan seinälle.” *IS* 9.1.1957.
- ⁴⁷ Blomstedt 1957, 52–54.
- ⁴⁸ Karjalainen 1990, 153–154.
- ⁴⁹ Painters’ Union to its members, 23.2.1953. PU. Translation JR.
- ⁵⁰ Bergh 1959, 54.

8. Abstraction in Finnish Public Painting

- ¹ Ahlgrén 27.9.2006.
- ² Karjalainen 1990, 14–15.
- ³ Petra Uexküll. “Mosaiikki elää.” *IS* 19.3.1957; Petra Uexküll. “Käsitteellinen maalaus abstraktin maalauksen keinoin.” *IS* 25.8.1959.
- ⁴ Turku City Board 27.6.1961, §1410.
- ⁵ K. R. [Kalle Rautiainen] “Taidetta kansakouluun.” *Uusi Aura* 19.7.1961.
- ⁶ S. R. [Sixten Ringbom] “Miljöskapande formspråk.” *Åbo Underrättelser* 22.3.1958.
- ⁷ Jyväskylä City Art Committee 6.6.1962, §9, Jyväskylä CA.
- ⁸ “Taideostolautakunta syrjäytettiin taas.” *Kansan Lehti* 16.6.1962.
- ⁹ Helmer Selin. “Hra Tarkastaja V. A. Niiniselle.” *Keskisuomalainen* 17.6.1962.
- ¹⁰ K. Veijonen. “Taidemaalari Erkki Heikkilä: ‘Maalustehtävä on annettava Santaselle, jolle se kuuluu.’” *Keski-Suomen Iltalehti* 18.6.1962.
- ¹¹ Jyväskylä City Art Committee to City Board 12.6.1962. Jyväskylä CA. Translation and emphasis JR.
- ¹² Jyväskylä City Art Committee to City Board 12.6.1962. Jyväskylä CA
- ¹³ K. Veijonen. “Taidemaalari Erkki Heikkilä: ‘Maalustehtävä on annettava Santaselle, jolle se kuuluu.’” *Keski-Suomen Iltalehti* 18.6.1962.
- ¹⁴ S. Niinivaara. “Eskon puumerkkejä.” *Keskisuomalainen* 16.6.1962.

- ⁵¹ See pages 241–242.
- ⁵² S. R. [Sixten Ringbom] “Miljöskapande formspråk.” *Åbo Underrättelser* 22.3.1958.
- ⁵³ S. Saarikivi. “Porthanian seinämaalaus.” *HS* 18.1.1957.
- ⁵⁴ See Lindgren 1996, 58.
- ⁵⁵ ek. [Erik Kruskopf]. “Nonfigurativt I banklokal.” *HBL* 2.12.1956.
- ⁵⁶ “Arkkitehtuuri ja kuvataide yhteistoiminnassa.” *Kansan Uutiset* 20.8.1959.
- ⁵⁷ Petra Uexküll. “Seinämaalausommitelmia.” *IS* 12.9.1960. See Moberg 1993, 28, 36.
- ⁵⁸ Pusa 1982, 139.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 139–142.
- ⁶⁰ Karjalainen 1990, 161–162.
- ⁶¹ Lindgren 1996, 58–59.
- ⁶² Kruskopf 1961, 30; See also Valkonen 1960, 95.
- ⁶³ Karjalainen 1997, 32.
- ⁶⁴ The painting for Eerikin baari *Kuperkeikka* (Somersault) belongs to the art collection of Turku Art Museum. The size of the painting is moderate, 70 x 200 cm.
- ⁶⁵ Moberg 1993, 28, 36.
- ⁶⁶ See *Konstrevy* 4–5, 1952.
- ⁶⁷ Tuomi 2005, 194–195.
- ⁶⁸ Wall plaque in Porthania, photographed by JR in 2007. The constructor was Rakennuselementti Oy Saga and Matti Janhunen.
- ⁶⁹ “Nonfiguratiivista taidetta Porthaniaan.” *US* 8.1.1957.
- ⁷⁰ Karjalainen 1990, 71–72.
- ⁷¹ Saarikivi, S. “Porthanian seinämaalaus.” *HS* 18.1.1957.
- ⁷² “Eteenpäin ja ylöspäin.” *Ylioppilaslehti* 11.1.1957.
- ⁷³ L-G Nordström has communicated that Aarne Ervi commissioned a sketch for the painting from him in 1955. Karjalainen 1990, 153, 160.
- ⁷⁴ Sorjonen 2008, 28, 37–40.
- ⁷⁵ Valkonen 1993, 8.
- ⁷⁶ Sorjonen 2008, 28, 37–40.
- ⁷⁷ Tampere City Art Committee 9.5.1955, §5. Tampere CA. Pekala’s sketch was not, hence, bought. Toivo Rossi (1955, 102) describes the sketch as representing “abstract, purely surface-inflected painting manner.”
- ⁷⁸ Tampere City Art Committee 9.5.1955, §5. Tampere CA. Emphasis JR. See also pages 161–162.
- ⁷⁹ Tampere City Board 26.11.1956, §2973 [Jury minutes]. NYMU.
- ⁸⁰ “Koristelukilpailu Tampereella. Lehdistölle [---] 18.12.1959.” (Press release). NYMU.
- ⁸¹ Saukonpuiston kansakoulun taiteellisen koristelun kilpailun säännöt (Competition rules) [1959]. NYMU.
- ⁸² Hämeranta was paid 560,000 marks (12,200 euros). “Saukonpuiston koulun taiteellinen koristelu kolmeen eri kohteeseen.” *Kansan Lehti* 24.7.1959.
- ⁸³ Helsinki City Art Committee 20.12.1958, §44, HAM.
- ⁸⁴ “400 000 mk seinämaalauskilpailulle, prof. Aulis Blomstedt valvoo kilpailua.” *IS* 9.1.1959.
- ⁸⁵ Helsinki City Art Committee 29.5.1959, §29, HAM. We can only speculate on the appearance of this painting, since the awarded sketches have not been included in the art collection of the City of Helsinki. Oksanen 23.9.2010.
- ⁸⁶ Helsinki City Art Committee, working committee (työjaosto) 25.5.1959, §2, HAM; Art Inventory Card N:o 12401 (L-G Nordström), MPA. *From eye to eye* has been purchased to the Museum of Public Art in Lund.
- ⁸⁷ Yrjänä. “Kaaoksesta järjestykseen: Sam Vannin suuri kilpailutyö valmistuu.” *US* 4.9.1959.
- ⁸⁸ See Karjalainen 1990, 120–123.
- ⁸⁹ “Helsingin Työväenopistoon keskiviikkona [...]” *HS* 6.5.1960; ek. [Erik Kruskopf]. “Konstkrönika.” *HBL* 8.5.1960.
- ⁹⁰ ek. [Erik Kruskopf]. “Konstkrönika.” *HBL* 8.5.1960.
- ⁹¹ See pages 117–118 and 134.
- ⁹² Karjalainen 1997, 32–34.
- ⁹³ Pietilä 1959, 133.
- ⁹⁴ Valavuori 1961, 34.
- ⁹⁵ Niemi 2003, 150–151.
- ⁹⁶ Vehmas 1960, 43. See also Ojanperä 2010, 211–217.
- ⁹⁷ Ojanperä 2010, 214–215.
- ⁹⁸ Karjalainen 1990, 56.
- ⁹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁰ Kruskopf 1965, 79.
- ¹⁰¹ Kuusamo 1990, 114.
- ¹⁰² Lindgren 2003, 149.
- ¹⁰³ Hakala 1994, 45; “Yhteenveto Eduskunnan suuren valiokunnan salin seinämaalauskilpailun palkintolautakunnan työskentelystä ja päätöksistä” (Summary of the jury work [...]), 11.5.1962, 10; appendix 2. Office Commission, FP.
- ¹⁰⁴ Hakala 1994, 46.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 45–47.
- ¹⁰⁶ Summary of the jury work [...], 11.5.1962, 5. Office Commission, FP.
- ¹⁰⁷ Pusa 1967, 1.
- ¹⁰⁸ Hakala 1994, 47.
- ¹⁰⁹ Summary of the jury work [...] 11.5.1962, 10; appendix 2. Office Commission, FP.
- ¹¹⁰ Uusikylä 1996, 115–117; Hakala 1994, 45, 48.
- ¹¹¹ Hakala 1994, 49–51.
- ¹¹² Jury minutes for the Koukkuniemi painting competition 20.10.1961, §5, §6; “Suurikokoinen seinämaalaus Koukkuniemen vanhainkotiin.” *AL* 2.11.1961.

- ¹¹³ “Tampereen uusin seinämaalaus: Paljastus Koukkuniemen vanhainkodissa.” *AL* 1.10.1962.
- ¹¹⁴ “Päätoimittaja Vilho Halmeen puhe [...] 30.9.1962 kello 12.” (Speech of Chief Editor Vilho Halme [...] on September 30, 1962.) NYMU.
- ¹¹⁵ Ojanperä 2010, 206.
- ¹¹⁶ Ahlgrén 27.9.2007.
- ¹¹⁷ Bell 1969. HAM. In 1969, Lucander approached the city with a threat of removing some of the painted decorations for the reason of not receiving payment for them. The value of the paintings was estimated at 12,000 marks (16,000 euros). (Ibid.) See Teittinen 2009 on the “lyric abstraction” of Lucander. The Roihuvuori work, however, does not belong within the framing of Teittinen’s research.
- ¹¹⁸ Helsinki City Board 20.5.1965, §1400, appendixes 1–4. Helsinki CA. Translation JR.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid., appendix 1. Helsinki CA. The originally listed artists were the sculptors Laila Pullinen and Harry Kivijärvi, painters Vanni, Lavonen, Enroth, Unto Koistinen, and Reidar Särestöniemi.
- ¹²⁰ Lavonen’s and Pullinen’s works have been moved several times. Currently the sculpture by Pullinen is the Helsinki City Theatre, and the painting by Lavonen in Metropolia University of Applied Science in Helsinki. Mononen 1.6.2012.
- ¹²¹ “Maalaus ‘Suvi’ Pellervon kouluun Tampereella.” *AL* 28.12.1965; Tampere City Art Committee 1.8.1966, §6; Tampere City Board 16.5.1967, §1115. Tampere CA.
- ¹²² The competition closed in April 1967 and received twenty-three entries. Turku City Board 16.5.1967, §1456; 23.5.1967, §1521. Turku CA.
- ¹²³ See Ruohonen 2006.
- ¹²⁴ O. V-JÄ [Olavi Veistäjä]. “Turkulaista maalausta.” *AL* 4.10.1964; Rautiainen. “Otso Karpakan maalauksia.” *Turkulainen* 10.2.1967.
- ¹²⁵ Mellais 2003, 346–350.
- ¹²⁶ In 1968, the writer Hannu Salama was condemned to imprisonment for blasphemy on the basis of his novel *Juhannustanssit* (Midsummer dance, 1964). He was, however, pardoned by the President of the Republic. The artist Harro Koskinen was condemned to a fine for his work *Sikamessias* (Pig messiah), depicting, as the name implies, a crucified cartoon-like pig. The work was exhibited in Helsinki Kunsthalle in 1969 and, in addition to Koskinen, all of the jury members of the exhibition in questions were fined. Mellais 2003, 353–354.

LIST OF WORKS

Public Painting in Finland 1900–1970

Public paintings discussed in this volume in chronological order. Titles in quotes are by JR. Technique and size (in centimetres) of the works are listed according to the archival materials or as informed by the owners of the paintings. See explanations for abbreviations on page 284.

1900s

- Akseli Gallen-Kallela, ceiling frescoes, 1900. The Finnish Pavilion, Paris World Exhibition. [Image 9.]
Building demolished.
- Akseli Gallen-Kallela, *Kullervon sotaanlähtö* (Kullervo goes to war), 1901. Fresco, 355 x 687. Old [Image 10.]
Student House (Vanha ylioppilastalo), Helsinki.
- Akseli Gallen-Kallela, series of frescoes, 1901–03. Jusélius Mausoluem, Pori. Destroyed in 1931.
- Pekka Halonen, *Kirkkomiehiä* (Men of church) and *Kivityömiehiä* (Masons), 1901–03. Jusélius
Mausoluem, Pori. Destroyed in 1931.
- Magnus Enckell, *Kulta-aika* (The golden age), 1904. Oil on canvas, 245 x 490. Library of the [Image 16.]
University of Helsinki. Now the National Library, Helsinki.
- Juho Rissanen, *Työstä paluu* (Return from work), 1904. Fresco, 275 x 290. Rikhardinkatu Library, [Image 15.]
Helsinki. HAM.
- Albert Edelfelt, *Turun Akatemian vihkiäiset 1640* (The dedication of the Academy of Turku in [See image 8.]
1640), 1905. Tempera on canvas, three panels, 360 x 280 each. Main Building of the University of
Alexander (now University of Helsinki). Destroyed in a bombing in 1944.
- Pekka Halonen, *Huviretki* (Outing), 1906. Oil on canvas, 199 x 504. Töölö School, Helsinki. [Image 11.]
Currently in Helsinki Metropolia, University of Applied Sciences. HAM.
- Hugo Simberg and Magnus Enckell, fresco decorations, 1907. Tampere Cathedral.
- Juho Rissanen, *Sepät* (Blacksmiths), 1909. Fresco, 275 x 280. Rikhardinkatu Library, Helsinki. [Image 14.]
HAM.
- Juho Rissanen, *Rakentajia* (Builders), 1909. Fresco, 400 x 350. Kuopio Museum. Kuopio Art
Museum.

1910s

- Eero Järnefelt, “*Koli*”, 1911. Oil on canvas. Helsinki Railway Station. [Image 17.]
- Joseph Alanen, *Ilmarinen kyntää kyisen pellon* (Ilmarinen tilling the field of adders), before 1912. [Image 21.]
KOP Bank Tampere. Wall demolished in the 1960s.
- Joseph Alanen, *Hämeen valloitus* (The conquest of Häme), 1912. Oil on canvas, 250 x 450. Tampere
Workers’ Theatre, currently in storage.
- Verner Thomé, *Leikkiviä lapsia hiekkarannalla* (Playing children on the beach), 1912. Oil on [Image 18.]
canvas, 217 x 374. Ratakatu (now Cygnaeus) School, Helsinki. HAM.
- Unknown artist, “*Summer landscape*”, before 1913. Oil, 200 x 500. Tehtaankatu School, Helsinki. [Image 13.]
HAM.
- Magnus Enckell, *Veljesvala* (Oath of brothers), 1913. Oil on canvas, three panels, 250 x 500 in total.
Nylands Nation (Student house), Helsinki.

LIST OF WORKS

- [Image 19.] Yrjö Ollila, *Leikkiviä lapsia* (Playing children), 1914. Oil on canvas, 200 x 300. Tehtaankatu School, Helsinki. HAM.
- [Image 28.] Jalmari Ruokokoski, decorations, 1914. Oil on cardboard. Movie Theatre Arena, Hyvinkää. Parts of the paintings currently in the Hyvinkää City Hall. Hyvinkää Art Museum.
- Eero Järnefelt, *Aurora-seura* (Aurora Society), 1916. Main Building of the University of Alexander (now University of Helsinki). Destroyed in a bombing in 1944.
- [Image 20.] Wilho Sjöström, “*Autumn landscape*”, 1916. Fresco. Private Bank (*Privatbanken*). Now Café Jugend, Pohjoisesplanadi 19, Helsinki.
- [Image 22.] Joseph Alanen, *Elonkorjaajia* (Harvesters), 1917. Oil on canvas, 400 x 500. KOP (Nordea) Bank, Tampere.

1920s

Magnus Enckell, *Neitoja puron rannalla* (Maidens by a brook), 1920. Oil on canvas, three panels, 250 x 500 in total. Nylands Nation (Student house), Helsinki.

Eero Järnefelt, *Flora-juhla Kumpulan kentällä* (Flora Day celebration at the Kumpula Field), 1920. Main Building of the University of Alexander (now University of Helsinki). Destroyed in a bombing in 1944.

Marcus Collin, *Satu* (Fairy tale), 1922. Oil on canvas, three parts: 85 x 129, 168 x 129, 85 x 126. Topeliuksenkatu (now Zacharias Topelius) School, Helsinki. HAM.

- [Image 23.] Yrjö Forsén, *Pellavan lajittelu* (The sorting of flax), 1923. Oil on canvas, 258 x 440. Tampere Workers' Theatre. Later removed and currently in the new theatre building.
- Yrjö Forsén, *Pellavan valkaisu* (The bleaching of linen), 1923. Oil on canvas, 258 x 440. Tampere Workers' Theatre. Later removed and currently in the new theatre building.
- Yrjö Forsén, *Junttausryhmä* (Pile driving), 1925. Oil on canvas, 228 x 450. Tampere Workers' Theatre. Later removed.

- [Image 12.] Pekka Halonen, *Tukinuitto* (Log floating), 1925. Oil on canvas, 229 x 478. ILO Headquarters, Geneva. Currently in the Finnish Parliament House. Parliament's Art Collection.

Martta Helminen, *Sieniretki* (Mushroom trip), 1925. Tempera, 130 x 370. Tammela School, Tampere. NYMU.

Gabriel Engberg, *Porotokka* (Reindeer herd), 1927. Oil, 152 x 251. Aleksanteri School, Tampere. Currently in storage. NYMU.

- [Image 27.] Yrjö Ollila, “*Commerce*”, 1927. Fresco, 110 x 800. Central Provincial Bank (*Maakuntain keskuspankki*), Helsinki. Currently a Furniture Shop, Laivurinkatu 43, Helsinki.

Akseli Gallen-Kallela, ceiling frescoes, 1928. National Museum, Helsinki.

Juho Rissanen, *Helkajuhlat Ritvalassa* (Whitsuntide festivals in Ritvala), 1928. Oil, 100 x 326. KOP Bank, Helsinki. Currently in Nordea Bank, Valkeakoski. Art Foundation Merita.

Juho Rissanen and assistants, *Helkajuhlat Ritvalassa* (Whitsuntide festivals in Ritvala), 1928. Five fresco panels. Finnish National Theatre, Helsinki.

Alvar Cawén, *Laulavat lapset* (Singing children), 1929. Oil on canvas, 162 x 283. Kaisaniemi School, Helsinki. HAM.

Kalle Löytänä, *Veneen vetäjät* (Pulling the boat), 1929. Oil, 150 x 240. Aleksanteri School, Tampere. NYMU.

Verner Thomé, *Lapset retkellä* (Children outing), 1929. Oil, 150 x 316. Tammela School, Tampere. NYMU.

1930s

- Yrjö Saarinen, *Tanssiva Pariisi* (Dancing Paris), 1930. Distemper on canvas, 122 x 292. Restaurant Hanhi, Hyvinkää. Currently in Karin and Carl-Eric Sonck Collection, Hyvinkää Art Museum. [Image 31.]
- Gösta Diehl, *Oppimestari* (Master), 1931. Oil on canvas, three parts. Jakobstad Coeducational School. Now Jakobstad High School.
- Yrjö Ollila, *Thalian peili* (Thalia's mirror), 1932. Ceiling painting, diameter 950. The National Theatre, Helsinki. [Image 29.]
- Eric O. W. Ehrström, "*War of Freedom*", 1933. Eight fresco panels. Vocational School of Kymi Corporation (now UPM Kymi), Kuusankoski.
- Alvar Aalto and Eino Kauria, mural painting, circa 1933. Mortuary, Paimio Sanatory.
- Alvar Cawén, *Sukset* (Skis), 1934. Oil on canvas, 179 x 246. Helsinki Normal Lyceum. The collection of the Normal Lyceum of Helsinki. [Image 34.]
- Anton Lindfors, *Meren viljaa* (Crop of the sea), 1934. Oil on canvas, 180 x 246. Helsinki Normal Lyceum. The collection of the Normal Lyceum of Helsinki. [Image 33.]
- Lennart Segerstråle, *Kirjallisuuden synty* (Birth of literature), 1935. Fresco, 450 x 1500. Joenniemi Manor, Mänttä.
- Lennart Segerstråle, three frescoes, 1935–37. G. A. Serlachius Head Office, Mänttä.
- Lennart Segerstråle, *Uusmaalainen laulu* (The song of Uusimaa), 1935. Secco, circa 300 x 900. Svenska Gården clubhouse, Porvoo. Destroyed in a bombing in 1940 and repainted in 1950 in tempera.
- Eino Kauria, "*Underwater*", 1936. Mural painting, 350 x 590. Aleksis Kivi School, Helsinki. HAM. [Image 32.]
- Juho Mäkelä, *Koivu ja tähti* (The birch and the star), 1936. Fresco, 237 x 301. Oulu Central School, now the Central Health Centre, Oulu. Oulu Art Museum. [Image 37.]
- Unto Pusa, "*Bathing*", 1936. Kaartinkasarmi Barracks, Helsinki. Destroyed in a bombing in 1944.
- Tyko Sallinen, *Lepohetki* (Rest), 1936. Oil on canvas, 172 x 250. Finnish Lyceum, now Ressu School, Helsinki. HAM. [Image 35.]
- Tyko Sallinen, "*By the fire*", 1936. Oil, 165 x 225. Women's Hospital, HUS, Helsinki. [Image 36.]
- Eva Törnvall-Collin, *Euripides Medea* (Euripides' Medea), 1937. Oil on cardboard. The Swedish Theatre, Helsinki. [Image 30.]
- Eva Törnvall-Collin, *Molières komedier* (Molière's comedies), 1937. Oil on cardboard. The Swedish Theatre, Helsinki.
- Lennart Segerstråle, *Arkipäivä* (Everyday) and *Lauantai-ilta* (Saturday night), 1938. Oil on canvas, 200 x 900 each. "Lukaali", Fiskars.
- Aino von Boehm, *Nuoruuden aika* (The age of youth), 1939. SYK School, Helsinki. [Image 39.]
- Sven Grönvall, *Työ* (Work), 1939. Oil on hardboard, 120 x 215. Wärtsilä, Helsinki. Currently in storage.
- Lassi Tokkola, *Kristus parantaa ramman* (The Christ healing a crippled), 1939. Oil on canvas, 149 x 220. Kivelä Hospital, Helsinki. HAM. [Image 38.]

1940s

- Antti Favén, *Mannerheim esikuntineen Vehmaisissa 1918* (Mannerheim and his headquarters in Vehmainen in 1918), 1940. Oil on canvas, 180 x 250. Officers' Club, now the Restaurant Katajanokan Kasino, Helsinki.

LIST OF WORKS

[Image 60.] Bruno Tuukkanen, *Varkaus*, 1940. Oil, 197 x 523. TOK department store. Currently in Päiviönsaari School. Varkaus Art Museum.

Unto Pusa, *Ässä koukkaa* (The Ace outflanks) 1943. Oil on canvas, 200 x 170. Kaarti Barracks. Currently in Santahamina Cadet School. The Helsinki City Museum.

[Image 40.] Lennart Segerstråle, *Suomi herää* (Finland awakes), 1943. Fresco, 350 x 750. Bank of Finland, Helsinki.

[Image 41.] Lennart Segerstråle, *Suomi rakentaa* (Finland builds), 1943. Fresco, 350 x 750. Bank of Finland, Helsinki.

Tove Jansson, *Lepo työn jälkeen* (Rest after work), 1945. Oil on insulate board, 350 x 500. Strömberg Factories, Helsinki. Currently in storage. HAM.

[Image 109.] Tove Jansson, "*Electricity*", 1945. Oil on insulate board, 286 x 213. Strömberg Factories, Helsinki. Currently in storage. HAM.

[Image 107.] Onni Oja, *Kesäpäivä* (Summer day), 1946. Oil on canvas, 185 x 400. Elanto. Currently in the Finnish Club in Helsinki (Helsingin Suomalainen Klubi).

[Image 106.] Tuomas von Boehm, *Saimaan rantaa* (Shores of Saimaa), 1947. Oil, 300 x 650. Restaurant in "Väärätalo", Imatra. Currently in Tradeka Art Collection. Imatra Art Museum.

Aarre Heinonen, *Työ ja vienti* (Work and export), 1947. Students' Union of the Helsinki School of Economics / KY-building, Helsinki. Current location unknown.

[Image 4.] Harry Henriksson, *Työ ja henkinen virkistys* (Work and spiritual recreation), 1947. Oil on concrete, 238 x 565. Huhtamäki Corporation, Turku. In Linnankatu 60, Turku.

[Image 104.] Tove Jansson, *Juhlat kaupungissa* (Celebration in the city), 1947. Fresco, 206 x 490. Restaurant Kaupunginkellari. Currently in the Swedish language Adult Education Centre, *Arbis*, Helsinki. HAM.

[Image 105.] Tove Jansson, *Juhlat maalla* (Celebration in the countryside), 1947. Fresco, 203 x 531. Restaurant Kaupunginkellari. Currently in the Swedish language Adult Education Centre, *Arbis*, Helsinki. HAM.

[Image 97.] Hilikka Toivola, *Ihmisen elinpäivät* (The days of life), 1947. Fresco, three panels, 300 x 500 each. Normal School for Girls, now Helsinki School of Economics.

Eino Kauria, three paintings, 1948. Restaurant Lapinmaa, Rovaniemi. Currently covered.

[Image 42.] Unknown artist / possibly Eino Kauria, circa 1948. County Administration Building, Rovaniemi. Later painted over.

Matti Särkkä, "*A summer idyll*" and "*Sea life*", 1948. Mural paintings. Kypärämäki School, Jyväskylä. Jyväskylä Art Museum.

[Image 44.] Aarne Hamara, *Elinkeino rakenteen kehitys Lapissa* (The development of the structure of livelihood in Lapland), 1949. Municipal Hall of Sodankylä.

Tyko Sallinen, *Kyntäjä* (Ploughman), 1949. Oil on canvas, 160 x 360. Hyvinkää Savings Bank. Currently in Lammi Savings Bank, Hyvinkää. State Art Collection / Hämeenlinna Art Museum.

1950

[Image 47.] Yngve Bäck, *Maataloutta, metsätöitä, teollisuutta* (Agriculture, forestry, industry), 1950. Oil, 138 x 299. Nordic Union (now Nordea) Bank, Kemi. Art Foundation Merita.

[Image 50.] Birger Carlstedt, *Aamusta iltaan* (From morning until night), 1950. Oil on canvas, 250 x 1250. Kauttua Paper Mills.

Erik Enroth, "*Education*", 1950. Oil on canvas, 198 x 300. Lönkan High School, Helsinki. HAM.

Aarne Hamara, "*Reindeer driver*", circa 1950. Oil on plaster, 148 x 288. Restaurant *Pohjanpirtti*, Kemijärvi. Destroyed.

Harry Henriksson, *Aurajokea ja satamaa* (River Aura and harbour), 1950. Oil on canvas. Nordic Union Bank, Turku. Current location unknown.

Tauno Hämeranta, *Lapin elinkeinoelämää* (Economic life in Lapland), 1950. Oil on canvas, 138 x 300. Nordic Union Bank, Rovaniemi. Sold from the Art Foundation Merita. [Image 46.]

Yrjö Saarinen, *Tukinuittoa Pielisjoella* (Log floating in River Pielisjoki), 1950. Oil on canvas, 132 x 292. Nordic Union (now Nordea) Bank, Joensuu. Art Foundation Merita.

1951

Erik Enroth, “*By the lake*”, 1951. Oil on canvas 181 x 250. Kaleva (now Kissanmaa) School, Tampere. NYMU.

Matti Petäjä, *Satu* (Fairy tale), 1951. Oil on canvas, 142 x 260. Nekala Kindergarten, Tampere. NYMU. [Image 2.]

Antti Salmenlinna and Paavo Leinonen, *Ihmisen elämä* (The life of man), 1951. Fresco, 282 x 371. Rantavitikka School, Rovaniemi. Rovaniemi Art Museum. [Image 49.]

Lennart Segerstråle, *Elämän lähde* (Well of life), 1951. Fresco, 1400 x 1100. Rovaniemi Church. [Image 63.]

1952

Tauno Gröndahl, *Onnellinen aika* (Happy times), 1952. Oil on canvas, 158 x 400. Niirala Kindergarten, Kuopio. Currently at storage. Kuopio Art Museum.

Aarne Hamara, *Rakovalkealla* (By the fire), 1952. Oil on canvas, 195 x 285. Restaurant *Sallansuu*, Salla. Donated by Tradeka to Veitsiluoto “People’s Hall” (*Työväentalo*), Kemi. [Image 45.]

Eino Kauria, “*Forest*”, 1952. Mural painting. Etelä-Kymenlaakso Vocational College, Kotka. [Image 43.]

Olli Miettinen, *Työntekijät* (Workers), 1952. Oil on canvas, 324 x 594. Turku Concert Hall. WAM. [Image 76.]

1953

Sven Grönvall, *Elämän kulku tehtaan varjossa* (The course of life in the shadow of the factory), 1953. Oil, 215 x 450. Varkaus Retirement Home, now Käpykangas Service Centre. Varkaus Art Museum. [Image 59.]

Tove Jansson, *Lintu sininen* (Blue bird), 1953. Secco, 190 x 362. Kila School, now Karjaa High School, Raasepori. [Image 77.]

Matti Kallinen, *Kylvöä ja satoa* (Planting and harvesting), 1953. Oil on hardboard, 254 x 514. Vasaramäki School. WAM. [Image 84.]

Pentti Koivisto, “*By the shore*”, 1953. Oil on canvas, 210 x 380. Furniture Shop Seppo. Currently in Hotel Radisson SAS, Oulu. [Image 114.]

Erkki Koponen, *Minä olen ylösnousemus ja elämä* (I am the resurrection and the life), 1953. Oil on canvas, 260 x 613. Kemi Church. Currently in Paattio Chapel, Kemi. [Image 61.]

Lars-Gunnar Nordström, mural painting, 1953. Restaurant Itä-Puisto, Pori. Destroyed. [Image 132.]

Onni Oja, *Viimeinen koulupäivä* (Last day of school), 1953. Fresco, 300 x 500. Meilahti School, Helsinki. HAM. [Image 51.]

Felix Ojanen, *Leikkiviä lapsia* (Playing children), 1953. Oil on canvas, 227 x 475. Päivärinne Kindergarten, Jyväskylä. Jyväskylä Art Museum.

Helge Stén, “*Life besides the factory*”, 1953. Oil on canvas, 150 x 300. Punomo & Kutomo, Turku, currently in Inka oy, Kyminkoski.

1954

Tove Jansson, *Fantasia* (Fantasy) 1954. Tempera on canvas, 105 x 300. KOP (now Nordea) Bank, Helsinki. Art Foundation Merita.

[Image 82.] Harry Kivijärvi, “*In guard*”, 1954. Vähä-Heikkilä Barracks, Turku.

Erkki Koponen, *Nuorta elämää* (Young life), 1954. Unvealed in 1961. Tempera on canvas, 335 x 515. City Library of Joensuu. Currently in the University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu Campus.

[Image 117.] Olavi Laine, *Rakentajat* (Builders), 1954. Oil, 150 x 250. Nordic Union (now Nordea) Bank, Hämeenlinna. Currently in Nordea Bank, Vantaa. Art Foundation Merita.

[Image 115.] Unto Pusa, *Kaupunki nousee* (City rises), 1954. Oil on canvas, 212 x 402. Nordic Union (now Nordea) Bank, Lahti. Art Foundation Merita.

Lennart Segerstråle, *Tulkoon sinun valtakuntasi* (May your kingdom come), 1954. Fresco, 2400 x 1150. Varkaus Church.

[Image 102.] Irja Soini, *Kirkkautta Auran rannoilla* (Brightness on the shores of River Aura), 1954. Mosaic, 257 x 940. Workers’ restaurant, Turku Harbour. Toinen linja, Turku. WAM.

1955

Tor Bjurström, *Satamakaupunki* (Harbour city), 1955. Oil on canvas, 284 x 775. Turku Concert Hall. WAM.

[Image 108.] Erik Enroth, *Rakennustyömaa* (Construction site), 1955. Oil on hardboard, 160 x 306. Nordic Union Bank, Turku. Currently in Nordea Bank, Mikkeli. Art Foundation Merita.

[Image 71.] Harry Kivijärvi, *La Fresko* (Fresco), 1955. Fresco, 340 x 845. Luolavuori Retirement Home, Turku. Currently used as a youth hostel. WAM.

[Image 113.] Pentti Koivisto, *Koskikeskus / Uutta ja vanhaa Oulua* (Koskikeskus / New and old Oulu), 1955. Oil on canvas, 145 x 281. Tuira School, Oulu. Currently in storage. Oulu Art Museum.

Erkki Koponen *Omenanpoimijat* (Picking apples), 1955. Oil on canvas, 187 x 400. Hämeenlinna Savings Bank. Currently in State Art Collection.

Olavi Laine, *Vihreää kultaa* (Green gold), 1955. Oil, 210 x 461. Nordic Union (now Nordea) Bank, Kuopio. Art Foundation Merita.

[Image 81.] Onni Oja, *Kohtalon kutojat* (Weavers of destiny), 1955. Tempera, 250 x 300. Hyvinkää Central School, now Asema School, Hyvinkää. Hyvinkää Art Museum.

Matti Petäjä, *Suvi* (Summer), 1955. Oil, 167 x 430. Kauppi Sanatorium, now Kauppi Hospital, Tampere. NYMU.

1956

Mauri Favén, *Sallikaa lasten tulla minun tyköni* (Permit the children to come to me), 1956. Oil on canvas 130 x 210. Vanaja (currently in Voutila) Retirement Home, Hämeenlinna. Hämeenlinna Art Museum.

[Image 78.] Tove Jansson, *Leikki* (Play), 1956. Mural painting. Aurora Hospital, Helsinki. HAM.

[Image 79.] Tove Jansson, “*Squirrels*”, 1956. Ceiling painting. Aurora Hospital, Helsinki. HAM.

[Image 62.] Urho Lehtinen, “*Jyväskylä*”, 1956. Oil, 172 x 311. Jyväskylä Central School. Currently in Pupuhuhta School. Jyväskylä Art Museum.

[Image 133.] Lars-Gunnar Nordström, *Kuperkeikka* (Somersault), 1956. Oil on hardboard, 70 x 200. Café *Eerikin baari*, Turku. Currently in the collection of Turku Art Museum.

- Onni Oja, *Äitejä ja lapsia* (Mothers and children), 1956. Fresco, 285 x 200. Aurora Hospital, Helsinki. HAM. [Image 80.]
- Matti Petäjä, *Omenankeruu* (Picking apples), 1956. Latex, 280 x 620. Koukkuniemi Retirement Home, Tampere. NYMU. [Image 5.]
- Anna Räsänen, *Matt; 5, 6, 7*, 1956. Fresco, 480 x 620. Rajamäki Church.
- Kauko Salmi, *Convent*, 1956. Oil on canvas, 200 x 500. Amuri School, Tampere. NYMU. [Image 112.]
- Allan Salo, *Tampere*, 1956. Fresco, 275 x 385. Chamber of the City Council, now known as “The Old Library House”, Tampere. NYMU. [Image 72.]
- Helmer Selin, *Pietà*, 1956. Oil on canvas, 240 x 360. Jyväskylä Lyceum. Jyväskylä Art Museum. [Image 126.]
- Pentti Toivonen, *Leikkiä ja totta* (Play and reality), 1956. Secco, 150 x 728. Rahola School, Tampere. NYMU. [Image 101.]
- Pentti Toivonen, mural painting, 1956. Amuri School dental clinic, Tampere. Painted over.
- Taisto Toivonen, *Orava* (Squirrel), 1956. Oil/tempera on canvas, 131 x 251. Tampere Savings Bank. Currently in storage. Tampere Art Museum. [Image 95.]
- Olavi Valavuori, *Allegro*, 1956. Fresco, 300 x 670. Myllykallio (now Lauttasaari) School, Helsinki. HAM. [Image 74.]
- Nina Vanas and Liisa Rautiainen, “*Goodbye*”, 1956. Mural painting. Karihaara School, Kemi. [Image 96.]

1957

- Arvid Broms, *Eteenpäin ja korkeammalle* (Onward and upward), 1957. Oil/alkyd on canvas glued to the wall, 270 x 1450. Porthania, University of Helsinki. [Image 131.]
- Mauri Favén, *Aetas Aurea*, 1957. Haapaniemi School. Oil on canvas, 170 x 350. Currently in storage. Kuopio Art Museum. [Image 89.]
- Erkki Heikkilä, *Vuodenajat* (Seasons), 1957. Oil on canvas, 197 x 605. Vaajakoski School. Currently in Palokka School, Jyväskylä. Jyväskylä Art Museum. [Image 100.]
- Tapani Jokela, *Canasta*, 1957. Oil on canvas, 187 x 509. Tuomela School (now HYK), Hämeenlinna.
- Annie Krokfors, *Arbete tyglar livets villkor* (Work harnesses the conditions of life), 1957. Oil, 200 x 360. Kokkola Savings Bank. Currently in Kokkola City Hall. Kokkola Art Museum. [Image 75.]
- Olavi Laine, *Mensan tehdas* (Mensa factory), 1957. Oil, 130 x 240. Mensa Oy, Hämeenlinna. Current location unknown.
- Juhani Linnovaara, *Fazerin kanttiinissa* (In Fazer’s canteen), 1957. Oil on canvas, 280 x 470. Fazer Factories, Vantaa. [Image 58.]
- Kauko Salmi, mural painting, 1957. Sampo School, Tampere. NYMU. [Image 134.]
- Hilkka Toivola, *Portti Itään ja Länteen* (Gate to the East and West), 1957. Fresco, 420 x 1035. Customs, Turku Harbour. WAM. [Image 91.]

1958

- Arvid Broms, *Lakeuden kansan vaellus* (The wayfaring of the people of the expanse), 1958. Seinäjoki County Building. Currently a Movie Theatre. Kalevankatu 14, Seinäjoki.
- Erik Enroth, *Nyky aika* (Present day), 1958. Oil, 165 x 450. Tammela Library, Tampere. Currently in storage. NYMU. [Image 119.]
- Otso Karpakka, *Kalapoika* (Fishing boy), 1958. Tempera on canvas, 215 x 450. Central Secondary (now Puropelto) School. WAM. [Image 129.]

LIST OF WORKS

- [Image 123.] Erkki Koponen, *Nuorta elämää* (Young life), 1958. Fresco. Helsinki School of Economics.
- [Image 93.] Olavi Laine, *Virtasalmi*, 1958. Oil, 190 x 375. Cooperative Society of Virtasalmi. Tradeka Art Collection.
- [Image 67.] Pentti Melanen, "*Lahti*", 1958. Tempera on canvas, 263 x 772. Lahti City Hall. Lahti Art Museum.
- [Image 94.] Onni Oja, "*Welcome*", 1958. Oil on hardboard, 400 x 180. Lohja Savings Bank.
- [Image 121.] Allan Salo, *Kalastajat* (Fishermen), 1958. Oil on canvas 120 x 323. University of Tampere. NYMU.
- [Image 110.] Taisto Toivonen, "*Fire fighters*", 1958. Oil, 210 x 330. Pispala Fire Station, Tampere. NYMU.
- [Image 73.] Olavi Valavuori, *Versio* (Version), 1958. Mosaic, height of the figures 370. Pyynikki Swimming Pool, Tampere. NYMU.

1959

- [Image 53.] Lauri Ahlgrén, *Vapaapäivä* (Day off), 1959. Oil and tempera on canvas, 300 x 400. Seminaari School, Heinola. State Art Collection.
- Birger Carlstedt, mural painting, 1959. Houtskär School.
- Erkki Heikkilä, *Pakkasen henki* (The spirit of the frost), 1959. Oil on hardboard, 196 x 398. Aholaita Kindergarten, Jyväskylä. Currently in storage. Jyväskylä Art Museum.
- Unto Heikkinen, *Kuopionlahti* (Kuopio Bay), 1959. Oil, 68 x 326. KOP (now Nordea) Bank, Kuopio.
- Tapani Jokela, *Kuusi* (Six), 1959. Oil on canvas, 200 x 350. Männistö School, Kuopio. Currently in storage. Kuopio Art Museum.
- [Image 135.] Kimmo Kaivanto, *Ystävämme* (Our friends), 1959. Oil on concrete. Saukonpuisto School, Tampere. NYMU.
- Yrjö Lalla, *Rakentajat* (Builders), 1959. Oil, 190 x 99. KOP (now Nordea) Bank, Mynämäki.
- [Image 99.] Unto Pusa, *Kotimaamme ompe Suomi* (Our homeland is Finland), 1959. Oil on canvas, 330 x 564. Käpylä School, Helsinki. HAM.
- [Image 90.] Olli Seppänen, *Leirielämää* (Camp life), 1959. Oil on canvas, 232 x 511. Teuvo Pakkala School, Oulu. Oulu Art Museum.
- Veikko Vionoja, "*Round game*", 1959. Oil and tempera on canvas, 250 x 340. Imatra Lyceum. Currently in storage. State Art Collection.

1960

- Yngve Bäck, *Kalamatka kesäaamuna* (Fishing trip on a summer morning), 1960. Oil on canvas, 290 x 400. Hanasaari Power Plant, Helsinki. HAM.
- Stig Fredriksson, *Untitled*, 1960. Oil and tempera on canvas, 200 x 400. Äänekoski Office Building. State Art Collection.
- [Image 124.] Erkki Heikkilä, *Elämä ja aurinko* (Life and sun), 1960. Oil on canvas, 200 x 420. Cooperative Bank of Central Finland (*Keski-Suomen Osuuspankki*), Jyväskylä.
- Erkki Hervo, *Untitled*, 1960. Tempera on canvas, 220 x 330. Lappeenranta Secondary School. State Art Collection.
- Tauno Hämeranta, *Sillanrakentaja* (Bridge builders), 1960. Oil on hardboard, 160 x 443. Saukonpuisto School, Tampere. Currently in storage. NYMU.
- [Image 54.] Tapani Jokela, "*Wheel*", 1960. Oil and tempera on canvas, 220 x 500. Hamina Lyceum. Currently in Hamina Library. State Art Collection.

- Olli Miettinen, *Kehrä* (Spindle), 1960. Oil/tempera on canvas, 320 x 500. Porthania, University of Helsinki. [Image 66.]
- Unto Pusa, *Suma* (Sweep), 1960. Tempera on chipboard, 340 x 1015. Teachers' College, now Särkelä School, Kemijärvi.
- Lennart Segerstråle, *Joutsenten paluu keväällä* (Return of the swans in spring), 1960. Oil, 210 x 347. KOP Bank Rovaniemi. Currently in Rovaniemi Theatre.
- Sam Vanni, *Contrapunctus*, 1960. Oil, 150 x 450. Helsinki Adult Education Centre. HAM. [Image 136.]

1961

- Birger Carlstedt, *Kissan viikset* (Cat's whiskers), 1961. Television Station, Helsinki. [Image 120.]
- Erik Enroth, *Tie* (Road), 1961. Oil on hardboard, 400 x 580. University of Tampere. [Image 8.]
- Johannes Gebhard, a copy of Albert Edelfelt's *Turun Akatemian vihkiäiset 1640* (The dedication of the Academy of Turku in 1640), 1961. Main Building of the University of Helsinki. [Image 8.]
- Unto Heikkinen, *Elämä voittaa* (Life will prevail), 1961. Oil and tempera on canvas, 200 x 500. Tarinaharju Sanatorium. Currently in Kuopio University Hospital / Tarina Hospital, Siilijärvi. Kuopio Art Museum.
- Juhani Linnovaara, *Excelsior*, 1961. Oil and tempera on canvas, 230 x 425. Seinäjoki Lyceum. Currently in Seinäjoki Campus House. State Art Collection. [Image 55.]
- Hilkka Toivola, "*Turku*", 1961. Oil, 140 x 300. Postal Savings Bank, Turku. Current location unknown. [Image 92.]

1962

- Kimmo Kaivanto, *Niin hyvälle kuin pahoillekin* (For the good and bad alike), 1962. Oil on canvas, 460 x 220. Koukkuniemi Retirement Home, Tampere. NYMU. [Image 142.]
- Vieno Orre, *Väri ja rytmi* (Colour and rhythm), 1962. Tempera on canvas, 142 x 1980. Pääskyvuori School, Turku. WAM. [Image 88.]
- Unto Pusa, *Keskus* (Centre), 1962. Oil and tempera on canvas, 235 x 450. Kakkola District Court. State Art Collection. [Image 56.]
- Olli Reiman, *Maan luominen* (Creation of the earth), 1962. Oil on canvas, 195 x 393. Taivallahti School, Helsinki. HAM.
- Jaakko Somersalo, "*Red painting*", 1962. Oil on canvas, 240 x 550. Hyvinkää Church. [Image 65.]

1963

- Lauri Ahlgrén, *Yhtäaikaisia tapahtumia sinisessä tasossa* (Simultaneous events on a blue level), 1963. Secco, 630 x 1235. Kuopio Theatre. Kuopio Art Museum. [Image 143.]
- Yngve Bäck, *Piazza*, 1963. Tempera on canvas, 400 x 550. Valkoinen Sali ("White Hall"), Helsinki. HAM. [Image 3.]
- Erkki Heikkilä, *Nuoruus* (Youth), 1963. Oil, 200 x 408. Cygnaeus School. Currently in Palokka School, Jyväskylä. Jyväskylä Art Museum. [Image 128.]
- Pauli Koskinen, *Suomen kansan itsenäisyyden tie* (The road of independence of the Finnish nation), 1963. Oil, 142 x 275. Keljo School, Jyväskylä. Jyväskylä Art Museum.
- Unto Pusa, *Kansa rakentaa* (The nation builds), 1963. Oil on hardboard, 272 x 520. Kansa Insurance Company. Currently at Mandatum Life, Helsinki. [Image 116.]

LIST OF WORKS

Lennart Segerstråle, *Maamme* (Our Land), 1963. Jakobstad Vocational School, now Optima. Jakobstad.

Hilkka Toivola, *Palloveli* (Ball game), 1963. Tempera on canvas, 200 x 460. Kuparivuori School, Naantali.

1964

Unto Heikkinen, *Crescendo*, 1964. Oil, 198 x 307. Library of the Särkiniemi School, Kuopio. Currently in storage. Kuopio Art Museum.

[Image 69.] Tapani Jokela, *Vesiratas* (Waterwheel), 1964. Oil on canvas, 273 x 599. Vantaa City Hall. Vantaa Art Museum.

[Image 103.] Matti Petäjä, *Paikka auringossa* (A place in the sun), 1964. Oil, three panels, 210 x 160 each. Sampola School. Currently in Frenckell Building, Tampere. NYMU.

1965

[Image 147.] Pentti Hartelin, *Aamu* (Morning), 1965. Mixed media, 149 x 190. Pellervo School, Tampere. NYMU.

Eero Hiironen, *Läpi harmaan* (Through grey), 1965. Oil on canvas, 146 x 296. Adult Education Centre, Turku. WAM.

[Image 57.] Erkki Koponen, *Energian purkaus* (Eruption of energy), 1965. Tempera, 135 x 360. State Office Building, Helsinki. State Art Collection.

Lauri Laitala, *Suvi* (Summer), 1965. Oil, 144 x 199. Pellervo School, Tampere. NYMU.

[Image 145.] Ahti Lavonen, *Kaksi kirjettä* (Two letters), 1965. Oil on canvas, 233 x 500. Kallio Office Building, Helsinki. Currently in storage. HAM.

Viljo Suurhasko, *Ajan kuva* (Picture of time), 1965. Oil on hardboard, 150 x 305. Kuuvuori Nursery, Turku. Currently in storage. WAM.

Hilkka Toivola, *Työ ja tieto* (Work and knowledge), 1965. Oil on hardboard, 160 x 275. Luolavuori School, Turku. WAM.

[Image 137.] Sam Vanni, *Höyrypannu* (Steam boiler), 1965. Oil, 286 x 500. Tampere Vocational School, now the University of Applied Sciences. State Art Collection.

Sam Vanni, *Työ ja perhe* (Work and family), 1965. Postal Savings Bank, Helsinki. Current location unknown.

1966

Erik Enroth, *Meksikolainen tori* (Mexican market), 1966. Oil on canvas, 227 x 560. Kallio Office Building, Helsinki. HAM.

[Image 146.] Kimmo Kaivanto, *Kesäkuvia* (Summer images), 1966. Oil, 238 x 319. Pellervo School, Tampere. NYMU.

Lauri Laitala, *Airut* (Courier), 1966. Oil on canvas, 180 x 430. Finance Office, Tampere. Currently in Sampola School. NYMU.

Juhani Tarna, *Savuja* (Smokes), 1966. Oil on chipboard, 256 x 664. Satakunta University of Applied Science, Pori.

Taisto Toivonen, *Vuodenajat* (Seasons), 1966. Mixed media, 70 x 305 and 70 x 905. Commercial college, Tampere. Current location unknown.

Sam Vanni, *Revontulten välkkeessä* (In the shine of the northern lights), 1966. Oil, 183 x 464. Lapland Vocational College, Rovaniemi. State Art Collection. [Image 138.]

1967

Erik Enroth, *Rakentajat* (Builders), 1967. Oil on hardboard, 274 x 170. Vocational College *Varia*, Vantaa. Vantaa Art Museum.

Kimmo Kaivanto, *Perustiedon maisema* (Landscape of basic knowledge), 1967. Oil, 276 x 235. Tesomajärvi School, Tampere. NYMU.

Otso Karpakka, *Peinture*, 1967. Oil on canvas, 180 x 500. Western Secondary (now Rieskalähde) School, Turku. WAM. [Image 149.]

Anitra Lucander, canvas application, 1967. 700 x 1000. Roihuvuori School, Helsinki. HAM. [Image 144.]

Unto Pusa, *H₂SO₄/Harjalta, Uusikaupunki, Kokkola, Kotka*, 1967. Oil on chipboard, 285 x 1120. Rikkihappo, now Kemira, Helsinki.

Allan Salo, *Rakentajat* (Builders), 1967. Oil on hardboard, 250 x 150. Hatanpää Hospital, Tampere. NYMU. [Image 118.]

1968

Arvid Broms, “*Lappajärvi’s history*”, 1968. Triptych, oil on chipboard. Restaurant Kantakrouvi at the Lappajärvi Municipal Office. Currently in Lappajärvi Municipality Art Collection.

Lauri Laitala, *Talvileikki* (Winter play), 1968. Oil, 290 x 250. Tesomajärvi School, Tampere. NYMU. [Image 148.]

1970

Matti Mikkola, *Linnun siivin* (With the wings of a bird), 1970. Oil, 208 x 600. Oulu Vocational College. Oulu Art Museum.

Liisa Rautiainen, *Valvova silmä* (Watching eye), 1970. Two outdoor mural paintings. Kemi Fire Station. Kemi Art Museum.

ABBREVIATIONS

Archives and Museums

AFSA = Archives of the Art for Schools Association, National Archives

AKF = Archives of the Alfred Kordelin Foundation

CA = City Archives (e.g. Tampere CA = Tampere City Archives)

FCF = Archives of the Finnish Cultural Foundation

FP = Archives of the Finnish Parliament

HAM = Helsinki Art Museum

MPA = Museum of Public Art, Lund, Sweden

NCVA = Archives of the National Council for Visual Arts, National Archives

NYMU = Tampere Museum of Contemporary Art

PU = Archives of the Painters' Union

SAC = Archives of the State Art Commission

SMA = Sodankylä Municipal Archives

WAM = Turku City Art Collection

Newspapers

AL = Aamulehti

HBL = Hufvudstadsbladet

HS = Helsingin Sanomat

IS = Ilta-Sanomat

TS = Turun Sanomat

US = Uusi Suomi

Other

JR = Johanna Ruohonen

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- Annual reports
- Board of the foundation (*Hallitus*): Minutes
- Division of art (*Taiteen jaosto*): Minutes
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INDEX OF ARTISTS

Page numbers in bold indicate images.

- Aalto, Alvar (1898–1976), 84, 131, 148, 221–223, 275
- Aalto, Eeli (b. 1931), 46
- Aalto, Ilmari (1891–1934), 69, 259
- Aaltonen, Wäinö (1894–1966), 76–78, 81, 92, 107–108, 259
- Ahlgrén, Lauri (b. 1929), 128, 134–**135**, 136, 148, 162, 167–168, 177, 217, 237–**238**, 280–281
- Alanen, Joseph (1885–1920), 72–**74**, 273–274
- Alanko, Uuno (1878–1964), 46, 88, 95, 160, 163
- Bjurström, Tor (Swedish, 1888–1966), 278
- Bloc, André (French, 1896–1966), 225
- Blomstedt, Väinö (1871–1947), 72, 258
- Boehm, Aino von (1892–1939), **97**–98, 275
- Boehm, Tuomas von (1916–2000), 116, 197–**199**, 276
- Broms, Arvid (1910–1968), 51, 151, 210, 223, **226**–229, 279, 283
- Bäck, Yngve (1904–1990), **16**, 112–**113**, 117, 151, 265–266, 276, 280–281
- Cainberg, Erik (1771–1816), 58
- Carlstedt, Birger (1907–1975), 84, **117**–118, 194, 199–200, 222, 225–28, 276, 280–281
- Cawén, Alvar (1886–1935), 88–**89**, 90, 258, 274–275
- Cézanne, Paul (French, 1839–1906), 46
- Collin, Marcus (1882–1966), 258, 274
- Diehl, Gösta (1899–1964), 163, 171, 258, 275
- Edelfelt, Albert (1854–1905), 60, 66, 107–108, 258, 273
- Ehrström, Eric O. W. (1881–1934), 77, 142–143, 250, 275
- Ekelund, Ragnar (1892–1960), 151, 163, 167, 267
- Ekman, Robert Wilhelm (1808–1873), 25, 37, **59**–60, 62
- Enckell, Magnus (1870–1925), 25, 50, 68–**69**, 70, 258, 273–274
- Enckell, Torger (1901–1991), 117
- Engberg, Gabriel (1872–1953), 258–259, 274
- Enroth, Erik (1917–1975), 46, 52, 118, 140, 169, 200–**201**, 203, 208–**210**, **211**, 239, 258, 269, 272, 277–279, 281–283
- Ericsson, Henry (1898–1933), 84–86
- Eskola, Uuno (1889–1958), 146
- Favén, Antti (1882–1948), 102, 258, 275
- Favén, Mauri (1920–2006), 167, **182**, 278–279
- Finch, Alfred William (Anglo-Belgian, resided in Finland, 1854–1930), 69
- Finne, Gunnar (1886–1952), 82
- Forsén, Yrjö (1889–1970), 50, 77–**78**, 84, 200, 274
- Fredriksson, Stig (1929–2008), 136, 266, 280
- Gallen-Kallela, Akseli (1865–1931), 36, 50, 58, 60–**61**, 62, 65–66, 72, 76–77, 81, 83, 90, 98, 246, 273–274
- Gebhard, Johannes (1894–1976), **60**, 108, 281
- Granfelt, Erik (1919–1990), 171
- Gröndahl, Tauno (1911–1970), 264, 277
- Grönvall, Sven (1908–1975), 117, 142–**143**, 194, 250–251, 275, 277
- Hakava, Aale (1909–1995), 114, 126, 146, 167, 177, 229, 267
- Halonen, Pekka (1865–1933), 64–**65**, 66–69, 72–74, 76, 200, 236, 255, 258, 273–274
- Hamara, Aarne (1910–1966), 110–**111**, 112–114, 276–277
- Hartelin, Pentti (1922–1970), 239–**240**, 282

- Heikkilä, Erkki (1933–1996), 140, 186, 192–**193**, 200, 214–**215**, 216, 218–**219**, 220, 234, 279–281.
- Heikkinen, Unto (1931–1991), 168, 280–282
- Heinonen, Aarre (1906–2003), 117, 133, 222, 276
- Helminen, Martta (1890–1983), 258, 274
- Henriksson, Harry (1907–1981), **23**, 116, 265, 276–277
- Hervo, Erkki (1924–1994), 136, 234, 280
- Hienonen, Erkki (b. 1933), 52, 118, 178, 184
- Hiironen, Eero (b. 1938), 242, 264, 282
- Hämeranta, Tauno (1910–1987), 112–**113**, 164–165, 229, 265, 277, 280
- Härkönen, Aappo (1912–1991), 264
- Jansson, Tove (1914–2001), 116, 126, 164, 171–**172**, 173, 197–**198**, 201–**202**, 265, 276–282
- Jokela, Tapani (b. 1922), **135**–136, 151, 157–**158**, 167, 266, 279–282
- Jorn, Asger (Danish, 1914–1973), 220
- Juvonen, Mauno (1925–2010), 194–195
- Järnefelt, Eero (1863–1937), 60, 63, 69, **71**–72, 81, 107, 258, 273–274
- Kaivanto, Kimmo (1932–2012), 229–**230**, 236–**237**, 239–**240**, 280–232
- Kallinen, Matti (1921–1977), 156–157, **179**–180, 200, 277
- Kardén, Jorma (1925–2001), 134
- Karpakka, Otso (1914–2005), 9–11, 46, 161, 180, 218, 223–**224**, **241**–242, 280, 283
- Kauria, Eino (1903–1997), 79–**80**, 84–**86**, **109**–110, 222, 275–277
- Kivijärvi, Harry (1931–2010), **159**, **178**–179, 203, 272, 278
- Koivisto, Pentti (1917–1961), **205**–206, 277–278
- Koponen, Erkki (1899–1996), 118, 133–134, 136–**138**, 144–**145**, 148, 150–151, 171–173, 204, 212–**213**, 277–8, 280, 282
- Koskinen, Pauli (1921–2003), 281
- Krogh, Per (Norwegian, 1889–1965), 94
- Krokfors, Annie (1901–1994), **168**–169, 279
- Kulovesi, Erkki (1895–1971), 46, 160, 260
- Laine, Olavi (1922–1983), 186–**187**, 199–208–**209**, 265, 269, 278–280
- Laitala, Lauri (1931–1984), 239, 241–**242**, 282–283
- Lalla, Yrjö (1908–1993), 269, 280
- Lavonen, Ahti (1928–1970), 218–219, **239**, 282
- Le Corbusier (Swiss, 1887–1965), 39–40, 47, 220
- Léger, Fernand (French, 1881–1955), 33, 37, 40, 43, 46, 118, 141, 192, 220, 222–223
- Lehtinen, Urho (1887–1982), **145**–146, 278
- Leinonen, Paavo (1894–1964), 112–**115**, 188, 277
- Lhôte, André (French, 1885–1962), 46, 118
- Lindfors, Anton (1890–1943), 88–**89**, 258, 275
- Linnovaara, Juhani (b. 1934), 136–**137**, **141**–142, 279, 281
- Lompolo, Jouni (1936–2010), **235**–236
- Lucander, Anitra (1918–2000), 234–**235**, **238**–239, 283
- Löytänä, Kalle (1887–1952), 258, 274
- Matinpalo, Leo Antero (1900–1990), 160, 206, 236, 250
- Matisse, Henri (French, 1969–1954), 46
- Melanen, Pentti (1917–2003), 151–**152**, 218, 280
- Miettinen, Olli (1899–1969), 117, 150–**152**, 167, **169**, 210, 229, 167–268, 277, 281
- Mikkola, Matti (b. 1930), 283
- Mikola, Armas (1901–1983), 156
- Mitikka, Valma (1921–1998), 167
- Munch, Edvard (Norwegian, 1863–1944), 42
- Mäkelä, Juho (1885–1943), 92–**93**, 275
- Mäki, Oili (1925–2011), 236
- Naatti, Arvo (b. 1925), 234
- Niinivirta, Aarne (1906–1942), 98

- Nixon, Nils (Swedish, 1912–1998), 228
 Nopsanen, Aarne (1907–1990), 231
 Nordström, Lars–Gunnar (b. 1924), 51–52, 150, 217, 222–223, 226–**227**, 228, **230**–231, 277, 279
 Nyman, Olle (Swedish, 1909–1999), 180–**181**
 Oja, Onni (1909–2004), 110, 116, 125–**126**, 131–**132**, 164, 167, 171–**174**, 186–**187**, 188, 197, **199**–200, 222–223, 276–290
 Ojanen, Felix (1898–1970), 277
 Ollila, Yrjö (1887–1932), 50, 70–**73**, 79–**80**, 81–**82**, 83–**85**, 258, 260, 274–275
 Orozco, José Clemente (Mexican, 1883–1949), 48, 201
 Orre, Vieno (1920–1984), 180–**181**, 281
 Paavola, Johannes (1894–1961), 156–157
 Pekala, Pauli (n/a), 229
 Petäjä, Matti (1912–1995), 10–**11**, **41**, 46, 165, 173–714, 195–**196**, 277–279, 282
 Picasso, Pablo (Spanish, 1881–1973), 95
 Pillet, Edgard (French, 1912–1996), 222
 Pullinen, Laila (b. 1933), 239
 Pusa, Unto (1913–1973), 33, 40–41, 46, 51–52, 107, 117, 122, 133, 136–**137**, 150–153, 157, 160, 163–164, 170, 178, 192–**193**, 203–**207**, 208, 217, 225, 229–231, 234–**235**, 236, 265, 275–276, 278, 280–282
 Puvis de Chavannes, Pierre (French, 1824–1898), 42, 66, 68–69
 Rapp, Eino (1902–1953), 79–**80**
 Rautiainen, Kalle (1889–1969), 122, 186, 218
 Rautiainen, Liisa (b. 1919), 188–**189**, 204, 279, 283
 Reiman, Olli (1933–2004), 281
 Revold, Axel (Norwegian, 1887–1962), 44, 94
 Riihimäki, Heimo (1907–1962), 234–236
 Rissanen, Juho (1873–1950), 26, 66, **67**–74, 76, 81, 83–84, 103, 162, 200, 258, 273–274
 Rivera, Diego (Mexican, 1886–1957), 43–44, 48
 Rolfsen, Alf (Norwegian, 1895–1979), 43, **45**–46, 94, 192
 Runeberg, Walter (1838–1920), 155
 Ruokokoski, Jalmari (1886–1936), 82–**83**, 86, 274
 Räsänen, Anna (1927–1969), 46, 144, 160, 236, 279
 Räsänen, Kauko (b. 1926), 239
 Saarinen, Yrjö (1899–1958), 84–**85**, 86, 265, 275, 277
 Sallinen, Tyko (1879–1955), 70, 90–**91**, 92–94, 245, 275–276
 Salmenlinna, Antti (1897–1968), 107, 112–**115**, 146, 188, 277
 Salmi, Kauko (1928–2005), 175, 203–**204**, 226–**227**, 279
 Salo, Allan (1901–1978), **161**–162, 200, 208–**209**, 210–**211**, 218, 229, 279–280, 283
 Santanen, Erkki (1925–1990), 218–**219**, 220
 Segerstråle, Lennart (1892–1975), 39, 46, 52, 79–**80**, 81, 94–96, 103–**104**, 105, 107, 112–116, 126, 142, 144–**147**, 161, 179, 183, 195–199, 236, 262, 275–278, 281–282
 Selin, Helmer (b. 1920), 214–**216**, 218, 251, 279
 Seppänen, Olli (1921–1968), 183–**184**, 280
 Simberg, Hugo (1873–1917), 25, 258, 273
 Siqueros, David Alfaro (Mexican, 1896–1974), 43, 48
 Sironi, Mario (Italian, 1985–1961), 43, 48
 Sjöstrand, Carl Eneas (Swedish, resided in Finland, 1828–1906), 59
 Sjöström, Wilho (1873–1944), 72–**73**, 258, 266, 274
 Skovgaard, Joakim (Danish, 1856–1933), 94
 Slotte, Carl (1878–1946), 82
 Soini, Irja (1913–1995), 128, 169, 195–**196**, 278
 Soldan–Brofelt, Venny (1863–1945), 63, 68–69, 88, 116, 258
 Somersalo, Jaakko (1916–1966), 148–**149**, 237, 281

- Suurhasko, Vilho (b. 1937), 264, 282
 Stén, Helge (1923–1965), 140, 268, 278
 Särkkä, Matti (1908–1995), 276
 Tanner, Liisa (1902–1986), 156, 266
 Tapiovaara, Tapio (1908–1982), 77
 Tapper, Kain (1930–2004), 148, 237
 Tarna, Juhani (b. 1937), 169, 282
 Thomé, Verner (1878–1953), 50, 70–71, 72, 258, 273–274
 Toivola, Hilikka (1909–2002), 46, 116, 132, 161–162, 169, **185**–188, 190–**191**, 200, 264, 276, 279, 281–282
 Toivonen, Pentti (1921–1973), 40, 165, **194**–195, 200, 279
 Toivonen, Taisto (b. 1921), 188–**189**, 190, 200, **202**–203, 279–280, 283
 Tokkola, Lauri (Lassi) (1899–1975), 96–**97**, 275
 Tukiainen, Aimo (1917–1996), 102, 133
 Tuukkanen, Bruno (1891–1979), 116, 142–**143**, 260, 276
 Törnvall-Collin, Eva (1896–1982), 84–**85**, 275
 Valavuori, Olavi (1921–1992), 164–**166**, 182, 233, 245, 279–280
 Vanas, Nina (1906–1977), 188–**189**, 204, 279
 Vanni, Sam (1908–1992), 51–52, 117, 134–138, 160, 222–223, 226, 229–**230**, 231–**232**, 233, 236, 281–283
 Verho, Yrjö (1901–1992), 167
 Viirilä, Reino (1901–1999), 151
 Vionoja, Veikko (1909–2001), 134, 280
 Wainio, Urpo (1910–1975), 134