



# INTRODUCTION TO THE REALM OF SERLACHIUS

## GUSTAF ADOLF SERLACHIUS

Gustaf Adolf Serlachius (1830–1901) established a ground wood mill on Mäntänkoski in 1868. Despite of serious problems he was able to build an economically profitable industrial company. Patron Serlachius loved art and led the society constructed around his paper mill with paternal hands.

In 1868 G. A. Serlachius bought the western bank of the Mäntänkoski rapids, together with a share of the hydropower rights. Beside the rapids he built a ground wood mill, which was completed in March 1869. In the following three decades his industry and intensive work had brought two ground wood mills, two steam sawmills, a paper mill, a cardboard converting factory and a bag factory into being.

The ground wood mill had to overcome a multitude of practical and financial difficulties in its early years. Mänttä was a remote place, far from the main transport routes of those days. The pulp that the mill produced had to be drawn by horses to Hämeenlinna and from there on to St. Petersburg via Viipuri.



Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Portrait of Gustaf Adolf Serlachius, 1887

G.A. Serlachius has a place in the industrial history of Finland as one of the pioneers who created links to markets in Western Europe. He took also initiative to acquire Finland's first icebreaker to the Baltic Sea.

G.A. Serlachius believed that Finland's future lay in education and culture. He worked in many ways to promote the Finnish language and Finnish culture in a period of growing national awareness. Thanks to his generosity, an elementary school and a library were opened in Mänttä in 1871. The mill owner of Mänttä organized many other services needed by the industrial society but not organized by the municipality.

## G.A. SERLACHIUS AS AN ART PATRON

Frequent trips outside Finland broadened G. A. Serlachius' world view. On his journeys he often visited international industrial fairs, many of which included extensive art exhibitions. He personally acquainted with several artists and prominent cultural figures. The most important of these contacts was with the painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela. The artist visited Mänttä several times and the gentlemen later met also abroad, for example in Paris. Serlachius demonstrated that he understood the essence of creative work, and he encouraged and guided the young artist in many ways. Another artist whose life G. A. Serlachius followed closely was the sculptor Emil Wikström, whom he encouraged to dedicate himself to art full-time. Wikström was a frequent visitor to Mänttä and the two men also travelled abroad together.

## THE SECOND MASTER, GÖSTA SERLACHIUS

Gösta Serlachius (1876–1942) converted the paper company that his uncle G. A. Serlachius established into one of the most important forest combines in Finland. This mill owner, who was direct in his business affairs, had also a delicate and sensitive side, particularly apparent in his relation to art.

In 1902 Gösta Serlachius became a member of the board of the family business. He was the managing director of G.A. Serlachius Ab from 1913 to 1942. Gösta Serlachius was a talented economic innovator with a gift for choosing the right moment to act. He could see the big technical and financial picture in industrial operations and understood the importance of improving social conditions. He laid the foundations for the family company's growth into a major corporation with operations in many parts of Finland.



Bror Börjeson, Portrait of Gösta Serlachius, 1936

## GÖSTA SERLACHIUS AND ART

Alongside his engagement in industrial development, art played an important part in Gösta Serlachius' life. In the first two decades of the 20th century he added his collection by buying individual works, especially by Akseli Gallen-Kallela. Gösta Serlachius was a well-known art collector and patron of arts already in 1920's. In 1933 he established a Fine Arts Foundation carrying his own name to maintain his unique art collection of some 250 artworks.

Gösta Serlachius wanted his art collection to stay in Mänttä, where the collection was born. He once explained this and said, that art and culture was not only the privilege of bigger cities, but art belonged also to the countryside and should be reachable for everyone. His great dream was to build an art museum in Mänttä. The process of planning the art museum continued throughout the 1930's. This project was interrupted however, when he died in 1942. The foundation's board of trustees decided to give up the museum project as the Second World War still went on.



Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Thunderclouds, 1897

The emphasis of the Serlachius' collection was and still today is on the art of Finnish Golden Age. It also consists works of old European masters as well as contemporary artworks. Gösta Serlachius had no prejudice against the contemporary art of his time. Today we are enjoying one of the most significant private art collections in the Nordic countries. According to Gösta's wish, the home for this collection is still in Mänttä, at Serlachius Museums.

## BUILDING AN IDEAL SOCIETY

Art Town Mänttä is part of industrial heritage of Finland. Four generations of Serlachiuses lead Mänttä's paper mills, exported Finnish paper, created international business relations and made their mark developing Finland.

Already in G.A. Serlachius' times mill took care developing the society: For example there was no local police presence until 1892, when the company hired police at the mill. Before that even G.A. himself had served as a police officer in Mänttä. He constructed his first worker housing in 1870. In 1936 already half of the people in Mänttä were living in company housing. Organized health care began in Mänttä 1871 when G.A. and his workforce together established a poor relief fund. In the era of Gösta Serlachius the company hired a midwife and a company doctor. The company played a major role in establishing the regional hospital. It also took care of the public education and by the end of the 19th century Mänttä had developed in to an educational centre with the best equipped school in the entire region and the largest library anywhere between Tampere and Jyväskylä.



The development of transport, roads and railway were of course in the company's interest. Serlachius purchased ships and cars. It had even an airfield here in Mänttä. The biggest achievement of G.A. was to arrange the main railway line pass Vilppula in 1883. The company took also care for the telephone communications in Mänttä until 1954.

There is easily found many examples more: a cemetery, daytime nursery care, shops. One could say that Serlachius masters and the company nearly managed to create an ideal society. Finnish government used Mänttä and the paper combine as a show case of the welfare state and presented it to rulers from all over the world for example to Nehru and Elisabeth II.

## MUSEUM IN THE MANOR

Gösta Serlachius' second wife, Ruth Serlachius had observed the museum project of her husband for many years. In 1945 she and Serlachius family made a decision that finally solved the problem. A part of Joenniemi manor, the residence of Serlachius, was opened as a museum in August 1945. It became the eighth art museum in Finland at that time.

During the years 1943-1976, under leadership of R. Erik Serlachius (1901-1980), who represented the next generation, the museum in Joenniemi was open regularly but for quite short periods. In 1972 Fine Arts Foundation acquired the Joenniemi manor and surrounding park of Olof and Peter Serlachius.

Museum operations gained new speed as Gustaf Serlachius (1935-2009) led the Foundation between 1976-2009. Joenniemi manor was renovated thoroughly in 1983-84, after which art museum operations could utilize the entire building. Nowadays the manor still operates as an art museum, presenting mainly works from the Gösta Serlachius Fine Arts Foundation's collection. The manor together with the new extension, Gösta's Pavilion, is called Serlachius Museum Gösta.



In year 2000 the foundation acquired the former head office building of the paper industry combine G. A. Serlachius Ltd. It was decided that the so-called White house would be transformed into a cultural historical museum that presents the history of Finnish forest industry, the history of the G.A. Serlachius Ltd. as well as that of Mänttä. The former head office is nowadays called Serlachius Museum Gustaf.



## GÖSTA'S PAVILION

In 2010 Fine Arts Foundation opened an international architectural design competition to build an extension to Art Museum Gösta. The competition attracted 579 submissions from 42 countries. It is the largest international design competition ever organized in Finland, when considering the fact that the submission was also actualized. The competition was won by the Barcelona architectural firm MX\_Sl's work Parallels, designed by architects Héctor Mendoza, Mara Partida and Boris Bezan. Further design was launched on the basis of the submission, and the construction work began in autumn 2012.

Gösta's Pavilion descends in a gentle arc towards the lakeshore. It respects the manor and grows to his full dimensions towards the park. It is beautifully connected to the old manor by a glass corridor. The pavilion's basic structure consists of more than 100 laminated-timber columns and beams, which support the building and give it its distinctive appearance. The alternation of wood and glass surfaces impart a rhythm to the building and connect it to the surrounding park.

Gösta's Pavilion has a gross floor area of 5,700 square meters. It features 1,000 square meters of new exhibition space, a high-quality restaurant, a reception hall and a museum shop. The new building also offers staff office premises as well as modern storage facilities for the Gösta Serlachius Arts Foundation's substantial art collection.

The total cost of the construction project was around EUR 20 million. It was built entirely with the Foundation's own resources. The main contractor for the construction project was the company Jämsän Kone- and Rakennuspalvelu Oy. In the architectural design, the Finnish partner was the architectural firm Huttunen-Lipasti-Pakkanen.

The completion of the new museum building summer 2014 has meant multiplication of operations and made the Serlachius Museums a significant cultural attraction outside the major populated areas. Through this pavilion Gösta Serlachius' dream to build an own art museum in Mänttä came finally true.

## SERLACHIUS TODAY

Serlachius is carrying on the heritage of the paper patrons and their love for art, by keeping the utopia alive in the tiny art town of Mänttä. Serlachius offers people a place to explore exciting stories from the past and to experience the pulse of current issues through various contemporary art exhibitions. The collection of Gösta Serlachius Fine Arts Foundation is consisting nowadays over 13 000 art works and is one of the most important private art collections in the Nordic countries.

Alongside with art and history visitors at Serlachius will be astonished by the architecture, which goes perfectly hand in hand with Finnish lakeside nature. Nature is also present in the delicate cuisine of Restaurant Gösta. Chef de cuisine Henry Tikkanen, who has been awarded in domestic and international fields, describes his cuisine as natural, using local, pure and seasonal ingredients. Restaurant Gösta is considered as one of the top museum restaurants in Europe.



When Gustaf Adolf Serlachius came to Mänttä 150 years back, he could not have predicted such a future for the little village in the middle of the forest. But he was a man of dream and determination and today we witness that his journey has been successful. Forest is still a dominating element in Mänttä: The factory is working today and producing for example Serla-paper, a brand known by every Finn. In addition to this, the green gold is regarded valuable in itself. The surrounding forests and lakesides offer locals and visitors a place to slow down and feel the tranquility of natural. Serlachius is proud to transmit the experience of Finnish forest through its history, art, cuisine and the nature all around.

## AWARDS TO SERLACHIUS

2017 Second in Lonely Planet's list of Finland's top sights

2016 Award in XIII Spanish Biennial of Architecture and Urbanism (BEAU) in Granada (Pavilion and its designer MX\_SI)

2016 Domestic Tourism Business of the Year

2015 Museum of the Year in Finland

2015 Top Domestic Tourism Destination of the Year

2015 Merit Award in Wood Design and Building Awards of the Canadian Wood Council (the Pavilion)

2014 The Tampere Region Award

2014 Finalist in the Architecture Finlandia Prize (the Pavilion)

2014 The Wood Award (the Pavilion)

2013 Spanish International Architecture Prize (the Pavilion and its designer MX\_SI architectural studio)

2006 Museum act of the Year award, ICOM (international Council of Museums) - Finnish Committee awarded.

## RESTAURANT GÖSTA, AWARDS TO THE CHEF RESTAURATEUR HENRY TIKKANEN

Chairman of the Chef of the Year Academy

2003 10th Bocuse d'Or

2002 3rd Nordic Chef of the Year

2001 1st Chef of the Year, Finland



# SERLACHIUS

2. IN LONELY PLANET'S LIST OF FINLAND'S TOP SIGHTS 2017  
DOMESTIC TOURISM BUSINESS OF THE YEAR 2016  
MUSEUM OF THE YEAR IN FINLAND 2015