



Press release 4 November 2022

Exhibition of Serlachius contemporary art collection on display for the first time

The contemporary art collection of the Serlachius Museums in Finland has been growing since 2010, and it currently consists of more than five hundred works. The first exhibition from the collection, *Morning Coffee on the Roof of a Town*, gathers discussion topics of our time under different themes. The exhibition opens at Serlachius Museums in Mänttä on 5 November 2022.

The exhibition, named after a work of photographer **Ville Lenkkeri**, is curated by **Laura Kuurne**, Serlachius Museums' Head of Collections and Exhibitions. She says that, after more than ten years of collecting, it was good to pause and examine how the Fine Arts Foundation's contemporary art collection has begun to take shape. The exhibition features around sixty works, gathered under eight different themes.

As she went through the collection, Kuurne noticed that the works deal with lots of issues that have been raised in social discussion. The themes eventually evolved into #borders, #heroes, #roots, #hometown, #present, #unprotected, #roles and #nature. The themes are not addressed with wall texts; they have been replaced with hashtags, which lead into the topic but leave room for the viewers' own thoughts.

Contemporary art and social discussion

According to Laura Kuurne, art is an integral part of society and the ongoing discussion there. She sees the importance of art particularly in the way it observes and brings to light aspects that cannot necessarily be seen elsewhere. "In front of art works, an opportunity can open up to ponder and discuss even difficult topics and, at best, to understand life from someone else's perspective."

She believes that there could be more opportunities for art to be part of wider social discussion, but contemporary art is often perceived as being too obscure. On the other hand, one can ask why art should stimulate discussion. There are, in any case, plenty of opinions and channels for expressing opinions. Can play of colours and form language be a sufficient role for art?

“My own opinion is that art cannot be shackled, and a single role cannot be defined for it. To my delight, I find in the Serlachius collection both clearly expressed themes and works with more ambiguous interpretations, before which you can ponder issues more freely.”

Collection growing on foundation laid by Gösta Serlachius

The Serlachius contemporary art collection is steadily growing and is based on the same principles adopted by **Gösta Serlachius**, who founded the Fine Arts Foundation in the early 20th century. In addition to Finnish Golden Age and old European art, he was interested in the art of his own time. He forged long-term relationships with trusted artists, invited them to Mänttä and commissioned many works from them. This approach has continued in the Fine Arts Foundation's collection of contemporary art.

The collection is distinguished by a few artists from whom a significant number of works have been acquired and with whom one or more exhibitions have been held. They include **Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Elina Brotherus, Ville Lenkkeri, Marita Liulia, Esther Shalev-Gerz** and **Riiko Sakkinen**. The careers of several other artists are also being followed and collections of their works will be accumulated in the longer term. They are **Trish Morrissey, Noora Schroderus, Anna Retulainen, Reima Nevalainen, Stiina Saaristo** and **Santeri Tuori**.

In connection with the exhibition, the first collection book on Serlachius Museums' contemporary art has also been published. *Six Glimpses into a Collection*, published by Parvus Publishing, is edited by **Pauli Sivonen**, Director of Serlachius Museums. A Finnish version of the book, *Kuusi katsetta kokoelmaan*, has also been published.

The exhibition *Morning Coffee on the Roof of a Town* is open at Serlachius Museum Gösta from 5 November 2022 to 16 April 2023.

Press releases and photographs: <https://serlachius.fi/en/for-media/>

Photo: Serlachius Museums, Sampo Linkoneva

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The Serlachius Museums are open:

in the winter season, 1 September–31 May, from Tuesday to Sunday, 11 am–6 pm.

in the summer season, 1 June–31 August, every day 10 am–6 pm

Visiting addresses:

Serlachius Museum Gösta, Joenniementie 47, Mänttä

Serlachius Museum Gustaf, R. Erik Serlachiuksen katu 2, Mänttä

Serlachius Museums in the social media:

<https://facebook.com/serlachius>

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