



Media release June 11, 2024

## Patrons tells the story of the Serlachius family's art patronage

### Serlachius Headquarters | opening June 15

*Patrons* is an exhibition taking an in-depth look at the Serlachius family and their achievements as art patrons, paper industry pioneers and influential builders of Finnish society. Forests are highlighted as the source of wealth that enabled the family to become art patrons and assemble their prestigious art collection.

The family became art patrons in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Gustaf Adolf Serlachius – who founded Mänttä's first paper mill in 1868 – discovered two promising young talents, Akseli Gallen-Kallela and Emil Wikström. Serlachius began supporting these emerging Golden Age artists through direct patronage and by commissioning artworks for his private collection.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, G. A. Serlachius was succeeded by his nephew Gösta Serlachius, who established an art foundation in 1933 to oversee the family's expanding art collection. The foundation's work was later carried on by Ralph Erik Serlachius and Gustaf Serlachius.

Today the Gösta Serlachius Fine Arts Foundation Collection comprises over 10,000 artworks. It is famous especially for its many turn-of-the-century Golden Age masterpieces. Key artists represented in the collection include Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Albert Edelfelt, Helene Schjerfbeck, Hugo Simberg and Emil Wikström.

### Exhibition in the old headquarters

*Patrons* is a permanent exhibition linked to the history of the company headquarters and its reconstructed period rooms. The foundation's second museum, Serlachius Manor, is located outside the centre of Mänttä.

Serlachius embrace a policy of consciously blurring the traditional line between what is regarded as an art museum and a history museum. This approach is well aligned with the Serlachius story, in which many themes are uniquely intertwined, from art and architecture to corporate history, forests and Finnish identity.

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“A variety of historical artefacts and a selection of artworks are featured in the exhibition’s carefully designed visual journey. It also presents a wide selection of multimedia manuscripts written by our researchers, enlivened by a rich compliment of supporting illustrations,” says Pauli Sivonen, Director of the Serlachius Museums.

### **Building an ideal society**

The exhibition expands on the theme of art patronage by going deeper into the wider narrative of the mill community’s genesis. Thanks to the efforts of the Serlachius company, Mänttä became a prosperous industrial town that was proudly presented to Finnish and foreign dignitaries as the ideal Finnish community in the 1950s and 1960s.

Although the story of the G. A. Serlachius paper company ended with a corporate merger in 1986, the Gösta Serlachius Fine Arts Foundation and its prestigious art collection live on to this day. The foundation has transformed Mänttä into a one-of-a-kind cultural destination unparalleled in Finland.

The *Patrons* exhibition has been curated by Pauli Sivonen, Director of the Serlachius Museums. Its design has been created by Serlachius Museums’ head of Design, Tarja Väättä.

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

### **For further information and image requests, please contact:**

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### **Serlachius is 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 Manor, Joenniementie 47, Mänttä, Finland

Serlachius Headquarters, R. Erik Serlachiuksen katu 2, Mänttä, Finland

**Serlachius in the social media:** [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#)

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