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Riiko Sakkinen deconstructs Finnishness in Los moimoi de Fuengirola

Serlachius Headquarters | June 15, 2024–February 16, 2025

Riiko Sakkinen's latest exhibition is an anthropological study of Finnishness based on the artist's explorations of the Finnish community living in the Spanish town of Fuengirola. *Los moimoi de Fuengirola* opens at the Serlachius Headquarters on June 15.

The region of Fuengirola on the Costa del Sol is home to a community of 30,000 Finns. The town's mayor calls Fuengirola "Finland's southernmost city".

In Fuengirola, or *Fuge*, as it is nicknamed, local Finns spend their time in Finnish bars. All services – including everything from doctors to plumbers – are available in Finnish. The local Finns have no reason to learn Spanish or integrate into the local culture. Finnish is visible everywhere, and familiar Finnish products are widely available in local shops.

"I had been wanting to study Finnishness for a long time, and then I finally realized that the best place to do so is just a few hundred kilometres from my home," says Sakkinen, who has lived in central Spain for twenty years.

Sakkinen made three trips to Fuengirola together with Pauli Sivonen, Director of the Serlachius Museums. The artist came up with the title of the exhibition after a Spanish shopkeeper told him that Spaniards sometimes refer to Finns as *los moimoi*. "Moi" is a common Finnish greeting, to which the standard reply is "moi moi".

Sakkinen and Sivonen toured bars and various events in Fuengirola. The artist interviewed pensioners, telemarketers, entrepreneurs, homeless people and even fugitives of the law. He met with a social worker at the Finnish Seamen's Church, the chief editors of the local Finnish media, and the principal of a Finnish school.

Sakkinen organized all the material he collected into an exhibition, which consists of jotted notes, photographs and drawings to which the artist has added handwritten text. Videos and cultural artefacts are also featured.

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Insights into immigration

Through this Fuge project, it dawned on Sakkinen that the reason Finns migrate to Fuengirola has nothing to do with a genuine interest in Spanish society or culture.

“They go there for the sun and the warm climate – they admit that the only reason they are there is to escape the cold, snow and ice. Because there are so few things drawing them to Spain, they aren’t motivated to integrate. Spain is irrelevant: the same community could have sprung up anywhere,” comments the artist.

Sakkinen compares Finns living in Spain to immigrants who come to Europe similarly drawn by something very specific: namely safety and a better standard of living. As there are few other things drawing them to Europe, not all of them feel motivated to integrate – something for which they face constant criticism.

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

Photo: Riiko Sakkinen, *Los moimoi de Fuengirola*, detail of the installation, 2023–2024. Courtesy the Artist. Photo: Israel Galán.

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](#)