

The centenaries of the births of Tapio Wirkkala and Rut Bryk to be celebrated in 2015 and 2016

The centenaries of the births of Tapio Wirkkala and Rut Bryk, two influential figures in Finnish design, will be celebrated between their respective hundredth birthdays, from 2 June 2015 to 16 October 2016. The designer, sculptor and academician Tapio Wirkkala (1915–1985) and his wife, the graphic designer and ceramic artist Rut Bryk (1916–1999), were influential in launching the concept of modern Finnish, and Scandinavian, design, which still continues to enjoy international acclaim even today. With the centenary year, actors in the field of art and design are invited to join in to realise events and to create related content, both in Finland and abroad.

The centenary to continue the ongoing work to improve the recognition of Finnish design

With the diverse events and exhibitions, and the products and books to be launched, the centenary year aims to increase the visibility of the important work done by Wirkkala and Bryk. In addition, the centenary will highlight new Finnish design thinking. The content of the centenary year programme in Finland and abroad is a natural continuation to the efforts to improve the national and international recognition of Finnish design.

Wirkkala and Bryk had an open attitude towards new technology, and they constantly strove to expand the field of design and planning with innovation. The centenary will bring the designers' modern way of thinking to new, present-day contexts, to interesting effect.



Photo: Sami Wirkkala.

Major events of the centenary to include travelling exhibitions in Finland and abroad

The centenary will start on Tapio Wirkkala's hundredth birthday, on 2 June 2015. A retrospective exhibition of Wirkkala's work will open in 2015 at the Rovaniemi Art Museum in Lapland, and it will later be shown elsewhere in Finland and abroad. Furthermore, an exhibition to be presented at Expo 2015 in Milan is being planned.

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A private company Kaustinen Culture Ltd in Central Ostrobothnia, Finland, recently acquired a rare collection of more than 400 porcelain objects that Wirkkala designed for the German company Rosenthal. The collection will be housed at the Kaustinen Folk Art Centre and will be exhibited to the public from June 2015. Wirkkala's roots were in Kaustinen.

During the centenary year, a competition will be held to find an innovative concept to exhibit the Tapio Wirkkala and Rut Bryk collection. The collection is currently housed at the Espoo Museum of Modern Art, EMMA in Espoo, Finland.

The products that Wirkkala designed for various companies will also be highlighted again, and new editions will be published of books by both designers.

A series of international architecture seminars is being organised as part of the centenary. Seminars held so far: *Architecture & Neuroscience* in June 2013 and *Architecture & Atmosphere* in June 2014.

Website: www.wirkkalabryk.fi

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Photographs: <http://wirkkalabryk.fi/juhlavuosi/medialle>

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Tapio Wirkkala (1915–1985) – designer, sculptor and academician

Tapio Wirkkala was a leading figure in modern Finnish applied art, and his glass, ceramic, wood and silver objects charmed international design circles in the 1950s and 1960s, while laying the foundation for the triumphs of Finnish design. A recipient of the honorary title of academician, Tapio Wirkkala's extensive oeuvre ranged from domestic everyday objects to monumental art and abstract sculpture. Wirkkala worked for several different companies in Finland, but also in Italy, Germany and Mexico. Wirkkala's works are included in the collections of almost all major international design museums.

Rut Bryk (1916–1999) – graphic designer and ceramic artist

Rut Bryk started her career as a ceramic artist, using visual narrative as her medium, first mainly in everyday objects and later in ceramic tiles. Starting from the 1960s, her work launched out into the world of abstract expression. She created large-scale tile designs for, for example, the Helsinki City Hall, the Finnish Embassy in New Delhi, and Mäntyniemi, the official residence of the President of the Republic of Finland. Her talent as a colourist found an outlet in textiles and in the decorations for sets of objects designed by Wirkkala, her husband. Bryk's work is widely exhibited in the collections of international design museums.