

2015-2016
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Tapio Wirkkala Rut Bryk Foundation



STILL/LIFE – Tapio Wirkkala Retrospective Exhibition
Tapio Wirkkala - Rut Bryk Centenary 2015-2016

30 Oct 2015 - 28 Feb 2016 Korundi, Rovaniemi, Finland

www.korundi.fi

23 Apr -25 Sept 2016 Siida, Inari, Finland

www.siida.fi

"Very often, an idea is born out of chance and the impulse comes from a completely different place than what was originally thought. There are endless possibilities with material – it somehow invites us to make something of it. I have an impression that material aims at something independently, according to its own logic. The task of the artist is to guide its movement in this direction." - Tapio Wirkkala 1961

STILL/LIFE – Tapio Wirkkala Retrospective Exhibition celebrates the long and versatile career of Finnish designer, sculptor and academician **Tapio Wirkkala**. It is

also the main exhibition of the Tapio Wirkkala - Rut Bryk centenary. The exhibition offers a glimpse into the world of Wirkkala, his thoughts and his career. Alongside some of his classic works, the exhibition also displays hitherto unseen objects.

The exhibition curation and architecture is by designer **Harri Koskinen**, whose vision was to build on the creations and lifework of Wirkkala. The exhibition is divided into two parts: LIFE presents the work and life of Wirkkala, his creative process, travels and underlining ideas. Many personal items are included in the exhibition, such as his ever-present smoking pipe, and a selection of tools.

STILL reminds visitors of Tapio Wirkkala's identity as a sculptor. His handwork skills were astonishing. If the glassblowers, mould-makers or carpenters could not bring an idea of Wirkkala's to life, he would do it himself. STILL is composed of Wirkkala's art pieces from plywood to glass.

"Working with my hands means a lot to me. I could even say that it has almost a therapeutical effect on me as I make sculptures and give shape to natural materials. They inspire me and tempt me to try new things... It takes me to another world. To a world where even at the loss of vision the eyes found on the fingertips can sense movement and the endless change of geometric shapes." - Tapio Wirkkala, 1979

The exhibition is a visual offering of Wirkkala's production over the years. Tapio Wirkkala was unbelievably productive. One project might include hundreds – if not thousands – of sketches, plans and prototypes, and only a fraction of these made it to production. In addition to the well-known classics, the exhibition also includes rarer items and works of art. The set of works also shows plans and projects that were never realised, as well as prototypes of utensils and one-off items.

Lapland was an important place for Wirkkala. It was his go-to destination from the metropolises of the world and trips to Lapland were marked on his calendar carefully in advance. There was no temptation or invitation to any event in the world to make him cancel these plans.

"Lapland has become a place where I recharge my batteries. It is my lifeline when I feel I am about to drown. When I become distressed by sensing the European excesses, with all their by-products, self-centredness and the sweaty smell of ambition... when I feel as if I am drowning and when the pain hits me hard, I make an exit to Lapland. It is, for me, a way to re-focus and to stay alive... Finding myself alone from time to time is important to me; to have the distance to think and to place human relations in their correct proportions. Nature shows the same ongoing process that humans incorporate: winter, spring, summer, autumn – it is a process that repeats itself, yet still remains new and exciting." - Tapio Wirkkala, 1975

Tapio Wirkkala was open, warm and he easily found excitement in new things.

Wirkkala did not write articles on his design philosophy and as such, his work is best elucidated through his comments found in interviews and in his correspondence with friends and colleagues.

The exhibition also opens up a dialogue between Tapio Wirkkala and contemporary creatives. Finnish photographers **Tuukka Koski**, **Ola Kolehmainen**, **Susanna Vento**, **Riikka Kantinkoski**, **Juho Huttunen** and **Mikko Ryhänen** have created new imagery from Wirkkala's production in the exhibition.

More Information & press pictures:

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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.