

Media release

## SCULPTURE!

### Educational exhibition in the *Maire Gullichsen and Modernism series*

12/02 – 04/04 2010 Project Room

**Preview brunch for the media on Thursday, 11 February, from 10am-2pm.**

**An open information meeting for the public will be held on Friday, 12 February, at 12 noon.**

**The opening of the exhibition will be on Friday, 12 February, at 6 pm. *Welcome!***

Artists featured in the exhibition are Gunnar Elfgren, Laila Pullinen, Kimmo Pyykkö, Sakari Tohka

Sculptures in bronze, iron or stone are by their very nature permanent. The sense of timelessness and immutability is only intensified by the idea of sculptures resting in the bosom of a museum in carefully regulated conditions. The *Sculpture!* exhibition investigates the solidity of the link between artworks and the ideas and ideologies of their time. Can present-day audiences approach artworks of past decades with the same freshness as contemporaries did, when the works engaged in the art discourse of their time by either challenging or confirming the then prevalent ideas and attitudes? Can features which challenged the taste of the age or enjoyed general acceptance still touch us in the same way? Does an artwork change because we are different?

The *Sculpture!* exhibition explores the relations between art and the audience, and between artworks and art history. A work of art exhibited in a museum is interpreted in the context of other works (on display), of the history and exhibition policy of the museum, of topical and past movements in art. In exhibitions, art also comes into contact with viewers. Exhibitions that approach the collection from new thematic perspectives place the works once again under assessment, and while the work itself remains physically unaltered, its interpretations may well be different. *Sculpture!* questions the meaning of avantgarde, not as a style, but as a 'practice' under which notions of art are constantly evolving. Sometimes the pioneers of art are not recognised or defined until much later.

The *Sculpture!* exhibition brings three-dimensional figures of stone and metal face to face with a living, breathing audience. The history of art and its reception is full of attacks, parries, counterattacks and capitulations, as well as temporary or enduring peace treaties that eventually crystallise into prevailing notions of art. For the experience of viewing art, knowledge of art history is simultaneously both an advantage and a disadvantage. The more one knows about art, the greater handle one has on the works, yet holding on to accepted ideas can also undermine one's personal interpretation. Famous artworks, styles and periods are often viewed through preconceived notions that prevent a fresh, immediate encounter with the work, which is instead 'seen' already before one enters the exhibition; viewers know what they want of the work, and also what the work wants of them. No wonder that the contemporary viewer is seldom surprised by older art.

The present selection of works from the collections of the Maire Gullichsen Art Foundation does not attempt to present a chronological or comprehensive account of the development of sculpture in this country. Instead, the spatial installation aims to illustrate how the past is viewed in contemporary art, and to open up works from past decades to new interpretations. Although each work can be viewed individually, they are all part of the countless stories of art that are told not only by the museum and the writers of art history, but viewers as well.

Additional information: Anni Venäläinen, curator of the exhibition, [anni.venalainen@pori.fi](mailto:anni.venalainen@pori.fi)