

## Questions and answers?

Exhibitions

**From Lauri Anttila to Konni Zilliacus, from Reijo Hukkanen to Kain Tapper and from Jan Håfström to Olav Christopher Jenssen. Dimensions of Finnish and international art in works deposited at Pori Art Museum.**

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**The new year exhibition of Pori Art Museum deals with the task of contemporary art, its nature and contents. The point of departure is: What kind of questions should be posed to art and what kind of answers should we expect to get? The answer, of course, is not unambiguous; no single standard solution exists.**

An art work and its interpretation depend on the viewing situation. It has even been claimed that the final art work is created in the viewer's mind – over and over again and changing from one viewer to the next. To apply the idea of Herakleitos, we could say that you cannot look twice at the same art work. The world has changed between the looks, and you with it. You no longer see the work through the same eyes.

Of course, this notion is somewhat one-sided and overlooks people's need for security, the longing for stability and permanence. However, it contains the seed of truth. It is clear that looking at or "reading" an art work depends essentially on the situation where the work is seen. Museums have traditionally offered a secure setting for the viewing of art. We can be relatively sure that the objects on display are artistic by nature. Outside the comfortable walls of the museum, recognising new phenomena considered art can be more difficult. We do not have the building and the setting to support us, to help us take the first steps of interpretation. We cannot often even tell with certainty which things to include in the features of the art work and which things to exclude.

Contemplating the artistic nature of art works and categorising them is actually futile and misleading. The quality and character of an art work should be tested by posing questions to it and seeing how it answers them. Although fertile, this approach is also problematic. Even a good art work cannot provide answers to questions that lack spirit and wit – at least the kind of answers that explode our consciousness with something new and unprecedented. The more creative, challenging, playful and spirited questions you can pose to an art work, the greater the pleasure produced by the ways the art work is able to answer the questions. Every art lover should try it.

What should we think when an artist (Konni Zilliacus) agonisingly declares that he cannot bear reality – neither life nor death? What questions can we pose to nature and how could nature be approached (Lauri Anttila)? What, after all, is real? Is reality pigment on a canvas or the mental images invoked by the canvas. What is reality ultimately, and should we bear it or understand it – and what kind of a tool art has to offer for this process? Such questions abound and so do answers. Welcome to join in a fruitful process.

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