

Press release

Exhibitions

09.05.2005

CAROLUS ENCKELL WRITES ON BIRGER CARLSTEDT

MEDIApoint 10.06.2005 – 08.01.2006

Information day on Thursday, June 9, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Information event open to the public on Friday, June 10, at 12 noon.

In a small exhibition at the Pori Art Museum's MEDIApoint, painter Carolus Enckell will guide visitors through the abstract world of Birger Carlstedt's non-figurative paintings. The show is part of a series of exhibitions illustrating the artistic themes in the Maire Gullichsen Art Foundation collection.

'For over a hundred years, modern art painting has known the option of not telling or describing. Instead, like science, it is analytical.' Carolus Enckell, 1985

One of the earliest pioneers of modern art in Finland was Birger Carlstedt (1907–1975), who in the 1920s became interested in the art of the avant-garde in Europe. His trips to Paris and the influence of the Bauhaus and De Stijl, which he gained from various publications, bore fruit in his designs for the functionalist décor of his mother's *Chat Doré* café in Helsinki. For three years, he studied the possibilities of expressionist, surrealist and cubist expression, and also created one entirely non-figurative work entitled *Circle and Triangles*, 1932. In the same year, Carlstedt showed his entire production to date in a private exhibition at the Kunsthalle Helsinki. It included not only paintings and drawings but also sketches for interior design, furniture and fabrics. In the cultural atmosphere of the time the exhibition and its goals were not understood, and the criticism was crushing. However, prejudices against new currents in art diminished after the war and artists began to respond to fresh influences. By 1950, Birger Carlstedt had returned to non-figurative expression. With his work based on a rigorous analysis of colour and form, he also aimed to achieve a mathematically exact inner order and clear balance in his paintings.

Art criticism has played an important role throughout the history of modern art. It would be hard to imagine Cubism without Apollinaire (1880–1918). And today, art critics continue to have an important influence – perhaps even more so. Good art offers people an opportunity to enjoy a meeting with fresh thoughts. Skilfully guided, viewers can learn not only to read a work of art, but also to observe their own habits of looking and interpreting. If successful, they develop their ways of understanding and renew themselves. The learning process takes place alongside the experience offered by the art – working simultaneously on two levels, so to speak.

Carolus Enckell is known primarily as a painter with a keen interest in colour, a painter who studies colour. He has also taught at the central schools of art in the Nordic countries. A rigorous thinker and skilful writer, he was editor-in-chief of the art magazine *Taide* from 1984 to 1990. For visitors to the Birger Carlstedt exhibition Enckell has two questions: 'What do we see when we look at an abstract painting?' and 'Should we learn to listen to paintings as opposed to reading them?'

The exhibition opening is on Friday, June 10, at 6 p.m. Welcome!

For more information about the exhibition : Website <http://www.poriartmuseum.fi>

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