

Press Release

Exhibition
02.01.2006

INA COLLIANDER I

Graphics and Paintings

MAIRE GULLICHSEN AND MODERNISM
MEDIApoint January 27–March 12, 2006

The Pori Art Museum's MEDIApoint small exhibition *INA COLLIANDER I Graphics and Paintings* presents an artist known for her multicoloured woodcuts, and whose production was characterised by a visual imagery that drew on the traditions of Russian Orthodox iconography. This exhibition continues the series exploring the themes of the Maire Gullichsen Art Foundation collection.

'Little by little, I see more and more how great a gift from God it is that I can draw, paint and write a little,' Ina Colliander once told her friend Sven Grönvall, who was three years younger than herself. She then added, 'However hard things are and no matter how captive and limited one feels, there is freedom, the freedom of creativity.'

Ina Colliander (1905–1985) is best known for her woodcuts and mosaic works. But she also painted throughout her life. Painting and colour were always important to her, although by the end of her artistic career, painting with oils, watercolours and pastels had been only flashes within her total production.

Sven Grönvall was a close friend of Maire Gullichsen, and one whose expertise she made use of in many ways, such as in the hanging of exhibitions. Ina Colliander met Maire Gullichsen in the 1940s and became an artist for the design house Artek. Fittingly, she made her final breakthrough with a solo exhibition at the Galerie Artek, February–March 1959. It was here that Ina Colliander first showed her upright, large-scale woodcuts of angels, despite having made her first angel many years earlier, in 1945. The end of the 1950s and early 1960s was a productive period for Ina Colliander. She took part in the Venice Biennales of 1960 and 1964, and also started making mosaic works.

The works of Ina Colliander have a prominent place in the Maire Gullichsen Art Foundation. More than half of the 24 of her works in the collection are woodcuts. In addition to her ink drawings, the collection also includes a couple of oil paintings, one pastel and one etching. When the Art Foundation was set up in 1971, the collection included 19 works by Ina Colliander. Chronologically, the works date from 1935 to 1968, with most of them produced in the 1940s and 50s. The Ina Colliander exhibition mounted at Galerie Artek, Helsinki, in 1981 was also shown at Pori. In the inaugural exhibition of the Pori Art Museum in the autumn of that year, Colliander's woodcuts were exhibited as a group in the museum café. The inaugural exhibition was mounted by Maire Gullichsen.

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Ina Behrsen's father was an architect, and her parents belonged to the cultured and German-speaking Baltic population of St Petersburg. Ina began studying the arts in the Soviet Union in 1922, but a year later she moved to Finland where she graduated from the Central School of Applied Arts in 1928. In 1930 Ina Behrsen married another émigré from St Petersburg, the well-known artist and writer Frithiof (Tito) Colliander (1904–1989). The Maire Gullichsen Art Foundation collection includes two works by Tito Colliander.

Ina Behrsen became a Finnish citizen in 1929. She was awarded the Pro Finlandia Medal in 1959 and the State Art Award in 1978.

For more information about the exhibition, go to: <http://www.poriartmuseum.fi> or contact Museum Director Esko Nummelin, phone 02-6211085, e-mail esko.nummelin@pori.fi.

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