

**OP – POP – POST. Maire Gullichsen and Modernism series****10 February – 27 May 2012 Project Room****Featured artists: Olle Baertling, Jorma Hautala, Pekka Jylhä, Ville Kirjanen, Jarmo Mäkilä, Eino Ruutsalo, Kimmo Sarje, Marianna Uutinen, Sam Vanni and Victor Vasarely**

The exhibition showcases transitional periods in modernism as they appear in op, pop and postmodern art. The works exhibited either have a temporal link to these art movements in Finland, or they contain recognisable stylistic features from them. Building upon pop art, conceptual art and feminist art, postmodernism makes use of concretism and op art through borrowing, playfulness and irony. In addition to works from the collection of the Maire Gullichsen Art Foundation, the exhibition also includes pieces from the Pori Art Museum's collection and deposit collection.

**Victor Vasarely** (1908–1997) and **Olle Baertling** (1911–1981) are among the leading figures of concretist art. Their work played an important role in the formation of op art, which had its roots in the colour theories of Josef Albers and optical experiments of the Bauhaus school. Op art drew inspiration from the tradition of concretist art, wherein a work of art is made of colours and simple forms, flat surfaces. Op art aimed to create an illusion of movement on the painted canvas. Throbbing optical illusions were constructed using tensions between lines, surfaces, repeating geometric shapes and the juxtaposition of colours. Victor Vasarely was an important artistic influence for **Sam Vanni** (1908–1992) in the 1950s and 60s. In the painting *Suuri Fragmentti I* (*Great Fragment I*), the modernist **Jorma Hautala** (b. 1941) uses intersecting colour planes to create an illusion of movement in space.

The popularity of op art had a great influence on the imagery and effects in popular culture, such as garment patterns and record covers. Pop art of that period adopted familiar imageries from popular culture, such as comics and advertisements, and also made use of everyday visual elements and objects more generally. The period of pop art in Finland remained relatively short, yet it signalled a new kind of appropriation of everyday things in art. Pop art paved the way for the cultural concept of postmodernism and for many aspects of contemporary art. **Jarmo Mäkilä** (b. 1952) uses pop imagery in his painting *Bdam* (1979). The treatment of subject matter is characteristic to pop art: the affinity to comics and the depersonalisation of brushwork through the use of uniform, bright surfaces of colour.

Postmodernism is not a genre or style in art. It denotes a new kind of attitude towards the preceding period of modernism. Postmodern art is pluralistic and allows multiple interpretations. The artists took the freedom to use the history of art as their material, which in Finland in particular appeared in the form of visual borrowing. **Kimmo Sarje** (b. 1951) is known for works which investigate the myths of modernism and politics. The works *Triptych* (1993) and *Diptych* (1996) in the exhibition comment on the history of art by borrowing and combining the classical Greek Corinthian capital and the vertical stripes typical of the work of the American expressionist Barnett Newman. **Marianna Uutinen** (b. 1961) creates a parody of the masculinity of modernism through theatrical and exaggerated gestures. The work by the young contemporary artist **Ville Kirjanen** (b. 1984) uses bold transformations to comment upon the sculpture of antiquity, restoring to the present imageries and palettes reminiscent of pop art. The work is owned by the artist.

More information about the exhibition:

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