

The 2022 Mänttä Art Festival attracted more than 16,000 visitors

Mänttä Art Festival 2022 ended last week on a happy note. The number of exhibition visitors during the summer was approximately 16,200. In addition to the exhibition centre, works of art were on display in front of Museum Gösta on Taavetinsaari, as well as in Mänttä Church. Last year's record number of 17,000 visitors goes unbroken, though.

“This summer was delightfully busy. In summer 2021, domestic tourism was more popular than ever – there is no point in making comparisons”, says Executive Director **Tiina Nyrhinen**. “This year, we were finally able to organise diverse side activities and gatherings, unlike last year, when there were still restrictions in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Curated by sculptor **Markus Kåhre**, the exhibition featured 25 individual artists or groups of artists. In addition to visual artists, these included composers, musicians, poets, dramaturges, and directors. With so many art forms represented, the side programme was also quite diverse.

Some of the highlights of the summer included actress **Kati Outinen**'s poetic tours and the concerts organised by the Hietsu is Happening! team in the Pekilo Exhibition Centre and Mänttä Church. Something quite new and extraordinary was offered in the form of mini concerts, with musicians performing for audiences of 1–2 people at the bottom of the Pekilo silos.

“The musical events were a great new form of collaboration during the festival summer”, Nyrhinen comments. Other high points of the summer included a performance by international jazz trio Innanen Pasborg Piromalli. Held in Pub Kolo on a sultry July evening, the gig attracted more than 60 listeners, which is quite a lot by small-town standards. In addition to poetic tours and concerts, activities held in Pekilo included the tongue-in-cheek Finnish Listening Championships, as well as meetings with artists and the traditional curator tours.

Markus Kåhre's aim was to create dialogue by bringing together different art forms and artists from various fields. Feedback from visitors indicates that he achieved his goal: the works of art communicate with both each other and the exhibition space, be it the Pekilo Centre, Mänttä Church, or the natural surroundings on Taavetinsaari. The works of art also invoked plenty of feelings. The *Jukebox of Sorrow* by cellist **Kati Raitinen** and director **Christian Lindblad**, for instance, moved some people to tears, while the laconic PA announcements by violinist **Eriikka Maalismaa** were found both amusing and irritating.

Visitors to the Art Festival include people of all ages. For years now, the exhibition has attracted groups of several generations: children with their parents and grandparents. This is gratifying – it shows that people consider modern art important and that it is for everyone. The Mänttä Art Festival also plays a major role in the art education of local youngsters. Guided tours around the exhibition are offered to all interested school groups in the last two weeks of August.

Next year will mark the 30th anniversary of the Mänttä Art Festival, Finland's most extensive summer exhibition of modern art. Mäntän kuvataiteen ystävät ry (Mänttä Art Lovers) was founded in 1991, and the first exhibition was held in the summer of 1993. In the early years, the festival was organised every two years, moving to annually from 1999. The curator for the XXVII Mänttä Art Festival will be announced in late October.

Further information

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