

**The XXIX Mänttä Art Festival will be in active resistance throughout the summer. The program will include free discussions, guided dialogues, special tours, experiential writing, and summer theatre that explore the concept of resistance to change.**

The schedule for the XXIX Mänttä Art Festival in summer 2025 has been announced. The Festival will feature a diverse programme that supports, intertwines, and coexists with the works of approximately 70 artists. Visitors will have the opportunity to participate in various programs.

Curator **Krister Gråhn** shares insights into the festival's themes: "Curating is a role that lacks a clear definition. The invited co-curators apply their unique curatorial practices to their work, allowing us to reflect on what can and should be curated. At the Mänttä Art Festival, the curated topics extended beyond art to include research, art writing, pedagogy, and public engagement with art.

The exhibition is centred around the theme of NO. In Finnish, no is a verb, which inflects as en, et, ei, emme, ette, eivät. When used as a command, it transforms into "älä," reflecting its character as something that expresses both action and opinion. Art is often political; therefore, providing opportunities for processing and sharing the experiences and emotions evoked by art is a natural part of the exhibition.

Currently, there is a focus on the welfare effects of art. However, I hope that the impacts are long-lasting, fostering change and sustainability over time. Culture should not merely offer temporary relief from daily struggles; it should contribute meaningfully to overall well-being," concludes Gråhn.

## **Participatory co-curation processes**

Of the nine co-curation processes, three focus on different ways of engaging with the public.

Art historian **Kaija Kaitavuori's** contribution is divided into three parts. Her text *Museomagiaa*, featured at the Mänttä Art Festival, explores the movement of objects and things between categories with the change of place, time, and environment. Kaitavuori's programme continues the discourse on how something becomes art and how the distinction between art and non-art emerges. For Kaitavuori, the key question is not "What is art?" but "How is it?"

**Mänttä as a Work of Art** encourages the residents of Mänttä-Vilppula to view their own lives as art. Anyone can participate by designating a part of their daily life as art, following the provided instructions. How does life change, what insights are born? The projects will be collected and shared on the Festival and Art Town's social media channels. For inspiration, participants can browse the online archive in the Tapio hall of the Pekilo exhibition space, which showcases examples of artists' projects that transform various everyday activities into art. By the end of summer, the projects created by the residents of Mänttä-Vilppula will form a collective work of art.

**Violon d'Ingres / Violin of Ingres** invites artists who maintain another active practice or job alongside their artistic endeavours. The French painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres was both a renowned painter and a skilled violinist. The saying "Ingres' violin" describes a cherished hobby or a highly developed avocation. Kaitavuori invited artists to bring their other (a)vocational skills to the Festival and discuss how their various activities interrelate.

**Art Soup!** offers gatherings, discussion, and soup in the old Valvomo space in Pekilo. The artists of the Violin of Ingres project and local actors, as well as members of the public, will take part in the discussion.

The artists invited by Kaija Kaitavuori are Eeva-Mari Haikala, Jaakko Rustanius, and Pia Lindman.

**The guided NO art tours** Curator and PhD researcher Sanna Karimäki-Nuutinen has planned a series of guided tours for the Mänttä Art Festival's programme. Guided tours are a well-established cornerstone of public engagement and art education, and planning a tour is an area of expertise in its own right. In compiling a tour, a narrative is formed of the exhibition, drawing connections between works, highlighting, and delimiting - as general introductions, the guided tours are not neutral. The NO tours highlight the choices and particular perspective of each guide. In this way, the NO tours highlight and invite reflection on the politics embedded in art.

As the tour guides, Karimäki-Nuutinen has invited artists and creators who limit their perspective to disability, accessibility, refusal, or the collaboration between humans and other species. The tours will emphasise the diversity of life and the importance of preserving it. What aspects of society should be highlighted to build a more ecosocially sustainable future? The tour guides are **Markku Haanpää**, **Riikka Leinonen** and the duo **Outimaija Hakala** and **Snejka**.

**The Lupin Laboratory** is a workshop project led by visual artist and art educator Hanna Rantala, based on the comet lupin (*Lupinus polyphyllus*), which is classified as an invasive alien species and spreads widely along roadside verges. The project is divided into three parts. In the first part, Rantala calls for volunteers to mow the lupins. In the second part, visitors are invited to try ink painting with pigment extracted from lupines. Lastly, Rantala will lead *Lupine Dialogues*, a discussion focused on biodiversity, human responsibility, invasive species, indigenoussness, beauty, and harm.

In addition to the Pekilo exhibition space, the Mänttä Art Festival will also take place at other locations during the summer of 2025:

**Väinölä Summer Theatre - Sirkus Lystikus.** The new play *Sirkus Lystikus*, produced by the Ihmisyyden tunnustajat community's summer theatre, will premiere in July. The summer theatre has been delivering lively and impactful stories since 1982. The tragicomedy, directed by community member **Satulia Saarilehto** and visual artist **Paula Tella**, tells the story of a circus community and the difficulty of choice, giving up, and letting go. The performances reflecting resistance to change and the journey toward new beginnings will be held from July 13 to August 10, 2025. On the premiere night, the **Unarmed Finland** exhibition at Sampola will open to the public.

Summer Theatre Working Group: **Satulia Saarilehto**, **Paula Tella**, **Päivi Aikioniemi**, **Eija Husso**, **Outi Jaakkola**, **Paula Jaakkola**, **Jarkko Kotakorpi**, **Liina Makkonen**, **Liisa Mankinen**, **Jouni Marjanen**, **Heli Peltola**, **Joonas Peltola**, **Riitta Pietilä**, **Jari Ronkainen**, **Jussi Saarilehto**, **Merja Saarilehto**, **Ulla Silván**, **Reija Tähtinen**.

**Exhibition catalogue 2.0** Poet and art critic **Raisa Jäntti** will be sharing daily posts on the Festival's social media channels in place of a traditional printed catalogue. Her writings will be based on her personal experiences as one of the exhibition visitors, providing insights into individual works as well as the overall ensemble they create. These collected texts will be published online on the Festival's website in the autumn.

Additionally, a printed catalogue will be released in the form of a **NO anthology**, which will include contributions from various authors and co-curators, centred around the exhibition's theme.

The XXIX Mänttä Art Festival will be open daily from June 15 to August 31, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

## For more information

**Krister Gråhn**, curator, +358 40 764 9847, [krister@kristergrahn.com](mailto:krister@kristergrahn.com)

**Sampsa Virkajärvi**, executive director, +358 44 259 9194, [toiminnanjohtaja@kuvataideviikot.fi](mailto:toiminnanjohtaja@kuvataideviikot.fi)

[www.kuvataideviikot.fi](http://www.kuvataideviikot.fi) / [www.facebook.com/kuvataideviikot](https://www.facebook.com/kuvataideviikot) / [www.instagram.com/kuvataideviikot](https://www.instagram.com/kuvataideviikot)