

JOENSUU ART MUSEUM ONNI

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The collections

Joensuu Art Museum was founded in 1962 as a result of two significant donations to the town, namely the collections of Olavi Turtiainen and Arla Cederberg. Somewhat later, the town also received the collection of Onni Okkonen in two lots (1964 and 1972). These three donations form the nucleus of the museum's collections.

OLAVI TURTIAINEN (1906-1961), an apothecary from Joensuu, donated his collection of Finnish post-war paintings and sculptures in 1961. The collection forms a harmonious whole, crystallizing the views of the art collector.

Joensuu Art Museum Onni is situated right in the town center near the market square. The neo-Renaissance building, a former grammar school, was built in 1894 and designed by the architect Theodor Decker. In connection with the renovation work of 1924-25 the attic was converted into a usable third floor. During the World War II the building functioned as a military hospital and temporary morgue was built in the courtyard. The building was used as school until 1977, and then in 1979, renovation work commenced in order to convert it into a museum according to the plans drawn up by the city architects. In 1981 the art museum moved in. Joensuu Art Museum celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2012.

The major part of the collection consists of works by established Finnish artists of the 1950's. Turtiainen followed with interest the activities of a group of artists called Viiva ja Väri (line and colour), e.g., Tapani Raittila, Helge Dahlman, Tuomas von Boehm, Per Stenius, Anitra Lucander, and several of their paintings found their way onto the walls of Turtiainen's home. In addition to this group, some other artists whose work had similar aesthetics also gained Turtiainen's favour, e.g., Aarre Heinonen, Sakari Tohka, Mikko Hovi. Turtiainen also managed to supplement his collection with earlier Finnish art. The paintings "Narcissus" and "Bacchante" represent Magnus Enckell's symbolistic period. Hugo Simberg's etchings are like a Finnish folk song.

Magnus Enckell, Narcissus 1896-1897, Joensuu Art Museum, Olavi Turtiainen collection



Born in Carl Johan Cederberg's wood industry family, **ARLA CEDERBERG** (1886-1961), spent her childhood in Joensuu. In her will she donated her collection to the town in 1962. Her inheritance made possible the creation of the art collection in the 1930's and 1940's.



Albert Edelfelt, Virginie 1883, Joensuu Art Museum Arla Cederberg Collection

Cederberg's collection presents some examples of Finnish painting from the mid-19th century to the turn of this century. For example, represented in this collection are Werner Holmberg, R.W. Ekman, Magnus von Wright, Albert Edelfelt, Gunnar Berndtson, Berndt Lindholm, Hjalmar Munsterhjelm and Aukusti Uotila.

The fact that the collection of **ONNI OKKONEN** (1886-1962), a professor of art history, was donated to Joensuu could perhaps be viewed as a logical consequence of the ideas which he constantly put forward in his writings after 1910. He often stated that in order to increase people's interest in art, it is also necessary to establish public collections and museums outside the Helsinki area. Okkonen emphasized the responsibility of town and local authorities in acquiring and exhibiting art to the public. Thus, Okkonen's heirs considered it appropriate to donate his collection to Joensuu, which was Okkonen's former school town and near his Karelian roots.

Okkonen's first art purchase was Helene Schjerfbeck's watercolor "Girl and the Tree of Life". It had obviously been of special importance to him, as documents mention it being his first purchase, and the year of the purchase, 1914, is marked on the back of the painting. Okkonen was interested in collecting art from the 1910's up till his last years. His collection of Chinese art was considerably supplemented in the 1950's when he traveled to China.



Lion Pair, 19th century, Joensuu Art Museum
Liisa ja Otto Kotovuori Collection

Okkonen's work as an art historian clearly influenced his acquisitions. He said in an interview that the numerous works of art from different periods surrounding him at home gave him enthusiasm for his work and focused attention on the periods in question.

Okkonen's collection can be divided into rather clear subdivisions. His collection of Classical art contains Greek and Etruscan specimens, as well as Roman items from the Hellenistic period. Central and Southern European pictorial and sculptural art from the 14th century onwards form an entity of its own. Okkonen's Chinese collection is a rarity in Finland. Most of his collection is from the Tang period (AD 618-907). Represented in his Finnish collection are, for example, Wäinö Aaltonen, Juho Rissanen, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Ellen Thesleff, Alvar Cawén, Tyko Sallinen and Erik Granfelt.



Young man's head, 500 B.C.,
Joensuu Art Museum, Onni
Okkonen Collection

The donation of medical counselor **HAGAR VAHER** (1898-1982) supplemented Olavi Turtiainen's collection. Vaher was a friend of Turtiainen and interested in the same kind of art. Hagar Vaher worked as a tuberculosis specialist in Joensuu from 1928 to 1963. He also took an active part in local politics.

The painter **ANITRA LUCANDER** (1918-2000), who is represented in Turtiainen's collection, donated her paintings to several museums in Finland in 1983. Joensuu Art Museum received a large number of drawings and graphic art. Lucander's interest in art was not restricted to actually producing it, but she also collected art. Her Persian bowls supplement the Oriental carpets and silverwork belonging to Turtiainen's collection, as well as the Persian bowls in Okkonen's collection.

In 1983 **ANNA-LISA** and **ARNOLD GLAVE** from Malmö, Sweden, donated to the museum a wide collection of Oscar Parviainen's work. Five years later, along with another donation, the museum received almost all of Parviainen's work. This donation was inspired by the fact that Parviainen's family came from Northern Karelia, and by the Parviainen commemorative exhibition held in Joensuu in 1980. A further contributing factor was the donors' wish that this graphic artist and painter, who died in Sweden and held only a few exhibitions during his lifetime, should not be forgotten.



Oscar Parviainen, Paradise, 1910. Joensuu Art Museum, Anna-Lisa and Arnold Glave Collection

In 1987 the museum received an interesting collection of **INA COLLIANDER's** (1905-1985) works from her heirs. Ina Colliander is best known as a graphic artist, but this collection consists of oil paintings, drawings and sketches from her long career. Russian Orthodoxy, which was near Colliander's heart, left its mark on most of these works. That was also one important motive for the donation: Joensuu is in the area where Orthodoxy is at its strongest in Finland.

JUHANI BERGHEM donated his icon collection to Joensuu Art Museum in 2000. The idea behind the icon collection was to commission, mainly from celebrated, highly skilled icon painters in Finland, a set of works that would represent a cross-section of Finnish iconography and its development during the last thirty years of the 20th century.



Joensuu Art Museum received an extensive collection of modern art in 2007. The donor was an art collector, **CARL-JOHAN AF FORSELLES** (1923-2010) from Helsinki. He is known as a supporter and promoter of modern art.

Forselles made friends with many artists in the 1940s and also began to collect their works of art. The collection has grown little by little to an entity that consists of more than 470 pieces from e.g., Lars-Gunnar Nordström, B.J. Carlstedt, Per Stenius, Erik Granfelt, Anitra Lucander, Ernst Mether-Borgström, Rafael Wardi and Tapani Raittila.

Joensuu Art Museum received an art donation from **LIISA** and **OTTO KOTOVUORI** in 2009-2011. The Chinese collection consists mostly of ceramics that originate from the Han-dynasty regime, two thousand years ago. Liisa and Otto Kotovuori traveled to China several times, but they also collected items elsewhere in Europe, even in Helsinki.

On the other hand, the Finnish collection originates from the 1960's onwards. The collection includes works of art from artists such as Olavi Martikainen, Erik Granfelt, Aarno Salosmaa, Juhani Harri, Ahti Lavonen, Mauno Hartman, Jukka Mäkelä and Jan Kenneth Weckman.

In 2012 the Art Museum received a collection acquired by **LIISA** and **INKERI HILTUNEN**. Collecting art became a passion for the two sisters after they retired, and thus most of the acquisitions are from the 1990s. The Hiltunen sisters were particularly fond of Finnish graphic art. The collection consists of 59 works of art and includes works by such acclaimed Finnish artists as Heljä Liukko-Sundström, Tuula Lehtinen, Saara Tikka, Pentti Kaskipuro and Outi Heiskanen.

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