

MEANDAŠ AND SULDE – TIME AND LIFE FORMS EERO AUTIO'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

The major themes of Eero Autio's research work were rock art, the Sámi storytelling tradition of the Kola Peninsula, and the Permian bronze castings, a major period in Finno-Ugric art history.

The fixed points of his timeline were the rock paintings of Karelia 6000-1500 BC, the Permian bronze castings located in the Urals environment 300-1200 AD. and the collection of the Kalevala-style oral storytelling heritage of the Sámi of Kola in the early 20th century. Cultural history, object production, and life forms meet thematically in Autio's rich production of articles, lectures, and books.

ROCK ART

The most striking objects in the exhibition are life-size rubbings of petroglyphs copied directly from the rock. The Piessa in Onega is over two meters in size, the Great Stone of Tsalmvarre in Ponoï on the Kola Peninsula is one and a half meters, the Deer Skiing in Zalavruga in the White Sea is five meters, and the Bergbukte in Alta is also five meters. Copies can be obtained from the archives of the Pitkäjärvi Art and Culture Association.

New discoveries of rock art have always surprised with their content themes: architecture, i.e. deer enclosures, ceremonial processions, whaling in the White Sea, battle scenes, expressive shamanic dances, snakes, bears, swans and their eggs, bows, arrows, deer-head boats and their crews.

Documentation was a bottleneck in ancient art research for a long time. When the Estonian and then the Finnish Ancient Art Societies were founded, with Eero Autio as a founding member of both, the working methods expanded. Measurements, copies, photographs and, especially, analyses of the environments in which they occurred expanded to botany, mineralogy, folklore, art history, and the study of the foundations of life forms. The exhibition presents more copies and photographs from the collections of Professor Väinö Poikalainen, artist Loit Joekalda, Doctor of Arts Ismo Luukkonen, etc.

PERMIAN BRONZE CASTINGS

In the entire long art history of the Finno-Ugric peoples, Permian bronze castings are considered our most significant international achievement, a genuine new cultural form.

In the years 300-1300 BC, Greater Perm was born to the west of the Urals, the main peoples of which were the Komi and the Udmurts, later the Komi-Permyaks. The geographical center of Eurasia was the area around the Kama, Vyatka, Pechora and Volga rivers, expanding in terms of artistic tradition across the Urals all the way to the Ob River, with the Khanty and Mansi joining in. Later, the style became widespread throughout northern Siberia.

The finest concept of the Permian animal style is considered to be the combination of three different life forms: moose/human/bird = sulde. Other composite animals also occur: moose/duck, eagle/moose/human, where a person flies on the eagle's chest. One of Autio's interpretations of these is a form of society dominated by the family and lineage, i.e. totemism, clan, and he gave his book a name referring to the surnames, Eagles – Deer – Bears.

Permian bronze motifs were mainly related to utilitarian objects. The heads of spoons were decorated with stylized bears, firecrackers with horses, pendants with ducks, and representational sculptures with gods.

The Finnish National Board of Antiquities has a collection of Permian castings as travel gifts for Finnish scientists from the 19th century.

Krusenstjern has a larger collection of bronze works in Tallinn. It is hoped to have examples of both for the exhibition.

Some of the Permian animal sculptures are three-dimensional, but most are reliefs. Their bronze casting is open casting and women are often considered to be the casting masters. In this method, the original was often made of wood and the bronze was cast in a mold pressed into clay. The exhibition presents this bronze casting technique. The wooden originals were made by researchers at the Hermitage.

Autio compares the Permian castings to Finnish käspaikka textile works. The figurative language of the embroidery is similar and the expression follows an ancient tradition. The collection of the Friends of Finnish Handicraft shows many visual similarities.

HERO MEANDAŠ ON THE KOLA PENINSULA

Meandaš lived both as a human and a deer. In the fells he transformed himself into a deer and when he returned home he transformed himself into a human.

At the beginning of the 20th century, **V.V. Tsarnoluski** published two books on the Sámi folklore of the Kola Peninsula: *Saamskije skazki* and *Legenda ob olene-tseloveke*. In these tales and songs, reality and imagination come together, faith and hope and love in a landscape where water is blood, stones from the liver and waves from the lungs.

The artist **Outi Pieski** represents the power and color of the Sámi people, free air and space, the fruitfulness of opposites and contradictions. The woven installations *Cuolmmadit* and *Beavvi*, floating in the air and moving with the breath, are as if straight from the work *The Golden Horned Deer* and its *Clan*.

DEER LIVE - ANCIENT IN THE PRESENT

Old works of art tend to show their vitality by appearing as influences in a future unknown to them.

Ancient cultures are experiencing a renaissance and are of deep interest.

The exhibition's historical material is set against a mirror of contemporary artists' work. Will a contemporary artist achieve the same legitimacy as his Stone Age colleague when standing on the same rock on the eastern shore of Lake Onega?

The contemporary artists in the test include **Kaljo Põllu** (Estonia, graphics), **Loit Joekalda** (Estonia, graphics and photographs), **Eve Selisaar** (Estonia, textiles), **Taru Mäntynen** (Finland, sculpture), **Leena Mäki-Patola** (Finland, ceramics), **Antero Kare** (Finland, painting and sculpture), **Outi Pieski** (Finland, installation)