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## Facets of Finnish Cultural Diplomacy – A Case Study of the Finnish Contemporary Art Exhibition ‘*Facettes de Finlande*’ 1975

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### Introduction

In December 1975, the Musée Galliera in Paris opened an extensive exhibition of Finnish contemporary art, ‘*Facettes de Finlande*’. The exhibition was organised by the Association of Modern Art in Finland (Nykytaide ry – Nutidskonst rf) as a part of a bilateral cultural treaty between Finland and France.<sup>1</sup> This exhibition was part of a broader pattern in the field of Finland’s international cultural relations. From the late 1960s to the 1970s, the Finnish state began to coordinate cultural exhibitions and cultural exchange.<sup>2</sup> The researcher Elina Melgin states that it was ‘*the time of foreign policy in art*’, as extensive Finnish export exhibitions promoted Finland abroad.<sup>3</sup>

During my internship at the Finnish National Gallery, my aim has been to examine what was behind this statement, and to understand the role of export art exhibitions as an aspect of cultural diplomacy in Finland in the late 1960s and the mid-70s. The framework of this research is based on the concepts of cultural diplomacy and cultural policy, which I will elaborate on in more detail in the first part of this article. Because the research topic is broad, it will be discussed from the perspective of the art field and from the point of view of one actor in the field, Nykytaide ry. To illustrate this focus, in the second part of this article, I will present a case study of the exhibition ‘*Facettes de Finlande*’. What did the selection of art and artists chosen for the exhibition aim to demonstrate to its international audience, and what were the objectives of Nykytaide ry in its export exhibition policy? I will present

- 1 Annual report of Nykytaide ry 1975. File 6: Minutes. The archive of Nykytaide ry (NTA). Archive collections (AC), Finnish National Gallery (FNG). Elina Melgin, ‘Nykytaide – Nutidskonst 1939–89,’ in Elina Melgin and Pekka Suhonen (eds.), *Nykytaide 1939–1989*. Helsinki: Nykytaide ry, 1989, (29–59), 56. An agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation between the Finnish state and the French state was concluded in September 1970. Kalervo Siikala. *Suomen kansainväliset kulttuurisuhteet*. Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1976, 197.
- 2 Veli-Matti Autio, *Opetusministeriön historia VI. Suurjärjestelmien aika koittaa 1966–1980*. Helsinki: Opetusministeriö, 1990, 439. Export exhibitions of Finnish visual art were organised mainly by the Fine Arts Academy of Finland for older art, the Finnish Artists’ Association and Nykytaide ry for contemporary art. Kalervo Siikala. *Suomen kansainväliset kulttuurisuhteet*. Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1976, 244–45.
- 3 Melgin, ‘Nykytaide – Nutidskonst 1939–89,’ 51.



Installation view of the 'Facettes de Finlande' exhibition at the Musée Galliera, Paris, 1975, showing paintings by Esko Tironen, including (left) *Morning*, 1971

Photographer unknown. Collection of Archived Photo Prints. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery

the key actors who shaped the exhibition, from its initiation to its presentation, and assess its significance. I will also consider the ways in which Finnish art was integrated into the endeavours of official cultural diplomacy concerning the national image of Finland. Although this article does not deal comprehensively with the phenomenon, it addresses in general the exporting of art exhibitions as instruments of Finnish cultural diplomacy. How did the Finnish state coordinate exhibition activities, and how did the art field react to the growing influence of the state? To answer these questions, I have examined how Finland began to coordinate export art exhibitions via the Finnish Commission for International Cultural Exhibitions (FCICE), an auxiliary body under the Ministry of Education, which operated from 1966 to 1975. The function of the FCICE has not been examined before. Finally, I will conclude by exploring the objectives of Nykytaide ry in its export exhibitions policy, and define the objectives of both the art field and the state in the coordination of export art exhibitions in general.

## Sources and Nykytaide ry

This research is primarily based on archive sources. I started by examining the archive of Nykytaide ry.<sup>4</sup> Overall, it has its limitations, for example much of the correspondence – annual reports, and proceedings of annual meetings and board meetings – is missing from the 1970s.<sup>5</sup> To supplement these gaps I have researched the archive sources of the Fine Arts Academy of Finland, which contain the archives of the Ateneum Art Museum and the Exhibition and Information Department of the Fine Arts Academy of Finland. From these archive collections I

4 From the archive of Nykytaide ry I have mainly researched the files containing the minutes of the board meetings, annual reports and exhibitions. The exhibition file of 'Facettes de Finlande' contains memos, finances, correspondence and other documentation.

5 Description of the archive catalogue of Nykytaide ry. Located in the library of the Finnish National Gallery.

have reviewed the collection of the FCICE,<sup>6</sup> and the exhibition collections that were utilised in 'Facettes de Finlande'.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, I have read the digital newspaper material in the National Library of Finland<sup>8</sup> concerning the exhibition and cultural agreement between Finland and France, which shed light on how these were treated in the Finnish press. In this article, I have mainly used minutes and correspondence from the archive catalogues. It should be noted that these contain a limited amount of information, and in addition to the fact that not all documents have been preserved, not everything was necessarily recorded.

Nykytaide ry was a private exhibition organisation which operated from 1939 to 1990. In the late 1960s and 1970s the key responsibilities in the association were held by the chairman of the association Per-Henrik Taucher, Maire Gullichsen, Salme Sarajas-Korte, Göran Schildt, Simo Kuntsi, Heikki A. Reenpää and Bengt von Bonsdorff, as well as alternating artist members Sam Vanni, Heikki Häiväoja, Kari Jylhä and Matti Kujasalo. Nykytaide ry aimed to promote the development of contemporary visual arts in Finland by supporting the interaction between international art and Finnish art life. In the 1960s, Nykytaide ry also took on the task of seeking international recognition for Finnish contemporary art, and the focus of its activities shifted to exhibiting Finnish art abroad in the 1960s.<sup>9</sup> This shift caught my interest, and thus I have researched the export exhibitions organised by Nykytaide ry in relation to Finland's cultural diplomacy. Nykytaide ry organised seven export art exhibitions during the research period<sup>10</sup> and 'Facettes de Finlande' was the first of these to be mounted under Finland's cultural exchange treaty. It can thus be considered a textbook example of the influence of Finnish cultural diplomacy on art exhibitions. For this reason, I have chosen to examine this particular exhibition as a case study for this article.

## Previous research

The art exhibitions of Nykytaide ry have been previously presented in the 50th anniversary history of the association, *Nykytaide 1939–1989*, by Elina Melgin and Pekka Suhonen (1989). However, the export exhibitions organised by the association from the late 1960s–70s receive less attention in the book, nor does it deal comprehensively with what kind of artists and art the association favoured in its export exhibitions policy. Since it is an anniversary publication, published by the association itself, it does not approach the association's activities very critically. The previous research into Finnish export art exhibitions, and art exhibitions in Finland in the framework of cultural diplomacy and cultural affairs, has also had a great impact in forming my perspective in this article. Maija Koskinen's dissertation *Poliittisesti ajankohtaista ja taiteellisesti elvyttävää. Helsingin Taidehallin näyttelyt 1928–1968*, (2019) examines the impact of Kunsthalle Helsinki (Helsingin Taidehalli) on the art field, as well as on the development of Finnish visual art under its intendant Bertel Hintze, from 1928 to 1968, highlighting the political dimension of the Finnish art field. Hanna-Leena Paloposki's

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- 6 This archive file contains mostly the minutes of the commission with their attachments, lists of exhibitions and some correspondence, such as invitation letters to the members. Translations: The Finnish Commission for International Cultural Exhibitions, FCICE ('Kansainvälisten kulttuurinäyttelyiden neuvottelukunta' 'KKNK'). All translations in this article from Finnish, French or Swedish, unless specified otherwise, are by the author.
- 7 The original exhibition catalogue is in French, and can be found from the library of the Finnish National Gallery. These exhibition archive files contain telegrams, correspondence, memos, budgets, minutes, invoices, lists of artists and works, printed products of the exhibition, the original Finnish texts of the exhibition catalogue and newspaper clippings.
- 8 See [digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi](https://digikansalliskirjasto.fi).
- 9 Sara Hildén also acted in the association for a couple years during the 1970s. Schildt resigned from the association in 1972. Melgin, 'Nykytaide – Nutidskonst 1939–89,' 55–56.
- 10 Some of the exhibitions were made in collaboration with other actors in the art field. *Nutidskonst från Finland (1966–67)*, *Finnish Graphics today (1967)*, *Schjerfbeck–Sallinen (1969)*, *Finland på Louisiana (1969)*, *Kunstszenen Finnland (1974)*, *Facettes de Finlande/Facets of Finland (1975–76)* and *Trä – Finskt – Element (1977)*. Melgin, 'Nykytaide – Nutidskonst 1939–89,' 50–51.

dissertation *Taidenäyttelyt Suomen ja Italian julkisissa kuvataidesuhteissa 1920-luvulta toisen maailmansodan loppuun*, (2012) examines the role of art exhibitions in bilateral relations between Finland and fascist Italy in the context of the visual arts and culture. Elina Melgin's dissertation *Propagandaa vai julkisuusdiplomatiaa? Taide ja kulttuuri Suomen maakuvaan viestinnässä 1937–1952*, (2014) focuses on the role of art and culture, and its impact on Finland's national communications and foreign relations. The emphasis on Finnish export art exhibitions in the framework of cultural diplomacy during the 1960s and 70s remains an unstudied field to this day. This article is also connected to the research regarding Finnish cultural policy in general, which has been studied extensively.<sup>11</sup> In his book *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland – Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare state* (2022), Professor Louis Clerc focuses on the shaping of Finland's international cultural relations in the post-war period, from 1945 to 1975, and from the perspective of the state actors. It has thus been a significant source of the Finnish state's insight and its objectives of cultural diplomacy in this article.

## Cultural diplomacy and cultural policy

As Clerc notes, in the study of cultural diplomacy, a labyrinth of terms and categories is used to connect the vast and rich field of activities in which the private and public sectors easily become entangled. This makes the study of international cultural contacts extremely difficult.<sup>12</sup> A definition of cultural diplomacy as a concept and a practice has not reached a consensus among scholars. The reasons for this are the unclear boundaries between concepts. For example, the concept of international cultural relations shares many traits with cultural diplomacy, and these terms are often used synonymously, making it difficult to separate activities which belong to either of them. Cultural diplomacy is traditionally, and narrowly, understood as the way states interact with each other by employing forms of culture, such as art exhibitions, to specific actions which support the objectives of the state.<sup>13</sup> The prevailing definitions of cultural diplomacy thus seem to highlight either the purported central actor in cultural diplomacy, the state, or the desired outcome of the cultural diplomacy.<sup>14</sup> The definition of cultural diplomacy is further complicated by the fact that, unlike other areas of diplomacy, the state is dependant on the support of non-state actors, such as artists and curators. For example, the researchers Simo Mikkonen and Pekka Suutari argue that, when studying the cultural diplomacy of the Cold War era one must focus more on non-state actors, as cultural diplomacy includes not only efforts made by the state. The criteria of 'state interest' still remain stable, even if cultural diplomacy is understood in the broadest possible terms. My stance on cultural diplomacy is to focus on the objectives of both the state and the art field, instead of questioning whether the actions of the art field were cultural diplomacy or not.

- 11 See Veli-Matti Autio, *Opetusministeriön historia VI. Suurjärjestelmien aika koittaa 1966–1980*. Helsinki: Opetusministeriö, 1990. See Ilkka Heiskanen, Anita Kangas, Ritva Mitchell. *Taiteen ja kulttuurin kentät. Perusrakenteet, hallinta ja lainsäädäntö*. Helsinki: Tietosanoma Oy, 2015. See Anita Kangas, Juha Virkki. *Kulttuuripolitiikan uudet vaatteet*. Jyväskylä: Kopijyvä Oy, 1999. See Tomi Mertanen, Cupore. *Harkinnanvaraisuudesta lakisääteeseen. Suomen valtiollisen taidehallinnon sekä taiteenalojen tukijärjestelmien muotoutuminen 1960–1980-luvulla*. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino, 2009.
- 12 See Louis Clerc. *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland. Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare State*. Palgrave Macmillan Series in Global Public Diplomacy. Open access, 2022, 5. <https://www.utupub.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/174268/978-3-031-12205-7.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- 13 Clerc, *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland. Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare State*, 30. Simo Mikkonen and Pekka Suutari. 'Introduction to the Logic of East-West Artistic Interactions' Simo Mikkonen and Pekka Suutari (eds.), *Music, Art and Diplomacy: East-West Cultural Interactions and the Cold War*. Dorchester: Ashgate, 2016, (1–13) 7.
- 14 Patricia M. Goff. 'Cultural Diplomacy: The Elusive Definition', in Nancy Snow and Nicholas J. Cull (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy. Second Edition*. Taylor&Francis, 2020, (30–37) 30–32.

According to Clerc, in Finland's case, cultural diplomacy had its origins in the state's actions and in its definitions of the national interest, as well as in debates about national identity. It was not only connected to the geopolitical situation – the Cold War – but also to the redefinition and modernisation of Finnish society. The state supported, controlled and promoted certain forms of international cultural contacts over others. Thus cultural diplomacy must also be considered in connection to, and as an expression of, cultural policy and the definition of a national identity.<sup>15</sup> Paloposki also notes that the state's cultural relations with other countries cannot be studied without examining the country's own cultural and art policy.<sup>16</sup> Finnish cultural diplomacy developed in the contexts of the Cold War, the expansion of the welfare state, social and economic modernisation and certain visions of Finland's position in the world. The endeavours of Finnish cultural diplomacy were concerned with the management of cultural, artistic, technological and scientific relations with foreign states and international organisations.<sup>17</sup> By cultural policy in this article, I mean the state's cultural policy, the organisation of the Finnish state's art, culture and international relations administration from the late 1960s to the mid-70s.<sup>18</sup> In this article, I will primarily deal with cultural diplomacy through the cultural policy the state applied in the Ministry of Education. I will study cultural policy that concerned export art exhibition activities as a part of cultural diplomacy. In light of the above, it is necessary to open up more about the most intensive phase of the construction of Finland's cultural policy<sup>19</sup>, and how it affected the efforts of Finnish cultural diplomacy.

## Internationalisation and The Finnish Commission for International Cultural Exhibitions (FCICE)

Finland's cultural policy was reformed in the late 1960s, and the state's influence on the field of visual arts was strengthened.<sup>20</sup> My research begins from this 'second long line' of Finnish cultural policy that started in the 1960s and is considered to have lasted until the beginning of the 1990s. As a part of the welfare state ideology, cultural policy gained new forms – the state attempted to shift its position from being a supporter of art to being a promoter of art, and the change meant that the state had to recognise the development of all of the fields of art more clearly.<sup>21</sup> When art and cultural policy was deliberately addressed at the end of the 1960s, it was seen above all as a part of social policy pursued by the state, which was considered to be able to influence culture by, among other things, allocating

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- 15 Clerc, *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland. Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare State*, 9, 21.
- 16 Paloposki refers to J.M. Mitchell's definition. Hanna-Leena Paloposki. *Taidenäyttelyt Suomen ja Italian julkisissa kuvataidesuhteissa 1920-luvulta toisen maailmansodan loppuun*. Helsinki: Valtion taidemuseo, Kuvataiteen keskusarkisto, 2012, 49.
- 17 Clerc, *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland. Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare State*, 9.
- 18 Anita Kangas and Esa Pirnes show that cultural policy can be seen as the way in which culture is organised in social activities. The way culture is defined affects the organisation, which brings different contexts to cultural policy activities. Anita Kangas and Esa Pirnes. 'Kulttuuripoliittinen päätöksenteko, lainsäädäntö, hallinto ja rahoitus' Ilkka Heiskanen, Anita Kangas, Ritva Mitchell (eds.), *Taiteen ja kulttuurin kentät. Perusrakenteet, hallinta ja lainsäädäntö*. Helsinki: Tietosanoma Oy, 2015, (23–108) 23.
- 19 Anita Kangas. 'Kulttuuripoliittikan uudet vaatteet' Anita Kangas and Juha Virkki (eds.), *Kulttuuripoliittikan uudet vaatteet*. Jyväskylä: Kopijyvä Oy, 1999. (156–79) 163. Anita Kangas. 'Preface' in Tomi Mertanen and Cupore (eds.), *Harkinnanvaraisuudesta lakisääteiseen. Suomen valtiollisen taidehallinnon sekä taiteenalojen tukijärjestelmien muotoutuminen 1960–1980-luvulla*. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino, 2009.
- 20 Paula Tuomikoski-Leskelä. *Taide ja politiikka. Kansanedustuslaitoksen suhtautuminen taiteen edistämiseen Suomessa*. Helsinki: Historiallisia tutkimuksia 103, 1977, 282–84.
- 21 Kangas, 'Kulttuuripoliittikan uudet vaatteet,' 159–64. Mertanen, *Harkinnanvaraisuudesta lakisääteiseen. Suomen valtiollisen taidehallinnon sekä taiteenalojen tukijärjestelmien muotoutuminen 1960–1980-luvulla*, 51.

funds and administrative control.<sup>22</sup> The changes in the direction of cultural policy were also emphasised in the case of international cultural relations, and internationalisation was one of the central themes of cultural policy in Finland in the 1970s.<sup>23</sup> In the 1960s, the tasks of foreign information activities and cultural relations differed from each other, and the latter was transferred to the Ministry of Education, which established a department of international relations during its reorganisation in 1966.<sup>24</sup> Clerc observes this as a 'high-water mark' of Finland's state-driven development of cultural diplomacy. What this meant in practice was that cultural relations were directed more clearly to various auxiliary bodies, and concrete measures to organise international cultural exhibitions at a state level were made in the mid-1960s.<sup>25</sup>

An example of an auxiliary body was The Finnish Commission for International Cultural Exhibitions which acted under the international relations department in the Ministry of Education from 1966 to 1975. In the 1960s, matters concerning international cultural exhibition activities were dealt with in a fragmented manner, and because of this, the government inaugurated the FCICE to coordinate and develop the activities.<sup>26</sup> The first chairman of the FCICE was the head of the Ministry of Education's Department of International Affairs, Kalervo Siikala, and the members of the commission were drawn from the art field.<sup>27</sup> In the FCICE, Nykytaide ry was represented first through its member Maire Gullichsen<sup>28</sup> and starting from 1970 by P.H. Taucher.<sup>29</sup>

Based on its minutes, the FCICE was supposed to perform the following tasks with the relevant institutions, authorities and associations in the field: yearly planning of exhibitions activity and their costs, both financially supported or publicly financed; taking care of coordinating the procedures needed to accomplish the exhibitions; following international exhibitions activity and its development in Finland and abroad; and taking initiatives to improve the field for the Ministry of Education.<sup>30</sup> In the first meeting of the FCICE in December 1966, the possibility of starting a large-scale coordination of exhibitions activities was

22 Mertanen, *Harkinnanvaraisuudesta lakisääteiseen. Suomen valtiollisen taidehallinnon sekä taiteenalojen tukijärjestelmien muotoutuminen 1960–1980-luvulla*, 65.

23 Clerc, *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland. Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare State*, 8. Mertanen, *Harkinnanvaraisuudesta lakisääteiseen. Suomen valtiollisen taidehallinnon sekä taiteenalojen tukijärjestelmien muotoutuminen 1960–1980-luvulla*, 147, 157. Kangas, 'Kulttuuripolitiikan uudet vaatteet,' 161.

24 Elina Melgin. *Propagandaa vai julkisuusdiplomatiaa? Taide ja kulttuuri Suomen maakuvan viestinnässä 1937–1952*. Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, 2014, 195.

25 Mertanen, *Harkinnanvaraisuudesta lakisääteiseen. Suomen valtiollisen taidehallinnon sekä taiteenalojen tukijärjestelmien muotoutuminen 1960–1980-luvulla*, 157. Melgin, 'Nykytaide – Nutidskonst 1939–89,' 46. Clerc, *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland. Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare State*, 237.

26 Minutes of the meeting of the Finnish Commission for International Cultural Exhibitions (FCICE), 10 January 1967. Annex: exhibition program and activities. Minutes of FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. Archive Collections (AC), Finnish National Gallery, (FNG). Clerc, *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland. Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare State*, 187.

27 Autio, *Opetusministeriön historia VI. Suurjärjestelmien aika koittaa 1966–1980*, 439–40.

28 Minutes of the meeting of FCICE, 10 November 1966. Minutes of FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

29 Melgin, 'Nykytaide – Nutidskonst 1939–89,' 50–51.

30 There is no information in the archives on how these members were chosen, other than indirect mentions in the minutes. Most of them were central figures from the art field of Finland. In the first term of the FCICE, the visual arts were represented by Sakari Saarikivi and Aune Lindström from The Fine Arts Academy of Finland, Maire Gullichsen from Nykytaide ry and Mauri Favén from the Artists' Association of Finland. Other members of the commission were Bengt Broms, H.O. Gummerus, Olle Herold, Yrjö Kaarne, Olli Närvä, George Paile and Kyösti Ålander. The Ministry of Education to Aune Lindström and Sakari Saarikivi, Minutes of the meeting of the FCICE, 10 November 1966. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

postponed until 1969. While the main focus of the commission was on export exhibitions, it was also considered important to import exhibitions from abroad to Finland.<sup>31</sup>

The members of the commission were happy that a coordinating body had been set up for exhibitions activities, which, in addition to its own activities, allowed for the 'private entrepreneurship' of various institutions and communities in implementing them. The commission chairman Siikala also stated that the establishment of the commission did not mean changes to the operational level of exhibitions activity, which would be implemented using the same channels as before.<sup>32</sup> In these discussions it was emphasised that the communities organising exhibitions had to be guaranteed sufficient freedom of action and discretion.<sup>33</sup> Based on the minutes, the tasks and discussions of the commission indicate that its role was above all an advisory and coordinating one, reflecting the overall coordinating guidance of the Ministry.<sup>34</sup> According to Clerc, the increased coordination by the state can be seen as an conscious effort to pull Finnish society and its cultural contacts in certain directions, and those directions corresponded to definitions of the national interest.<sup>35</sup> These directions included, for example, the discussion of exhibitions policies. The commission stated that exhibitions activity should be centralised, and annual targets, as well as geographical and qualitative priorities, should be set by the commission.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to making Nordic contacts, Finland concluded numerous bilateral agreements in the 1970s with the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and to an increasing extent with Western European countries after The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in 1975.<sup>37</sup> In the meetings of the commission these agreements and the possible exhibitions included in them were one of the main topics discussed. Other important topics were the exhibitions that the members of the commission were to organise overall, Finland's participation in permanent foreign exhibitions, the financial support of exhibitions, as well as evaluation of possible countries that might be interested in receiving Finnish exhibitions. The commission managed coherent yearly lists of all the Finnish exhibitions that were sent abroad, and exhibitions from abroad organised in Finland.<sup>38</sup>

## Exhibition Seminar 73

In 1973 the FCICE's Exhibition Seminar 73 was held to discuss the central issues of international exhibitions exchange with relevant institutions and associations in the field, as well as with state actors.<sup>39</sup> The archival material – memos – reveals some of the views of

31 It was noted in the discussion, that in this area there is also a lot to be improved. Minutes of the meeting of the FCICE, 01 December 1966. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

32 Minutes of the meeting of FCICE, 1 December 1966. Minutes of FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG. Cultural institutions and artists worked quite independently when forming international affairs. Siikala, *Suomen kansainväliset kulttuurisuhteet*, 219–21.

33 Minutes of the meeting of the FCICE, 19 December 1966. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

34 Autio, *Opetusministeriön historia VI. Suurjärjestelmien aika koittaa 1966–1980*, 440.

35 Clerc, *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland. Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare State*, 8.

36 Minutes of the meeting of the FCICE, 16 April 1970. Minutes of FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

37 Mertanen, *Harkinnanvaraisuudesta lakisäätöeseen. Suomen valtiollisen taidehallinnon sekä taiteenalojen tukijärjestelmien muotoutuminen 1960–1980-luvulla*, 161. Cultural exchange with Western market economy countries was also widely practised by private citizens and non-governmental organisations. The agreements with Great Britain and Italy were created in 1976, and with Austria the Federal Republic of Germany, Turkey and Japan in 1978. Autio, *Opetusministeriön historia VI. Suurjärjestelmien aika koittaa 1966–1980*, 451.

38 Exhibition plans, statistics, etc. documents. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

39 Such as museums, artists' associations, art organisations, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, press officers from the embassies etc. Minutes of the FCICE meeting, 3 December 1973. Appendix: Memorandum of exhibition seminar 73 held June 1973. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.



the Finnish art field on the coordination of exhibitions activities, and from the discussions it appears there was some dissatisfaction. To take one of the many points, the problems of the commission itself were brought up, as well as the coordination of activity and disputes as to who ultimately had control, and issues concerning Finland's bilateral agreements. The need for coordination was thought to be necessary, but was felt to be almost impossible due to many factors, including poor information sharing between organisers.<sup>40</sup>

The seminar also gives clues as to how the state officials understood their role. The director of the Ministry of Education's art office, government counsellor Olli Närvä, demanded in his presentation that the exhibitions activity requiring state funding should be based on comprehensive planning and realisation, which should take place in the Ministry. He thought it was incorrect that the exhibition plans were made 'far away from the ministry', when they required state support. Närvä noted that the government's attitude towards the promotion of art had changed greatly in the previous ten years, and now it was taken for granted that the development and support of the various fields of art were part of the state's responsibilities.<sup>41</sup> Siikala in turn stated that, after working six years in the commission, he had come to the conclusion that coordination in the field was impossible, and was ruled by a certain kind of 'Darwinian law of the jungle'. However, he thought that the state's involvement in exhibition activities had become important as there was a lot of artwork that needed to be exported and therefore supported. Siikala added that, according to his understanding, Finnish visual artists were living in their most interesting and creative phase, and thus it was the visual arts that deserved a better international audience and treatment.<sup>42</sup> The coordination of the state was a source of suspicion for the director of The Finnish Museum of Architecture, Kyösti Ålander, who feared that the more the field is coordinated, the more the organisation of exhibitions would be transferred from expert circles to officials and the less the rule of free competition would apply.<sup>43</sup>

In the 1970s, most of the exhibitions of Finnish art abroad were group exhibitions that were supported by public funds.<sup>44</sup> In the field of visual arts, the seminar discussion indicated that the state's financial support in the exchange of art exhibitions was considered insufficient, especially when compared to architecture and arts and crafts. The artist Sven Grönvall was one who was of this opinion, as well as the artist Kari Jylhä, chairman of the Finnish Artists' Association.<sup>45</sup> Jylhä pointed out that the art exhibitions organised abroad by the association were part of Finland's foreign policy and cultural dialogue. However, Jylhä pointed out that there had been fewer opportunities available for the visual arts to be utilised in Finland's international cooperation compared to the arts and crafts and architecture fields, which through exhibitions had given them more recognition internationally. From Nykytaide ry, Taucher also thought that there should have been a unanimous effort to support Finnish visual

40 Autio, *Opetusministeriön historia VI. Suurjärjestelmien aika koittaa 1966–1980*, 64.

41 Minutes of the FCICE meeting, 3 December 1973. Appendix: Memorandum of exhibition seminar 73 held June 1973. Olli Närvä 'State support for international exhibition exchange'. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

42 According to Siikala bilateral agreements of the state were mostly about politics, international relations and money. Minutes of the FCICE meeting, 3 December 1973. Appendix: Memorandum of exhibition seminar 73 held in June 1973. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

43 Minutes of the FCICE meeting, 3 December 1973. Appendix: Memorandum of exhibition seminar 73 held in June 1973. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

44 Siikala, *Suomen kansainväliset kulttuurisuhteet*, 244–45.

45 Minutes of the FCICE meeting, 3 December 1973. Appendix: Memorandum of exhibition seminar 73 held in June 1973. Kari Jylhä 'Decentralisation'. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG. Jylhä was the chairman of the association from 1972 to 1974. 'Suomen Taiteilijaseuran vuodet' Hanne Selkokari (ed.), *150 vuotta kuvataiteilijoiden puolesta. Suomen Taiteilijaseura. Konstnärsgillet i Finland 1864–2014*. Helsinki: Suomen Taiteilijaseura, 2014, (7–59), 19.



arts more strongly, or at least offer the same opportunities that architecture and the arts and crafts were given.<sup>46</sup>

In the seminar, the actors from the art field presented their exhibitions policy and operations. Jylhä called for a coordinating body for visual art exhibitions activities, to prevent overlaps. However, he added that the Finnish Artists' Association saw its task as an expert body in the visual arts field, so important that it would not be fond of 'dictating decisions', and instead demanded that the proposals of the Association's representatives had to be seriously taken into account.<sup>47</sup>

P.H. Taucher's presentation, titled 'The private sector as an administrator of exhibition exchange.' summed up the tasks of Nykytaide ry as 'supporting Finnish contemporary art and making it recognised both in Finland and abroad', assuring that Nykytaide ry did not in any way participate in the country's internal art policy.<sup>48</sup> Taucher noted that Nykytaide ry's exhibition policy was implemented through being in constant contact with the state representatives and the art field. Nykytaide ry targeted large art centres abroad, because Finnish exhibitions in such places received more attention, and thus had a greater significance for Finnish art. According to Taucher, in the case of the visual arts, the goal of the association was to secure either solo shows or small groups shows of interesting Finnish artists with other artists in international art centres, instead of sending extensive 'Finnish cavalcades'. Taucher saw that artists needed to be promoted in order to be recognised both in Finland and abroad. According to Taucher, both state and private support were needed for this.<sup>49</sup>

Thus the issues raised in the seminar concerned the actors in the art field, the relationship between the state and the art field, the use of power and its mechanisms in art exhibitions activities, as well as overall the role of the FCICE, which in the end was not very clear. It seemed that there were a wide range of opinions, even though everyone agreed that some kind of coordination was needed. Siikala's description of the impossible coordination of exhibition activities, where a certain kind of Darwinian law of the jungle prevails, seems apt, given the seminar's presentations and discussions. The commission's last term ended in 1975. Its members thought, however, that long-term coordination of exhibition plans was still needed, regardless of whether or not the commission continued.<sup>50</sup>

As Clerc has noted, the Finnish cultural diplomacy system was divided between non-state-, semi-public- and state actors, as the composition of the members of the FCICE indicates. The system of soft coordination with the art field worked ultimately through financial support by the state. The FCICE can thus be considered a concrete example of the

46 Minutes of the FCICE meeting, 3 December 1973. Appendix: Memorandum of exhibition seminar 73 held June 1973. Kari Jylhä 'Decentralisation'. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG. Siikala left the commission in 1972. Government counsellor Ragnar Meinander was the last chairman of the commission. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

47 Minutes of the FCICE meeting, 3 December 1973. Appendix: Memorandum of exhibition seminar 73 held June 1973. Kari Jylhä 'Decentralisation'. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

48 The association felt that there was no longer the need to make international art known in Finland to the same extent as before. Minutes of the FCICE meeting, 3 December 1973. Appendix: Memorandum of exhibition seminar 73 held in June 1973. P.H. Taucher 'The private sector as an administrator of exhibition exchange'. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

49 Minutes of the FCICE meeting 3 December 1973. Appendix: Memorandum of exhibition seminar 73 held in June 1973. P.H. Taucher 'The private sector as an administrator of exhibition exchange'. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

50 Minutes of the meeting of the FCICE, 5 December 1975. Minutes of FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG. In the commission a division of visual arts was formed by Taucher from Nykytaide ry, Maaretta Jaukkuri from The Finnish Artists' Association and Sakari Saarikivi from The Fine Arts Academy of Finland, whose task was to draw up annual plans for both one-year and four-year exhibitions to be financed with state funds. Although the FCICE ceased to function after 1975, Olli Närvä had hoped that the division would continue its activities and prepare the requested plans. Minutes of the meeting of the FCICE, 12 September 1975. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG. Annual report of Nykytaide ry, 1975. File 6: Minutes. NTA. AC, FNG. Board meeting of Nykytaide ry, 22 December 1975. File 6: Minutes. NTA. AC, FNG.

Ministry of Education’s attempt to work closely, yet at ‘arm’s length’<sup>51</sup>, with the cultural field in matters of Finnish international cultural exhibitions. The state benefited from the expertise and engagement of non-state actors through this soft coordination in a context where certain conceptions of the national interest were shared.<sup>52</sup> The objective of this national interest articulated through the eyes of the art field was ultimately to make Finnish art recognised abroad, elevating it to the same level of recognition with arts and crafts and architecture.

### ‘Facettes de Finlande’ – Facets of Finland

*[...] Of course, the collection assembled now does not correspond to the original character, which we talked about before, because during the preparation and planning phase we had to bend to a different solution due to the different wishes and demands presented by different parties. However, in the jury’s opinion, it presents a very representative cross-section of Finnish contemporary art. [...] I wish you and the exhibition success, and through that a positive cultural reputation for our country.*  
 – P.H. Taucher to the Ambassador of Finland in Paris, Ralph Enckell.<sup>53</sup>

‘Facettes de Finlande’ serves as an example of the exhibitions policy of Nykytaide ry and of Finnish cultural diplomacy more generally. The formula for implementing the exhibition echoed Taucher’s views mentioned above on the association’s role in the cultural exchange of Finland. As the exhibition was part of the cultural exchange agreement, it was also an aspect of the state’s official cultural diplomacy. During the 1970s cultural export exhibitions began to grow in size and were included in cultural exchange agreements between countries<sup>54</sup>. The agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation between the Finnish government and the French government was concluded in September 1970. This treaty was exceptional for Finland, as it had not previously entered into bilateral cultural agreements with western market-economy countries. According to Kalervo Siikala, from Finland’s viewpoint, the agreement offered an opportunity for Finnish art and culture to appear in key places on the international art scene in France.<sup>55</sup>

Finland’s Prime Minister Kalevi Sorsa had already presented the planned exhibition of contemporary Finnish art in Paris as an example of successful cultural exchange in 1974, and specified that the goal of the agreement was also to increase the number of meetings between French and Finnish statesmen and leading politicians, further developing relations between Finland and France.<sup>56</sup> One could thus draw the conclusion that the function of export art exhibitions also had political aspirations, as it supported the broader objectives of the Finnish state. The state’s actions were not gratuitous, as it utilised art and art exhibitions through cultural diplomacy to facilitate its international relations and to form a modern public image of Finland.

51 The art administration was ‘at arm’s length’ from the actual state administration. The purpose of this principle was to prevent the abuse of art in society and to guarantee the freedom of art, as artists and art organisations had a central position in the arts commissions that were formed in the late 1960s. Mertanen, *Harkinnanvaraisuudesta lakisäätöeseen. Suomen valtiollisen taidehallinnon sekä taiteenalojen tukijärjestelmien muotoutuminen 1960–1980-luvulla*, 64.

52 Clerc, *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland. Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare State*, 20, 124, 234, 237.

53 P.H. Taucher’s letter to Finland’s Ambassador in Paris Ralph Enckell, 4 December 1975. File 20: Facettes de Finlande, Finnish Contemporary Art, Musée Galliéra, Paris December 1975 – January 1976 (FdF). NTA. AC, FNG.

54 Melgin, ‘Nykytaide – Nutidskonst 1939–89’, 56.

55 For France cultural agreements were essentially a part of its foreign policy. Kalervo Siikala. *Suomen kansainväliset kulttuurisuhteet*. Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1976, 197–99.

56 J.T., ‘Bonsoir herra pääministeri,’ *Suomen Kuvalehti*, 15 March, 1974, 40. [digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi](http://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi).

According to Elina Melgin, the arrangements for the 'Facettes de Finlande' exhibition proved to be more difficult than usual. It had too many stakeholders, and the arrangements did not contribute to the success of the exhibition. However, Melgin did not elaborate on what she meant, nor how the exhibition process started. In the meeting of the FCICE in 1972, the commission discussed the possibility of organising an official cultural exhibition supported by the government in France in 1974. Potential exhibition options were proposed, such as a solo exhibition of sculptor Eila Hiltunen, a contemporary art [group] show, and a 'Finnish Jugend' exhibition. Among the exhibition projects, the commission prioritised the contemporary art exhibition.<sup>57</sup> Nykytaide ry presented an exhibition plan 'Alternative Finnoise' to the commission. The original idea for the show was inspired by the French-Swedish collaboration exhibition held in 1971 at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. In similar fashion, Nykytaide ry was invited to organise an exhibition of 6 to 7 Finnish visual artists who had extensive bodies of work and a strong collections track record. Nykytaide ry would be the official Finnish organiser, but the French organisers would also have some input into the choice of participating artists. Nykytaide ry hoped that the exhibition could be organised as an official cultural exchange exhibition between Finland and France in 1974, arguing that this kind of joint presentation of a few elite artists was the best way to exhibit Finnish art abroad and give Finnish artists opportunities to become active participants in the European art scene.<sup>58</sup> Later, it was brought to the notice of the commission that an initiative had been taken by the French side to bring Finnish artist Kimmo Kaivanto to Paris to have a solo show. It was decided that Kaivanto's exhibition would be arranged as part of 'Facettes de Finlande'.<sup>59</sup>

The exhibition in France was discussed in an FCICE meeting again in 1973. In the negotiations on cultural exchange between Finland and France in 1973–74, led by Kalervo Siikala from the Finnish side, the following points were agreed: the Finnish side organises an exhibition of Finnish contemporary art in Paris in 1974 comprising 6 or 7 artists, inviting a French art expert to Finland to participate in the selection of works; the Finnish side also hoped to receive a prominent French art exhibition in Finland.<sup>60</sup> Siikala obviously had a significant influence on the organisation of the exhibition. Later, Taucher noted that Nykytaide ry was grateful for Siikala's support for his proposal that this exhibition would be included in the cultural exchange agreement.<sup>61</sup> The Ministry of Education's formal announcement to Nykytaide ry concerning the exhibition was made in October 1974. The Ministry took into account the initiative taken by the association, and assigned the task of practical arrangements for the exhibition to Nykytaide ry.<sup>62</sup>

As the exhibition was organised in the context of the official cultural exchange agreement, the Finnish Embassy in Paris was also a crucial actor in the process. The negotiations with the French side were held with Nykytaide ry, together with the embassy at

57 H.O. Gummerus disagreed and thought that a Finnish Jugend exhibition should be organised instead. Minutes of the meeting of the FCICE, 21 September 1972. Appendix: 'Alternative Finnoise'. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

58 The corresponding Swedish organisers were Nämnden för Utställningar av Nutida Svensk Konst i Utlandet (NUNSKU), and The Swedish Institute in Paris. Ranskan näyttely Minutes of the meeting of the FCICE, 21 September 1972. Appendix: 'Alternative Finnoise'. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

59 Kaivanto and Nykytaide ry both agreed on it. Minutes of the meeting of the FCICE, 30 November 1972. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

60 Minutes of the meeting of the FCICE, 23 February 1973. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG. Unknown writer, 'Uutta ja vanhaa Pariisia Jugendsalissa', *Helsingin Sanomat*, October 9, 1974, 17. [digikansalliskirjasto.fi](https://digikansalliskirjasto.fi).

61 Taucher's letter to Enckell, 4 December 1975. File 20: FdF. NTA. AC, FNG.

62 The Ministry of Education's letter to Nykytaide ry, 29 October 1974. Letters. STANTO H91. Archive Collections (AC), Finnish National Gallery, (FNG). The cultural exchange negotiations between Finland and France were held in Helsinki in October 1974. The negotiations were based on the cultural exchange agreement from 1970. Unknown writer. 'Kulttuurivaihdosta uudistettu ohjelma', *Uusi Suomi*, October 9, 1974, 3. [digikansalliskirjasto.fi](https://digikansalliskirjasto.fi).

an official level.<sup>63</sup> The cultural attaché and the embassy's press officer Lorenz von Numers had the mandate to take care of the arrangements concerning negotiations of the exhibition space and costs, as well as other practical arrangements. At the official level, the correspondence regarding the exhibition with the French organisers had to be conducted through the exhibition commissar, Salme Sarajas-Korte from Nykytaide ry, and von Numers.<sup>64</sup> The administration at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris seemed rather complicated and von Numers encouraged Nykytaide ry to contact Gaston Diehl, the director of the L'Action Artistique department in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>65</sup> Sarajas-Korte and von Numers accordingly negotiated with Diehl in order to reserve an exhibition venue for Finland in Paris. Diehl promised that the Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris would 'certainly be the exhibition space for the Finnish exhibition',<sup>66</sup> and Jacques Lassaigue, the museum's chief curator, would be invited to Finland as the French art expert, as planned in the FCICE meeting.<sup>67</sup>

## The French are not very interested in Finland

*The Paris Youth Biennale opens tomorrow. Part of the exhibition is located in Lassaigue's museum. I will try during the vernissage to push him against the wall and insist that he answers the visit invitation [...]*

– Lorenz von Numers to Salme Sarajas-Korte<sup>68</sup>

The original idea for the exhibition gradually started to fade. Evidently the French weren't really interested in the Finnish exhibition – the correspondence between Sarajas-Korte and von Numers reveals that both were having difficulties bringing Lassaigue to Finland, as he repeatedly postponed his visit, von Numers describing this as 'obnoxious procrastination'.<sup>69</sup> Sarajas-Korte was also concerned that the French organisers hadn't settled on a space for the exhibition. This caused problems for Nykytaide ry, because they couldn't inform the artists officially of the upcoming exhibition, and the Ministry of Education also hesitated to grant state support before the exhibition's realisation was assured. Sarajas-Korte wrote to von Numers, saying that usually, when organising exhibitions abroad, the local organiser naturally contacted the sender, and would inform them of the venue. She added that, from the behaviour of the counterparts in Paris, it seemed that Nykytaide ry was expected to submit to a procedure that was completely new for it, that is, to make an exhibition without knowing anything about where it will be presented.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, the final selection of artists should have occurred after Lassaigue's visit to Finland: Sarajas-Korte wrote that this was necessary, as it would make the position of Nykytaide ry easier and ensure the overall exhibition would go ahead. It was known that in the past Lassaigue had refused at the last minute to accept a Norwegian official exhibition which he thought was poor.<sup>71</sup> The invitation of the art

63 The commissar of 'Facettes de Finlande' Salme Sarajas-Korte's letter to the cultural attaché and press officer of Finnish Embassy in Paris Lorenz von Numers, 14 June 1973. Facettes de Finlande (FdF), letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

64 Von Numers' letter to Sarajas-Korte, 27 March 1973. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

65 Gilbert Brownstone, with whom Sarajas-Korte had originally discussed the exhibition, turned out not to be the actual staff of the museum. Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 23 March 1973. Von Numers' letter to Sarajas-Korte, 27 March 1973. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

66 Von Numers' letter to Sarajas-Korte, 18 July 1973. Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 16 October 1973. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

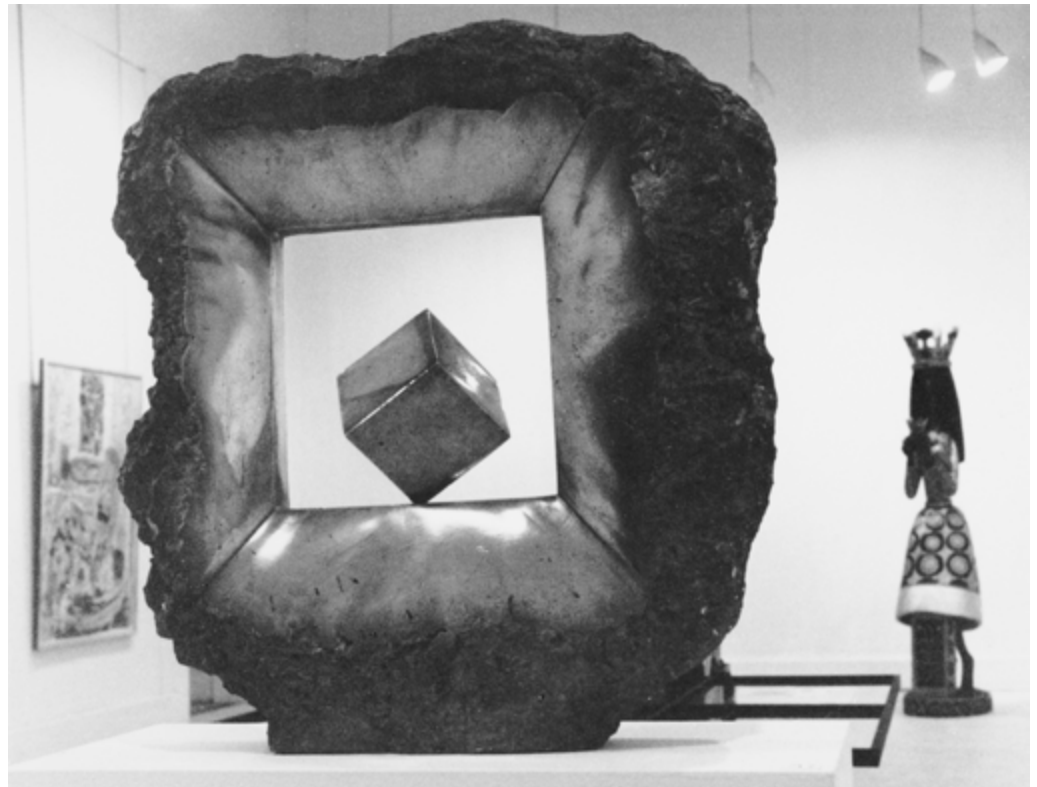
67 Taucher's letter to the chief curator of Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris Jacques Lassaigue, 30 March 1973. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

68 Von Numers' letter to Sarajas-Korte, 13 September 1973. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

69 Von Numers' letter to Sarajas-Korte, 30 June 1973. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

70 Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 2 May 1974. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

71 Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 2 May 1974. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.



Installation view of 'Facettes de Finlande' at the Musée Galliera, showing (centre) *Window to the Sea*, 1968, by Tapio Junno, loaned by the then President of Finland, Urho Kekkonen; (right) *Marjatta*, 1965, by Heikki W. Virolainen

Photographer: AGRACI, Paris. Collection of Archived Photo Prints. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery

expert seemed to be important to Nykytaide ry – how would the French react to the Finnish jury's choices?

As the commissar of the exhibition, Sarajas-Korte was sent by the Ministry of Education to Paris in 1974 to participate in the final negotiations with the representatives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and museum officials.<sup>72</sup> Once these were over, Sarajas-Korte was able to write to Maire Gullichsen about the results. She explained that she didn't know whether to be glad or sorry about the outcome. She didn't have any opportunities to return to the subject of the original plans for the exhibition space during the negotiations. The French side had decided that it would be held at the Musée Galliera, from December 1975 to January 1976, and if Finland wanted a different exhibition space, it would have to wait for another year, which was not desirable, as the exhibition had already been postponed. The letter reveals Sarajas-Korte's disappointment, but eventually she considered that the most important thing was the exhibition itself.<sup>73</sup>

When it was finally decided that the Musée Galliera would be the exhibition venue, it was the Galliera's intendant Marie-Claude Dane, instead of Lassaigne, who visited Finland in August of 1975.<sup>74</sup> During her visit, the Finns tried to take into account as much as possible

72 Minutes of the meeting of the Exhibition and Information Department of the Fine Arts Academy of Finland, 4 November 1974. Minutes of the Exhibition and Information Department of the Fine Arts Academy of Finland 1973–1983. The Fine Arts Academy of Finland (STA) STA C40. AC, FNG.

73 A letter to 'Maire' – most likely Sarajas-Korte's letter to Maire Gullichsen, unknown date. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

74 Annual report of Nykytaide ry 1975. File 6: Minutes. NTA. AC, FNG.



Installation view of the 'Facettes de Finlande' exhibition at the Musée Galliera, showing (from left) works by Kimmo Kaivanto, Mauno Hartman and Jaakko Sievänen. The figure standing in the foreground is probably the artist Ernst Mether-Borgström

Photographer: AGRACI, Paris.  
 Collection of Archived Photo Prints. Archive Collections,  
 Finnish National Gallery

the wishes expressed by Dane regarding the composition of the exhibition.<sup>75</sup> The exhibition secretary, Tuula Arkio from the Ateneum Art Museum, wrote to Juhana Blomstedt, one of the artists selected, that Dane's visit to Finland had not gone entirely smoothly. It seems difficulties had been expected overall during the preparations of the exhibition, as well as between the museum and the Finnish embassy in Paris, as Arkio described Dane and von Numers as being 'already on the warpath'.<sup>76</sup>

## 141 works of Finnish art

*The collection was not as good as we hoped, too many names – but that's how it is with democracy and government money. But there are many excellent artists out there and they are saving our 'face'.*

– Maire Gullichsen to Lorenz von Numers<sup>77</sup>

A picture of what kind of Finnish art Nykytaide ry considered suitable to export abroad can be constructed from its correspondence, as well as the minutes of the exhibition jury's meetings. The original jury comprised the members of Nykytaide ry, Salme Sarajas-Korte and two artists,

- 75 The Ministry of Education, Jaakko Numminen to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 16 September 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.  
 76 The exhibition secretary Tuula Arkio's letter to artist Juhana Blomstedt 1.10.1975. Facettes de Finlande (FdF), letters. STA/AT H92. AC, FNG.  
 77 Nykytaide ry board member Maire Gullichsen's letter to Von Numers 20 November 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.



**Jaakko Sievänen, Outi on the Sofa, 1974, oil and tempera on canvas, 135.5cm x 160.5cm Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum**

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Sakari Viika  
 © Kuvasto 2024

Sam Vanni and Heikki Häivöja. The Ministry of Education officially stated that since the exhibition was part of the official cultural exchange, the jury would be appointed by the Ministry, following previous discussions with Nykytaide ry.<sup>78</sup> According to Sarajas-Korte's letter, behind this decision was Kalervo Siikala from the Ministry. However, it should be noted that it is not mentioned in other

archive sources. When the exhibition was made official, Nykytaide ry could no longer keep the selection of artists to itself.<sup>79</sup> The expanded jury comprised the original members appointed by the association, together with the artists Raimo Heino from the Finnish Artists' Association and Lauri Ahlgrén from the State Visual Arts Committee. Tuula Arkio was the secretary of the jury.<sup>80</sup> If the original exhibition idea had previously started to fade, at this point, it had become completely unrecognisable.

In the end 'Facettes de Finlande' consisted of 141 works by 21 artists, filling the entire space of the Musée Galliéra.<sup>81</sup> Nykytaide ry decided to use the large, 'currently boring and tatty lobby' of the museum, as well as its courtyard, as exhibition spaces. This could not be done without an exhibition architect and exhibition structures brought from Finland.<sup>82</sup> The jury's chairman Sarajas-Korte promised to contact Artek's interior designer Ben af Schultén<sup>83</sup> to be architect, and the possible theme and structure of the exhibition was also discussed. In the end it was decided that there was no reason to come up with any specific theme for the

78 The Ministry of Education to Nykytaide ry, 29 October 1974. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

79 A letter to Von Numers, most likely from Salme Sarajas-Korte. Date unknown. Sarajas-Korte's letter to the intendant of Musée Galliéra Marie-Claude Dane, 24 September 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

80 Annual report of Nykytaide ry 1975. File 6: Minutes. NTA. AC, FNG. Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers 2 January 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

81 A letter to 'Maire', unknown sender but most likely Sarajas-Korte to Maire Gullichsen, unknown date. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

82 Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, unknown date. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG. In the budget for the exhibition, it was noted that the tasks of the exhibition architect were to design exhibition structures and lighting arrangements, as well as hanging of the exhibition works. The budget of the Paris exhibition. FdF. STA/AT H92, AC, FNG.

83 Ben af Schultén began his work at Artek in 1964. One of the founders of Artek and Nykytaide ry, Maire Gullichsen, was important to af Schultén also as a friend, in addition to their shared work in Artek. Designing various Artek exhibitions, as well as other numerous exhibitions in art museums, was a significant part of af Schultén's work. Susanna Aaltonen. 'Ben af Schulténin traditio tradition sisällä – Sisustusarkkitehtina Artekissa 1964–2004', in Marjatta Levanto (ed.), *Ben af Schultén: muotoilija – formgivare*. Helsinki: Parus Verus, 2023, (11–57). 18, 20, 31, 37. On Gullichsen's initiative and wish, af Schultén became the artistic director of Artek in 1976. Marjatta Levanto. 'Näin minä sen muistan. Marjatta Levannon keskustelu Ben af Schulténin kanssa', in Marjatta Levanto (ed.), *Ben af Schultén: muotoilija – formgivare*. Helsinki: Parus Verus, 2023, (61–107) 86.





**Outi Ikkala, *Untitled*, 1975, acrylic on canvas, 117cm x 116.5cm**  
**Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum**

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Petri Virtanen © Kuvasto 2024

exhibition in Paris, but simply to make it impressive and as high quality as possible.<sup>84</sup> The list of artists chosen by the original jury included sculptors Mauno Hartman, Kain Tapper, Harry Kivijärvi and Laila Pullinen. The painters chosen by the association were Kimmo Kaivanto, Juhana Blomstedt, Juhani Linnovaara, Kauko Lehtinen, Juhani Harri, Jaakko Sievänen and Lars-Gunnar Nordström.<sup>85</sup> The final list of artists chosen by the expanded jury was presented to the board of Nykytaide ry in February 1975. A few new names had now also appeared on the artist list – Niilo Hyttinen, Esko Tirronen, Outi Ikkala, Rafael Wardi, Veikko Vionoja, Pentti Lumikangas, Tapio Junno, Ahti Lavonen, Raimo Utraiainen, and Heikki Virolainen.<sup>86</sup>

According to Sarajas-Korte, the main focus of the exhibition was on sculptures, as these suited the conditions of the Galliera the best.<sup>87</sup> The selected artists, as well as those chosen for the exhibition poster however, caused friction among the organisers. The designs for the exhibition catalogue and poster were undertaken in Finland by graphic designer Osmo Pasanen. The Finnish embassy in Paris hoped that the catalogue could also serve as a general presentation of Finnish contemporary visual art.<sup>88</sup> After the exhibition catalogue design was

84 Minutes of the meeting of the Paris exhibition jury, 16 December 1974. FdF. STA/AT H92. AC, FNG. As the exhibition architect, Ben af Schultén was also involved in selecting the works for the exhibition. Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 23 October 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

85 Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 29 March 1974. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

86 Artist lists of the jury. FdF. STA/AT H92, AC, FNG.

87 Minutes of the board meeting of Nykytaide ry, 14 February 1975. FdF. STA/AT H92, AC, FNG.

88 Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 29 July 1975. Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers 16 September 1975. Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 23 October 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.



Juhani Linnovaara, *Moonlight Sonata II*, 1970, acrylic and oil on canvas, 119.5cm x 105cm  
 Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Jouko Könönen © Kuvasto 2024

completed in Finland, it was sent to France for approval, and Dane's response in particular was awaited with tension. It appears that when Dane had been in Finland, she had wanted some artists chosen by the jury to be removed from the exhibition – such as Wardi, Vionoja and Virolainen – but the Finns insisted they stay, as they considered it impossible to exclude artists who had already been preparing for this exhibition for months. As a compromise, the jury then included two more artists in the exhibition who Dane had liked – Lavonen and Tirronen – and reduced the number of works by the aforementioned artists. Sarajas-Korte wrote to Von Numers:

*Compromise after compromise! If she takes it really hard, I'll probably come there to negotiate. She of course has the power to take or leave the exhibition. I think the core part of the exhibition is good – there are too many artists as it is now.<sup>89</sup>*

The question of the exhibition's poster was also a puzzle. The French side wanted a colourful poster, but most of the colourful artists in the exhibition were those who Dane didn't favour. The Finnish side did not want Juhani Linnovaara's work on the poster, as he was considered to be the 'least Finnish' artist in the show, and the Finns wanted the poster to be 'the most authentically Finnish of the exhibition'. Von Numers explained to Sarajas-Korte

<sup>89</sup> Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 23 September 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

that the opinions on the poster design by the French were devastating.<sup>90</sup> In the end, Juhani Linnovaara's painting *Moonlight Sonata II*, was chosen by the French organisers for the exhibition poster,<sup>91</sup> as a 'colourful and striking poster to advertise the exhibition'.<sup>92</sup> When the exhibition plans were completed, Salme Sarajas-Korte wrote to von Numers:

*[...] I really wistfully think of the first plan of the exhibition with its few artist names, and Finland's 'democratic' exhibition policy, which seems to make such a freely planned exhibition impossible!*<sup>93</sup>

However, Sarajas-Korte was confident that the exhibition would turn out to be quite beautiful with the help of its architect Ben af Schultén, even though there was no longer any concrete theme to the exhibition.<sup>94</sup> Sarajas-Korte's letter and Maire Gullichsen's (see note 77) to Von Numers further narrate the less democratic wishes of the jury and the exhibition policy of Nykytaide ry – the association blamed the 'democratic exhibition policy' and 'government money' as limiting factors for its exhibition policy, which favoured bringing interesting Finnish individuals either alone, or in a small group.<sup>95</sup> Sarajas-Korte was also a member of the State Visual Arts Committee, whose meeting in February 1975 dealt with the processing of a statement to the FCICE, regarding foreign exhibitions activities. Sarajas-Korte's dissenting opinion was recorded in the minutes, furthermore emphasising the standpoint of Nykytaide ry.

*I cannot agree with the opinion of the majority of the committee, according to which, regardless of the organiser, the juries of exhibitions of living artists that go abroad must have a majority of representatives of professional organisations of artists. In my opinion, desirable cooperation in this field between professional organisations of artists and, on the other hand, museums and other art organisations should take place on a voluntary basis. Too narrow regulations in my opinion, they are not even in the artists' own interest, they are apt to reduce the voluntary activity manifested by various parties, which aims to make Finnish art recognised beyond the country's borders, and means even greater standardising of exhibition activities than at present.*<sup>96</sup>

Von Numers from the embassy was also rather disappointed by the change of plans, and thought that a limited number of artists would have been more profitable than a 'herd' of artists. The French organisers concurred with Von Numers.<sup>97</sup> He complained about how reducing the collection seemed like an impossible requirement, writing: 'Let's hope everything ends happily. Maintaining the current pace, the next Finnish contemporary art exhibition in Paris will take place in 2001!'<sup>98</sup>

90 Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, date unknown. Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 23 October 1975. Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 27 October 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

91 Liisa Tuutti, 'Taide pakettiin ja Pariisiin,' *Ilta-Sanomat*, 12 December, 1975, 5. [digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi](http://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi).

92 Von Numers' letter to Sarajas-Korte, 29 October 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

93 Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 23 September 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

94 Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 23 September 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG. Repainting the museum halls and installing floodlights was a necessary measure according to af Schultén's plans for the exhibition design. R-L Elomaa, Ministry for Foreign Affairs' Telegram copy to Sarajas-Korte, 19.11.1975. FdF, telegrams. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

95 Minutes of FCICE meeting 3 December 1973. Appendix: Memorandum of exhibition seminar 73 held in June 1973. P.H. Taucher 'The private sector as an administrator of exhibition exchange'. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

96 Minutes of the FCICE meeting, 5 December 1975. Appendix: Minutes of the meeting of the State Visual Arts Committee, 25 February 1975. Minutes of the FCICE 1966–1975. STA/AT E3. AC, FNG.

97 Von Numers' letter to Sarajas-Korte, 21 March 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

98 Von Numers' letter to cultural secretary of the Ministry of Education Raija Kallinen, 3 October 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.



Mauno Hartman, *Homeland Sculpture II*, 1968, wood, ht 293cm  
 Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Jouko Kõnönen © Kuvasto 2024

## The living conditions of the North

On the opening day of 'Facettes de Finlande', the exhibition was attended by nearly 2,000 spectators. The show continued for a month, and in the Finnish press it was thought to accentuate Finland's relationship with European contemporary art and the unique nature of Finnish art.<sup>99</sup> Nykytaide ry ultimately considered that the exhibition suited the Musée Galliera well, and gave a prominent picture of Finnish contemporary art.<sup>100</sup> The sculptures in particular were thought to have been of prominence in the exhibition.<sup>101</sup> Salme Sarajas-Korte wrote in the preface of the catalogue:

*We have ended up with the seemingly heterogeneous program Facettes de Finlande, a presentation of the works of twenty artists from the past ten years or so. They are not bound by a common theme, but they all essentially belong to the image of Finnish contemporary art. If the entirety of the exhibition overall has a uniform tone in the eyes of the Parisian audience – à la Bonheur – then it is Finnish. At least this art expresses something about the mentality and the special conditions under which Finnish art exists.<sup>102</sup>*

Sarajas-Korte also drew attention in the preface to the fact that it had been almost 25 years since Finnish visual art had been seen in a similar major exhibition in Paris. Sarajas-Korte explained how in the official international cultural exchange of Finland and France, Finland's contemporary architecture and art and crafts – 'Finnish design' – had long been considered naturally to interpret

the originality and vitality of a young and modern, democratic society. The preface reflects the need to prove Finland's modernity in the case of visual arts too.

*The complex, almost mythical, post-war image of Finland as the extreme corner of Europe isolated by geographical and linguistic barriers, where current art flows slowly arrive [...] has gradually loosened its grip and lost its meaning.<sup>103</sup>*

99 Mirja Bolgár. 'Nykytaidetta Suomesta pariisilaisten jouluun,' *Uusi Suomi*, 21 December, 1975, 14. [digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi](http://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi).

100 Annual report of Nykytaide ry 1975. File 6: Minutes. NTA. AC, FNG.

101 Minutes of the board meeting of Nykytaide ry 22 December 1975. File 6: Minutes. NTA. AC, FNG.

102 'Facettes de Finlande' Finnish version of the preface in the exhibition catalogue written by Salme Sarajas-Korte. Exhibition catalogue, original Finnish texts of the exhibition catalogue. FdF. STA/AT 92. AC, FNG.

103 'Facettes de Finlande' Finnish version of the preface of exhibition catalogue written by Salme Sarajas-Korte. Exhibition catalogue, original Finnish texts of the exhibition catalogue. FdF. STA/AT 92. AC, FNG.





**Esko Tironen, Morning, 1971, tempera on canvas, 195cm x 195cm**  
 Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum

Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Hannu Aaltonen © Kuvasto 2024

Sarajas-Korte explained how Finnish artists had possibilities to 'view both the east and the west' and they no longer cared what art directions to follow – Finnish artists had freedom of choice. But if there were some basic elements of Finnish art, Sarajas-Korte thought these revolved around northern nature and the fierce rhythm of the seasons. Sarajas-Korte continued in the preface by quoting one of the artist's in the exhibition, Niilo Hyttinen, that it is difficult to discuss the basic conditions of northern art without falling into 'a pitfall of baseless exoticism'. However, Sarajas-Korte dared to present some of her thoughts on the special features of Finnish art – Finnish artists had a tendency towards mysticism, but also a natural and instinctive reliance on their own tradition and soil.<sup>104</sup>

The reviews of the French critics echoed Sarajas-Korte's observations in her preface in the catalogue, referencing it widely, and especially the connection of Finnish art to nature and northern living conditions. According to the critic Pierre Mazars, from *Le Figaro*, the exhibition was effective and emotionally appealing in bringing out the difficult conditions under which art is made in Finland. Mazars named Linnovaara as the most original painter of the exhibition.<sup>105</sup> The exhibition's strong emphasis on sculptors was noted in *Le Parisien Libéré*, which highlighted

Mauno Hartman's wooden sculptures and Harry Kivijärvi's black granite sculptures. Among the painters, the review also gave a special nod to Linnovaara, whose talent was felt to be very idiosyncratic, as well as to Wardi, Tironen and Nordström.<sup>106</sup> In a review in *Nice-Matin*, Maguy Furhange noted the sublime sculptures of Laila Pullinen, the only female sculptor in the exhibition, and described the exhibition as bringing out the spirit of Finland.<sup>107</sup> In the 1970s the recognisability of Finnish contemporary art was still somewhat uncertain and it was assumed that Finnish architecture was better known in France than Finnish visual arts.<sup>108</sup> The French reviews of 'Facettes de Finlande' confirmed the notion that Finnish contemporary visual art was overshadowed by architecture and arts and crafts. The reviews in *Revue de l'Ameublement* and *Le Courrier du Meuble* mentioned that Finnish architecture and arts and crafts were relatively well known in France, but other forms of artistic expression had remained unknown. In addition to nature, the magazine named Finland's geographical and

104 'Facettes de Finlande,' Finnish version of the preface of exhibition catalogue written by Salme Sarajas-Korte. Exhibition catalogue, original Finnish texts of the exhibition catalogue. FdF. STA/AT 92. AC, FNG.

105 Pierre Mazars, 'The foggy brains of the north,' *Le Figaro*, 12 December, 1975. Finnish translations of newspaper clippings. STANTO H91. AC, FNG. Original versions of the newspaper clippings. FdF, newspaper clippings. STA/AT H92. AC, FNG.

106 A.J, 'Facettes de Finlande,' *Le Parisien Libéré*, 18 December, 1975. Finnish translations of newspaper clippings. STANTO H91. AC, FNG. Original versions of the newspaper clippings. FdF, newspaper clippings. STA/AT H92. AC, FNG.

107 Maguy Furhange, 'Exhibitions in Paris. Facettes de Finlande,' *Nice-Matin*, January 4, 1976. Finnish translations of newspaper clippings. FdF. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

108 Anni Voipio, 'Sini-valko-punainen kulttuurisilta,' *Uusi Suomi*, 10 June, 1972, 4.  
[digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi](http://digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi).

political location by the 'watershed' as one of the special features of Finnish art.<sup>109</sup> Frank Elgar wrote in *Carrefour* that Finnish culture, without obeying the instructions of its neighbour, the Soviet Union, seems to be clearly oriented towards the West.<sup>110</sup>

As Clerc has noted of Finland, there was an ambiguity between the desire to embrace foreign cultural trends as a necessity to modernise the country, and a focus on national features that are considered to be unique and therefore necessary to be preserved and exported internationally. During the research period, the export of Finnish cultural trends in international cultural relations was increasingly seen as a contribution to the aim of peace and stability, while the cultural diplomacy of Finland also aimed to bring out and promote the sophisticated and distinctive national culture of the country.<sup>111</sup> I argue that the preface by Sarajas-Korte in the exhibition catalogue expressed the same values – to shake up the picture of Finland as a periphery and isolated corner in the north, and instead to present an open, international and democratic society whose artists were able to look both east and west, and still remained free to produce unique features in their art. My interpretation is that the critique of the exhibition also reflected these aims, since the press reviews confirmed the special geopolitical situation of Finland and, to Finland's favour, these reviews regarded Finnish contemporary art as 'proof' of a free democracy and society.

## Cross-driven art policy

The exhibition's lack of sufficient press was brought up in the Finnish press by Mirja Bolgár in *Uusi Suomi*, who pointed out that for such a rare exhibition, more centralised information for the press would have been appropriate.<sup>112</sup> Liisa Tuutti wrote in *Ilta-Sanomat* that the exhibition was a rare event, giving artists the opportunity to move 'from the periphery to the centre of culture'. Moreover, she added that there were none of the usual disputes when making this exhibition as there was a desire to avoid the clashes of Finnish internal art policy, although she admitted that the participating artists in the exhibition do think of these questions, even if Finnish art policy felt like a far-fetched question from a French perspective. Tuutti quoted Sarajas-Korte in the article: 'This art mainly expresses something about the mentality and the special conditions under which Finnish art exists.'<sup>113</sup>

But was *Nykytaide ry* and its exhibition outside the cross-driven art policy? Apparently the exhibition had generated more rumours and stirred more heated opinions on the official cultural exchange of Finland than usual. Sarajas-Korte believed this was partly due to the fact that artists felt that whether or not they were included in the exhibition was a very important matter.<sup>114</sup> Kristina Carlson wrote about the exhibition in *Suomen kuvalehti* under the heading 'Friction in Paris'. Carlson questioned whether Finland's cultural export had stumbled into the disagreements of a small circle, and asked, was the remarkable opportunity to exhibit Finnish art in Paris used well? In the article, Carlson referred to the artists' comments about the exhibition, concluding that when Finnish art is sent to the world in future, hopefully the kind of friction that had occurred in connection with this exhibition would not be repeated.<sup>115</sup> Sarajas-Korte corrected the erroneous information in Carlson's article, such as the claims about why the exhibition was in the Musée Galliera, and that the initiative for the exhibition did not come from the French state. She explained to the press that when the exhibition

109 Pierre Masteau, 'Finnish wood in Galliera,' *Revue de l'Ameublement* February, 1976. P.M, 'Wood in the Current Finnish Art, *Le Courrier du Meuble*. Finnish translations of newspaper clippings. FdF. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

110 Frank Elgar, 'Ten years of Finnish art in Galliera,' *Carrefour*, 8 January, 1976. Finnish translations of newspaper clippings. FdF. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

111 Clerc, *Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Finland. Identity, Geopolitics and the Welfare State*, 19.

112 Mirja Bolgár, 'Nykytaidetta Suomesta pariisilaisten jouluun,' 14.

113 Liisa Tuutti, 'Taide pakettiin ja Pariisiin,' 5.

114 Salme Sarajas-Korte, 'Pariisiin näyttely,' *Suomen kuvalehti*, 19 March, 1976, 66, [digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi](https://digikansalliskirjasto.fi).

115 Kristina Carlson, 'Kitkaa Pariisissa,' *Suomen kuvalehti*, 5 March, 1976, 26, [digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi](https://digikansalliskirjasto.fi).



**At the 'Facettes de Finlande' exhibition, probably the opening, at the Musée Galliera, with (centre right) exhibition commissar Salme Sarajas-Korte, and (far right) sculptor Mauno Hartman**  
 Photographer: AGRACI, Paris. Collection of Archived Photo Prints. Archive Collections, Finnish National Gallery

became official, the artists' associations took an interest in it, which led to the expansion of the exhibition's base and supplementing the initially three-person jury with two members, writing: 'For reasons I am not qualified to ascertain, the embassy thought the Musée Galliera a more suitable location for the exhibition.' Sarajas-Korte made clear that the composition of the exhibition and the number of participants had played no part in the selection of a venue and that the selection of artists and art works took place only after securing the exhibition space.<sup>116</sup>

The final placement of the exhibition at the Musée Galliera and the problems related to the vernissage and press conference, remain contradictory in light of the sources I have examined. Misunderstandings arise from the correspondence between Von Numers and Sarajas-Korte.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, the archival sources indicate that the exhibition in Paris was a disappointment to the Nykytaide ry board members. However, this was not due to the exhibition itself – which was considered to be of high quality – but the poor administration of the Finnish embassy in Paris. Cooperation with the embassy did not go as smoothly as had been anticipated – a press conference was not organised and the association was disappointed by the change of exhibition venue.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Sarajas-Korte, 'Pariisin näyttely,' 66. Carlson, 'Kitkaa Pariisissa,' 26.

<sup>117</sup> Von Numers' letter to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2 October 1975. Sarajas-Korte's letter to Von Numers, 23 October 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

<sup>118</sup> Minutes of the board meeting of Nykytaide ry, 22 December 1975. File 6: Minutes. NTA. AC, FNG. In December 1975, there were problems at the embassy in Paris, and the embassy's 'state of mind' was described as 'sad' and operations were said to be 'almost paralysed.' The relations between Enckell and Von Numers were broken. Timo Soikkanen. *Presidentin ministeriö. Ulkoasiainhallinto, ulkopoliittikan hoito Kekkonen kaudella. Uudistumisen, ristiriitojen, menestyksen vuodet 1970–81.* Helsinki: Otava, 2008, 118.



Presenting the exhibition elsewhere had been on the table, but it seemed that much of it became too costly to realise.<sup>119</sup> There were several negotiations over the possible continuation of the exhibition and finally it was agreed, at the request of Kalervo Siikala, that a small part of it be sent to Dublin and Belfast. This follow-up tour was considered a success.<sup>120</sup>

The quote from Taucher's letter to ambassador Enckell at the beginning of this case study makes more sense after closely examining the preparations and the aftermath of the exhibition. The different wishes and demands of various parties turned out to be disagreements between the French and Finnish exhibition organisers – but also the internal disputes of the Finnish art field in matters concerning the organisation of cultural exhibitions abroad.

## Conclusions

To conclude, if the 1970s were 'the time of foreign policy in art', I argue that this assessment includes the notion that it was a time of close cooperation between the state and the art field. The imposition of the FCICE indicates that export art exhibitions were an important facet of Finland's cultural diplomacy. The state aimed to coordinate exhibitions activities through the FCICE, from 1966 to 1975. This coordination mostly consisted of bringing together exhibition organisers and supporting exhibitions activities, which were initiated either from the art field itself or within the framework of the state's cultural exchange agreements. What I found interesting was that the members of the commission widely accepted this coordination, content with the FCICE's role, but also holding on to their sufficient freedom. Why did the art field accept the coordination of the state? One could draw the conclusion that it was mostly seen as a facilitating factor that made it possible to carry out exhibitions with state funds. At the same time, it also reflects the Finnish cultural policy of the research period – how the development and support of the various fields of art were seen to be a part of the state's responsibilities, and therefore something that was supposed to be coordinated by the state. What previous studies of Finnish cultural diplomacy from the state's perspective and this research disclose is that, for both the state and the art field, the objectives of cultural diplomacy regarding export art exhibitions was to make Finland and Finnish art recognised, as it was seen to be nationally important. The case study of 'Facettes de Finlande' reveals how export art exhibitions were seen as a vital part of manifesting Finnish art and culture abroad, and they had political aspirations to support the broader objectives of the Finnish state. Perhaps this common objective was ultimately also the core of the FCICE's activities.

This research has focused on the course of events from the point of view of Nykytaide ry. As previous studies have claimed, for Nykytaide ry the motivation to organise export exhibitions was to present contemporary Finnish art abroad, supporting it and making it recognised. My research has shown that for Nykytaide ry the ambition behind these export exhibitions was also to prove that Finnish contemporary art deserved an opportunity to be presented abroad – it was high quality and connected to international styles, while having its own distinctive voice. I argue, that the preface written by Salme Sarajas-Korte in the exhibition catalogue of 'Facettes de Finlande' further represents how Nykytaide ry aimed to create a certain image of Finland and its contemporary art to an international audience. Whether unintentional or intentional, Sarajas-Korte aligned with the state's objectives in the endeavours of cultural diplomacy concerning the national image of Finland – to demonstrate that Finland is a free democracy with independent artists functioning between both eastern and western influences.

119 London and/or Dutch museums. Minutes of the board meeting of Nykytaide ry, 12 June, year unknown, most likely from 1975. File 6: Minutes. NTA. AC, FNG. The Finnish Embassy in Haag's letter to Sarajas-Korte, 15 July 1975. FdF, letters. STANTO H91. AC, FNG.

120 The intention was to organise the follow-up exhibition with as little effort and expense as possible. Part of the exhibition was then sent to Dublin, and Belfast in the spring of 1976. Minutes of the board meeting of Nykytaide ry, 22 December 1975. Minutes of the board meeting of Nykytaide ry, 21 September 1976. Annual report of Nykytaide ry 1975 File 6: Minutes. NTA. AC, FNG.

The objectives of the exhibitions policy of Nykytaide ry was to present a few of the best artists in selected central art cities. It is important to note that the association acted in accordance with its own values and described its activities as being outside of internal art politics. But was that really the case? The association wanted to influence what kind of an image Finnish contemporary art had abroad, to define what was authentically Finnish art, as well as what was the most significant contemporary art in Finland during the research period. Nykytaide ry favoured less democratic ways of organising export art exhibitions, as prominent board members of the association Maire Gullichsen and Sarajas-Korte argued that the association was not able to act ‘freely’ if the exhibition was carried out with ‘government money’ and ‘democratic exhibition policy’. Isn’t this, after all, internal art policy? The claim is further supported by the fact that Salme Sarajas-Korte acted at the heart of the state’s art policy, on the State Visual Arts Committee.

This research project thus brought up the disputes of the art field during the research period in matters of export art exhibitions, which is a subject for further extensive study. Whether the coordinated exhibitions activity improved the image of Finnish contemporary art abroad is also outside the scope of this research. It must also be stated that the state perhaps allowed the art field to operate relatively independently in its cultural exchange with Western countries. Would the picture be different if the subject of the study was to observe and interpret Finnish art exhibitions in the Soviet Union or other socialist countries?

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