

Press Release
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Exhibitions spring 2011 / EMMA - Espoo Museum of Modern Art

Joan Miró
4.3.-12.6.2011

EMMA's Joan Miró exhibition concentrates on the artist's sculptures from the years 1949-1981. There are 33 of them accompanied by 64 paintings, drawings and graphics.

It's easy to feel at home with the abstract surrealist paintings of the Catalan artist **Joan Miró (1893-1983)**, likewise with the crazy form language of his sculptures. The form language, materials and mood of his works reveal an insatiable *joie de vivre*, powerful sensuality and sense of humour behind which also lurks his lesser known pessimism. He has said that the humour in his works is the fortuitous outcome of the need to escape from his tragic, taciturn temperament.

Sculpture played a central role in Miró's art from the 1940s following his series of small-sized works with woman and bird motifs. Sculptures on similar themes grew in size during the 1960s and 1970s by which time Miró had produced about 300 works. Sculpture offered Miró a wider scope than painting to experiment with materials and expression. Another important stimulant was the need to get out of the studio and produce art for public places. His wanderings around the family estate at Montroïd (Tarragona), Catalonia, and the mountains of Palma, Majorca, were voyages of discovery for new works. With the completion of the massive studio in Palma in 1956, he could provide a home for the huge collection of objects discovered on these treks, and which "lived on" in his sculptures: a shoe last may refer to a foot or the wing of a bird, a coat hanger a head.

Miró worked for a long time on his sculptures, allowing them to "talk" to each other before becoming individual works. Most important of all was the act of creation, the moment when a work was born. Unconcerned with the finer aspects of technique, Miró did not bother to give a work the finishing touch, leaving this to his assistants and casters in whom he had complete faith. He was, however, greatly stimulated by the unexpected that occurred in casting bronze or firing ceramics.

In the 1960s Miró produced a number of public works. Not only did he believe that the "sun, wind, rain and dust improve sculpture" but also that art should be brought to the people. The same humane philosophy can be seen in his graphics.

Miró's artistic output was one of the largest and most comprehensive of our time. It included oil paintings, sculptures, ceramics, drawings, collages, textiles and graphics. His productivity was much influenced by the fact that he never waited for inspiration, just started to work allowing the object to assume its own shape. Efficiency was further advanced by his regular life style.

The works in the exhibition have been loaned by the Galerie Lelong, Paris, Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró, Majorca, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sara Hildén Art Museum, Tampere, Didrichsen Art Museum, Helsinki and a number of private collectors in Finland.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue in Finnish, Swedish and English.

Miró and Finnish Fantasy

In connection with its major international exhibitions, EMMA has offered a Finnish angle on the subject, as for example *Monet and the Finnish Impressionists* and *The Power of Africa* and the Finns. *Miró and Finnish Fantasy* continues this line.

Exhibition artists

Ole Kandelin, 1920-1947

Ernst Methner-Borgström, 1917-1966

Rolf Sandqvist, 1919-1994

Max Salmi, 1931-1995

Kauko Lehtinen, born 1925

Antti Vuori, born 1935

Kari Huhtamo, born 1943

Some 30 paintings, sculptures, graphics and drawings will be on show. Miró's influence on Finnish artists is examined from the viewpoint of different periods and styles. Like all great artists, Miró was, and remains an inspiration and trailblazer for generations past and present. The artists in the *Miró and Finnish Fantasy* exhibition have created their own individual image world but similarly reveal their affinity to Miró's fascinating and imaginative art.

The older generation of artists, Ole Kandelin, Ernst Methner-Borgström and Rolf Sandqvist, belong to the post-war trend to discover a new abstract expression. They are linked to Miró's art by the play of abstract, soft and organic forms, pure colours and ambiguous patterns.

Miró's refined Surrealism, his mysterious signs and symbols, appealed to Max Salmi and Kauko Lehtinen who were reared in the Surrealist tradition of the Turku School. Miró's influence on Salmi can be seen in the almost childish expression of his human figures, the division of his canvas, and his bird and moon motifs, and on Lehtinen it can be seen in his exquisite use of line and ingenious stories. Like Miró, both Ole Kandelin and Max Salmi utilised the subconscious, automatic technique of Surrealism in their art.

The flights of imagination in Miró's sculptures find a parallel in the joy of play and perception in Antti Vuori's colourful sculptures and paintings. Likewise a reflection of Miró's biomorphic patterns can be seen in the way Kari Huhtamo moulds tough steel into organic, sensual forms.

The world of art is boundless and its influences are never unambiguous or finite. The *Miró and Finnish Fantasy* exhibition opens a different approach to Miró's world.

Tor Arne

4.3. -12.6.2011

In addition to Miró, EMMA takes pleasure in introducing the Finnish artist **Tor Arne** (born 1934). This retrospective exhibition, curated by art critic **Timo Valjakka**, presents some 30 oil paintings, watercolours and pastels from 1978 to 2010, and is the largest showing of his works to date.

Tor Arne is highly respected among his colleagues and art experts, an 'artist's artist'. He studied at the Free Art School in the 1950s under Sam Vanni and Unto Pusa, teaching at the same place from 1962 to 1988, and being its rector from 1966 to 1988.

Arne's paintings have been described as bright, absolute and profound. Even though derived from the ordinary experiences and memories of nature, they are not descriptive. They are independent works, presenting only themselves, and lying somewhere between the representational and the abstract in expression. What is essential is that something alive can be found in his paintings.

Arne's paintings are both tranquil and powerful emotional experiences obtained by purely visual means. His art possesses an intense painterliness that makes way for colour and light. His works are without title, date or place because he does not wish to influence the meeting of viewer and painting. As he says: "My wish is to have the capacity to bring joy."

Parvs Publishing and EMMA will jointly publish a book in Finnish and English on Tor Arne edited by Timo Valjakka.

Press photos: www.emma.museum/press
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