

The XXIX Mänttä Art Festival names 70 artists for the upcoming exhibition. NO is the theme for summer 2025.

The artist list for the 2025 Mänttä Art Festival has been announced. Curator **Krister Gråhn** has invited 37 artists and 33 more were added to the list by co-curators, adding up to 70 artists/artist groups.

"Curation is based on inclusion and integration. However, delimiting the scope with the word no emerged as a surprisingly large part of the curation. After narrowing it down, what remained was perhaps the essential. In a way, I feel that we are down to the basics. Childhood and parenthood, relationship with nature, beliefs, opinions, and states of mind connect us all", says Krister Gråhn.

"Housing is an area of life that has been a long-time interest. It made me think of how individuals place themselves in the environment and society, and how this is affected by different stages of life, external factors, and responsibilities. The environment is dealt with broadly – it is NOT only about the built environment but also about our relationship with nature and other species. Despite the broad themes, I hope that people may feel that the exhibition is personally curated for them," hopes Gråhn.

"Next summer, the Mänttä Art Festival will also grant an opportunity to explore different definitions of art, theories, and reflections on what art consists of. Many of the works were selected from the artist's existing oeuvres. Even though society has changed, the works are still relevant – in different ways. New and unprecedented is NOT synonymous with the quality of art," says Gråhn.

The artists invited by Krister Gråhn are **Dorian Bajramovic, Maria Duncker, The Animal Rights Academy, Elina Försti, Ramina Habibollah, Minna Havukainen, Timo Heino, Heikki Hautala, Pauliina Jokela, Jaakko Kahilaniemi, Matias Karsikas, Kastehelmi Korpijaakko, Kalle Lampela, Santeri Lehto, Virve Lilja, Anni Löppönen, Simo Mantere, Heikki Marila, Teemu Mäenpää, Maija Närhinen, One Love Group, Marja Patrikainen, Antti Pussinen, Mikko Rekonen, Repin-institute alumni, Restlessminds, Erkki Saarilehto, Jasu Salmi, Teemu Salonen, Heidi Saramäki, Jere Suontausta, Paula Tella, Tommi Toija, Päivi Tuovinen, Pekko Vasantola, Milja Viita, and Timo Wright.**

The Co-Curation Processes

For Krister Gråhn, dealing with issues important to him in a many-voiced dialogue required expertise he does NOT have. Therefore, Gråhn has invited 14 co-curators to work on nine different processes.

Jewellery Art & the Politics of the Body - Curated by Jenni Sokura and Tarja Tuupanen

The politics of the body is the theme of the international jewellery collection. Searching beyond Finland's borders enabled the curators to display certain jewellery art classics to the public. The collection includes a material showdown from New Zealand, the infinite girlishness of a young Estonian artist, and insightful play with objects and words. Jewellery is a part of human identity and its expression. However, jewellery's identity is not tied to places or national borders but to the wearer. By definition, they travel with our bodies. There is always some communication between the jewellery and the environment - is there such a thing as a non-political body or jewellery?

The jewellery artists are **Lin Cheung (UK), Ana Escobar Saavedra (CO/FR/AE), Benedict Haener (CH), Jussi Järvinen (FI), Liisbeth Kirss (EE), Nadiye (FI), Jasmin Matzakow (DE), Nanna Melland (NO), Maria Nuutinen (FI), Anna Rikkinen (FI), Åsa Skogberg (SE), Hansel Tai (CN/EE), Vivi Touloumidi (GR/DE/BE), Wen-Ju Tseng (UK), Lisa Walker (NZ), and Zhipeng Wang (CN).**

Unarmed Finland – Exhibition Curated by Ihmisyyden tunnustajat

The exhibition Unarmed Finland by Ihmisyyden tunnustajat first opened in 1979. Since then, the art exhibition by the community based on a theosophical worldview and a pacifist ideology has been exhibited more than 200 times around Finland. For the summer of 2025, Ihmisyyden tunnustajat will curate a part of the exhibition for the exhibition spaces of the Väinölä and Sampola communities.

“Ihmisyyden tunnustajat are committed to self-education, which creates a unique environment for creating art. Beauty is not what pleases the eye, but what is real, eternal, and enduring in nature and human beings. If the force of violence, bitterness, selfishness could be redirected into cultural work for peace, we could create something unique: an unarmed nation”, the community describe their aims. The artists in the exhibition are **Joonas Peltola, Pekka Peltola, Riitta Pietilä, Erkki Saarilehto, Juha Saarilehto, Merja Saarilehto, Satulia Saarilehto, and Reija Tähtinen.**

The Urban Plan as a Work of Art - Curated by Iida Kalakoski and Otto Huttunen

Mänttä-Vilppula has distinguished itself as an art town. At the Festival's 2025 edition, the idea of an art town will be turned upside down: what would happen if, instead of seeing an art town, we would see the town as a work of art? In addition to the company responsible for promoting and developing the vitality of Mänttä-Vilppula, architects and architecture students from the University of Tampere were invited to the working group. The aim is to create a freely formed vision, without visual constraints, of what a residential area for artists would look like. How could it be realized with attention to artistic freedom, independent living, and a sustainable relationship with nature? The project peers into the artists' imaginary homes, creating images of a residential area that challenge the conventions of living.

The invited architects and architecture students are **Leo Hirviniemi, Jesse Kitinoja, Mari-Sohvi Miettinen, Essi Nisonen, Leo Nuutinen, and Beate Pekkarinen.** Sound designer **Kimmo Hokkanen.**

Cultural Environment & Building Protection - Curated by Iida Kalakoski and Elina Försti

Next summer, the cultural environment will be seen as a work of art and building conservation as a contemporary art project. A collage work dealing with the changing cultural environments and questions regarding the future will be built in the exhibition space. On display will be paintings by Elina Försti, rhymes on the values of architectural heritage written by Iida Kalakoski and her colleague, and a thesis on the potential for renovation and reuse of the old Mänttä spirit factory by the University of Tampere. Instead of being discarded, the building could serve Mänttä's cultural life and remain an important part of local identity. Architect **Riina Sirén** was invited to contribute to the rhymes. The author of the thesis is **Amanda Ikonen.**

518 City Pennants - Curated by Hannele Karppinen, Antti Korkka, and Heidi Saramäki

The pre-school and primary school pupils of Mänttä-Vilppula were invited to join and reflect on what they would not give up in their hometown. The city pennants designed by the children will be on display around Mänttä-Vilppula in the summer.

The program related to the co-curating processes of the Mänttä Art Festival will be published in May. The Mänttä Art Festival is Finland's largest summer exhibition of contemporary art. The XXIX Mänttä Art Festival is open daily from 15.6. to 31.8.2025.

For more information

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