



Leverage from
the EU
2014–2020



HÄMEENLINNA – ART WALK

Main story: When art comes alive

A statue by Viktor Jansson was unveiled in Hämeenlinna recently. Elli Wegelius is on a stroll and happens to see Viktor Jansson admiring his new work of art. Jansson is happy to tell Mrs Wegelius about the essence of art, and not only his own art: he takes her to the streets of the future to admire art from a completely new perspective.

"My statue, called *Youth*, is quite straightforward, don't you think?" Jansson asks Mrs Wegelius.

"It is beautiful", she responds and asks who or what has inspired Jansson to create such a delicate work of art.

"My daughter, Tove, is one of my inspirations. But many artists find youth inspirational, because it is only a fleeting moment in life, one that many people find worth yearning for. Myself, I would rather possess experience and wisdom than youth and innocence," Jansson replies, frowning.

"Should art always be inspiring?" Mrs Wegelius wonders.

"Come, I will take you to see art in its various forms; you can decide after that what you think is the purpose of art," Jansson says and boldly takes Mrs Wegelius by the arm.

Ball statue at Maaherranpuisto Park: Touching allowed

Viktor Jansson and Elli Wegelius are standing by a fountain at a park. The fountain features a rotating stone ball. They are oblivious to the life bustling around them as they come from another time, and what is around them does not matter at this moment. They are so deeply concentrated on the art before them.

"Art can touch you in so many ways, but art can also be touched", says Jansson, as Mrs Wegelius rotates the smooth ball that seems to be carried by water.

"This is like the earth, floating in space, without being supported by anything," she says, amazed.

At that very moment, children come running and rotate the ball again and again.

"I wonder who put this here" one of the children utters.

"It has been made by a stone-carving workshop in the village of Savitaipale. There was a skilled worker there who grinded the stone and made it beautiful."

The child smiles. Mrs Wegelius wonders whether the child will remember this moment later. Maybe he will return to the ball sometime as a grown-up.

"Yes", Jansson says, as if reading her mind: "art creates memories and connects people to times and places that are long gone."

Encounter: Encounter

Mr Jansson and Mrs Wegelius come from a time when the purpose of art was to reflect its model.

Encounter is a work by Pertti Kukkonen from 2004.

"This – art?" Elli says, hesitantly. But Jansson is not attached to time or resemblance.

"It is called *Encounter*. These elements, leaning towards each other, the slowly rising waters that briefly join into one. Do you understand? It contains big ideas. It is not merely what we see. It is also what it



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depicts: thoughts, emotions, states of mind. Different things for me and you, perhaps, but there is no right or wrong.”

Jansson's words are not easy to comprehend.

"Am I supposed to feel it? Should it provoke thoughts?"

"Is that not the meaning of art? To provoke feelings and ideas? What else could be the meaning of art? Encounter."

"This was an important encounter. That was the idea that was provoked in me," Mrs Wegelius says and turns her eyes to the mighty rock slabs one more time.

Statue of Paavo Cajander: Cajander reciting a poem

*"I do not know why; but I feel a heat
like the sun's warmth at my feet
And, in her eyes, I can see
the reflection of heavenly peace."*

"Who is this man who is reciting to us?" Mrs Wegelius inquires of Viktor Jansson.

"Good afternoon to you, I am Paavo Cajander. I was reciting my poem that describes the picture of my mother on the wall."

"He looks so solemn", she thinks out aloud, referring to the statue.

"Yes. I was captured by my friend, Alpo Sailo. We were very patriotic and fought for our native land together. It was like that back then. Even art was harnessed to tell the story of the ideal, the nation, of freedom. We were both born here, in Hämeenlinna, and that is why my statue is located here."

And Cajander goes on with his poem:

*"For hours and hours, I admire
her picture; of it I will never tire."*

"Art always reflects its time," Jansson agrees.

War and love: Discussing War and love

The sculpture consists of two parts: a young volunteer veterinary nurse and a big head of a horse.

"Sometimes art evokes many types of responses," Jansson explains to Mrs Wegelius.

"As volunteer veterinary nurses in war, we used to care for the horses that were involved in important, hard work in military operations. And we were young women. War was a hard time for all of us," she explains.

Mrs Wegelius does not know what to say, and she has to gulp a few times.

"Wartime memories are also hard. The sculpture by Tiina Torkkeli, *War and Love*, is not a smooth work of art. It has been made of recycled steel by welding and galvanising. It is rough and coarse."

"I am glad that discussion arises. Of art and memories, and war and love. If it will help us understand better and remember how important peace is, it is a good thing, right?" the nurse asks the lady.

"It is an important cause," she says and continues: "but also difficult. Memories can be very painful, and you can have a very different view on how they should be presented."

"That is why it is a good thing that art discussion takes place. That can help to widen your understanding, to help you understand the views of someone else."



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Statue of Larin Kyösti: How is your friend?

Larin-Kyösti is sitting down and leaning on his hand.

"I would like to write a book, too", Mrs Wegelius confesses to Viktor Jansson.

"Did you know that my first book, a collection of spring poems, was released in 1897 and the first edition was sold out in one month. They say that the poems were full of carefree vagabond romantics and descriptions of summer, Tavastia landscapes and its people", Larin-Kyösti speaks out.

She looks at Larin-Kyösti with increasing respect.

"And what is the poet thinking now, sitting here?"

"Many things. How is my old friend from school, Eino Leino? And I wonder if you know my real name. If you become a writer, you will need a pen name. At least if you are a poet."

"I know your name. It is Karl Gustaf Larson and you were captured here by your friend, Mikko Hovi." Mrs Wegelius was unaware of any news from Eino Leino. So, he and Viktor Jansson, who had taken a step back to watch them, continued their walk, and Larin-Kyösti is left with his thoughts.

Girl giving milk to a calf: It is so mundane – is it art?

"Look – *A girl giving milk to a calf*", Mrs Wegelius called out in excitedly, forgetting her ladylike manner:

"This has been here for a long time."

That is right, Viktor Jansson said, adding that the statue *A girl giving milk to a calf* was the first public work of art in the city. The sculpture was commissioned from the sculptor, Aukusti Veuro, in 1946.

"Is art not about portraying nice things and fine people, not something as mundane as that?"

"No, not just that. This sculpture pays homage to rural women and their work, in particular with cattle. Don't you think it is a cause worth an acknowledgement?"

"Yes, you are right. But why, then, do people think that art is complicated somehow? That you have to understand it? Here, you can see a girl giving milk to a calf, a girl and a calf, there is nothing to understand. Does it still count as art?"

"Yes. It is the artist's view of the connection between humans and animals, in addition to an acknowledgement. Art is so much, so many things, and you can think whatever you like about it. Whether it is solemn or mundane."

The main story continues...

"Which work of art did you like best?" Viktor Jansson enquires of Mrs Wegelius after their art walk.

"I liked the rotating stone and everything else, too, to be honest. Before, I have only looked, not touched, and perhaps I have not let art touch me either. I never thought of its message, only what I have seen, I have to admit," Mrs Wegelius frankly explains.

"Art is different for all of us, but at the same time it is common for all of us. We can encounter art in many places, which is delightful, as art also nourishes the soul," Jansson says.

"What about you, which one did you like best?"



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"I liked them all, but I found *Encounter* the most touching, I would not sculpt stone in the same way, but then again I am from a different time. Art can become a bridge-builder between times, and this helps us understand it, even when it is younger or older than us."

"It was interesting to meet you, and similarly interesting to see all this art. I wonder who will meet by these treasures next time," Mrs Wegelius and Viktor Jansson wondered after returning to their own time.