

HOSTLER BURROWS

Birger Kaipiainen (1915-1988) was one of the foremost ceramic artists in Finland, active for over 50 years since joining Arabia Studios, the leading producer of innovative applied art, in 1937. Kaipiainen's oeuvre is vast and diverse, though his signature designs are distinctive for their bright, whimsical and fecund floral designs. These definitive themes of which Kaipiainen conceived have become elemental to Finnish design. Kaipiainen's creations are also remarkable for their applied three-dimensional elements, through which Kaipiainen achieved an elevated aesthetic, launching the ceramic art form into the realm of sculpture.

Kaipiainen trained at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in Helsinki, after which he began working in the art department at Arabia Studios. In 1954 he spent some time in the employ of Rörstrand in Sweden, where his works developed into even more intensely surreal and color saturated designs. By then, Kaipiainen was well established, and Rörstrand comfortably orchestrated a well-received exhibition for the artist in New York in 1955. Shortly thereafter in 1960, Kaipiainen created several avian-themed ceramic sculptures for exhibition at the Milan Triennale, which were awarded with the Grand Prix.

At the end of the 1960s at Arabia's behest, Kaipiainen produced the industrial tableware lines Paratiisi and Apila, which are currently renown across Finland for their iconic verdant designs. Kaipiainen received his pension in 1981, however as a testament to his abounding creativity and devotion to his art, he continued to work at Arabia post retirement, even having spent the last day before his passing at the Studio.

MUSEUMS

Victoria & Albert Museum, London
Museum of Contemporary Art, Kyoto
The Brera Gallery, Milan
The Academy Museum, Genoa
The Dallas Museum of Art
The Museum of Applied Arts, Helsinki
The National Museum, Stockholm
Museum of Modern Art, Espoo
Röhsska, Museet, Gothenburg

AWARDS

1951 Milan Triennale, Diplôme D'honneur
1960 Grand Prix, Milan
1961 Gold Plaque Gualdo Tadino, Italy
1963 Pro FinalIndia
1967 Grand Prix, Montreal International and Universal Exposition
1970 State Finland and Helsinki City Art Prizes
1982 Prince Eugen Medal, Sweden

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