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DESIGN MUSEUM'S EXHIBITION OF WORK BY TIMO SARPANEVA – A CLASSIC NAME IN FINNISH DESIGN

Timo Sarpaneva (1926 –2006) is an internationally known and significant Finnish designer who helped establish the international reputation of Finnish design in the 1950s and 1960s. While best known for his designs of glass and art objects for the Iittala glassworks, his versatile, inquisitive and open-minded creativity also led him to work with metal, ceramics and textiles. Design Museum's exhibition is the first overview to present Sarpaneva's oeuvre to this extent.

Timo Sarpaneva began his career as a graphic artist and in 1951 he was hired to design for the Iittala glassworks. The first success of his career was the Milan Triennale of 1954, where he received the Grand Prix for his glass objects. Sarpaneva also achieved international success in exhibition architecture. The Finnish departments of the H55 exhibition, the Milan Triennale of 1957 and the Montreal World's Fair of 1967 were all designed by him.

Timo Sarpaneva's international career also led him to work abroad. The Suomi (Finland) tableware of the Rosenthal porcelain factory of Germany is still being produced and Sarpaneva collaborated with the Italian glass manufacturer Venini in the 1990s. He continued to create glass sculptures in the 1990s at Murano near Venice, where his last works were made in the early 2000s.

'The composer is nothing without an orchestra'

Design Museum's large and extensive Timo Sarpaneva exhibition will feature previously undisplayed material from the designer's career: projects by a talented student of graphic design, designs for printed fabrics and textiles and a great deal of material that has not been shown to the public before. The exhibits include Timo Sarpaneva's most important works in glass, such as Kayak (1954) and Orchid (1954). Also on display is a version of his large Pack Ice piece for the Montreal World's Fair of 1967. The version on show in the exhibition contains 210 glass parts.

Along with examples of Timo Sarpaneva's artistic work, the exhibition contains a wide-ranging selection of utility objects designed by him.

The main material of the exhibition consists of unique videos of Timo Sarpaneva filmed by **Marjatta Sarpaneva**. They show him in glasshouses and glassworks and in familiar company at Iittala, Nuutajärvi, Murano near Venice, Helsinki and Washington. There are also videotaped interviews in which Sarpaneva tells about his own work and designs. **Anne Lakanen**, Professor of Film Editing at Aalto University, has edited the projected material and films of the exhibition.

'The exhibition focuses on Timo Sarpaneva's endless capacity for renewal. This talented designer was prolific, inquisitive and communicative,' says curator **Harry Kivilinna** of Design Museum, who is responsible for the exhibition. *'Sarpaneva said that the designer is nothing unless he can communicate with those who make the works. The contribution of professionals is important when works are realised. There is no point in composing a brilliant symphony if the orchestra has no professional skills. Sarpaneva made his enthusiasm infectious, and this can be seen in the results,'* observes Kivilinna.

The exhibition architecture is by designer **Ilkka Suppanen** and the curator is Harry Kivilinna. **The Timo Sarpaneva exhibition is on display at Design Museum from 23 March until 23 September 2018**

Facts

Timo Sarpaneva (1926 –2006)

- *Alongside his work in design, Sarpaneva was also a talented graphic artist. He had graduated in graphic design in 1949 from the Department of Graphic Art at the Central School of Industrial Art. Among other work in graphic design, he created Iittala's iconic i-logo.*
- *Sarpaneva began his career as a glass artist in 1949, when he won second prize in a Nordic glass design competition held by the Riihimäki glassworks.*
- *Timo Sarpaneva became internationally known through the Milan Triennale of 1954, where he was awarded the Grand Prix for his Kayak, Orchid and Lancet glass pieces, among other works.*
- *Sarpaneva began to collaborate with the Rosenthal ceramics factory of Germany in 1970. His Suomi tableware (1974) for Rosenthal became a commercial success and is still being made.*
- *Textile design by Timo Sarpaneva included woven fabrics for the Porin puuvilla cotton mill and the successful Ambiente textiles for the Tampella company (1965).*
- *In the early 1980s Sarpaneva began to concentrate more and more on works of art, employing not only glass but also granite and metal. He continued to make glass sculptures in the 1990s at Murano near Venice, where his last works were prepared in the early 2000s.*

- *Timo Sarpaneva was awarded the Pro Finlandia medal in 1958 and the honorary title of professor in 1976. He was given an honorary doctorate by the University of Art and Design Helsinki (present-day Aalto University) in 1993.*
- *Timo Sarpaneva's main works are: Lancet (1952), Orchid (1954), Kayak (1954), the Iittala i-series of glassware (1956), Festivo (1966), Pack Ice (1967), the Finlandia series (1964), the Suomi tableware collection (1974) and Archipelago (1979).*

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