

Retrospective exhibition of works by Heikki Orvola in Oulu

Lovers of good design have a great opportunity this summer to get to grips with the very varied output of the Finnish glass and ceramics designer, Professor **Heikki Orvola** at the *Heikki Orvola Design – A Retrospective* exhibition at the Northern Ostrobothnia Museum in Oulu. Open from June 5 to September 6, the show will feature glass, ceramics, textiles, and metal pieces from Orvola's career stretching over the past 40 or more years.

Heikki Orvola is a master of a broad range of materials, something that is reflected in both his functional, everyday pieces and his unique artworks. His designs have proved popular worldwide – and his Kivi candleholders, originally designed for Marimekko, his 24h tableware for Arabia, and his Aurora glasses and Aika tableware for Iittala, have all become classics, whether measured in terms of their popularity or their timeless form. Orvola's expertise also extends to designing and decorating one-off tableware for prestige customers such as the Council of State and the University of Helsinki.

Heikki Orvola has made a valuable contribution as a teacher as well, teaching glass and ceramics techniques to students at the University of Industrial Arts, Helsinki between 1968 and 1991 and overseeing diploma projects by young designers there and at the Institute of Design at the Lahti University of Applied Sciences.

In addition to his designs intended for mass production, Heikki Orvola has also designed numerous unique pieces, many of which are now featured in the collections of major museums worldwide. His unique creations have also been given as gifts on state visits. Orvola's stunning textiles, although less well-known, have been featured in exhibitions at a number of museums in the US and have helped reawaken interest in the role of traditional skills in the design of art textiles.

The feel of an object

Heikki Orvola continues to exhibit widely, drawing on his seemingly undiminished creative inspiration and further reinforcing his international reputation, and he remains an active designer.

A richly illustrated overview of Heikki Orvola's output will be published by Iittala to accompany the Heikki Orvola Design – A Retrospective exhibition. Writing in the 40-page book, **Kaj Kalin** describes the spirit that informs Orvola's designs very perceptively as follows:

“Life as an object designed by Heikki Orvola would be good. You could be sure of a great appearance and great capabilities. As a hand-blown wine or champagne glass, you would have the chance to take part in some of life's highlights.

“As a teacup, you could concentrate on caressing the hand that holds you. Perhaps the most exciting of all would be to be part of a 24-piece ‘family’ of tableware. In bone china, for example. That would be the life! On the other hand, life as a breakfast bowl would not be bad either, celebrating the everyday.

“This is what defines the special quality of these objects, the role they play in our experience. Even at their finest, they feel familiar.”

Mirja and Heikki Orvola have donated all the pieces in the Heikki Orvola Design – A Retrospective exhibition to the Northern Ostrobothnia Museum.

Heikki Orvola Design – A Retrospective

June 5 – September 6, 2009
Northern Ostrobothnia Museum, Oulu
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www.ouka/ppm/

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