

# The Treasures of **ARABIA**

a tour of art and design

The works of art in the Arabia area speak of the history and nature of the area, as well as Finland's unique design heritage. The past and the present are intertwined. At this hub of design, you can catch a glimpse of an enhanced way of living in the future.



*I never knew, before I parted. The writing on the leaf: come. From the first stone I found the word; vademecum. Go with me.* (freely adapted from "Arabia Arabia", a poem by Tuula Isohanni)





2  
photo Rut Bryk

### 1. A CERAMIC LAKE

The tour begins from inside the Arabiakeskus centre, in front of the white ceramic work of art by Rut Bryk. It is located on the wall of the factory outlet by the lifts. Opposite the centre's information desk you can find a scale model of the Arabianranta area. Besides several factory outlets, the centre houses a café, a restaurant, the popular Aralis Library and Information Centre, and toilet facilities. The latest in design is available for sale at the Artebia shop, which also offers postal services.



3a  
photo Annika Bergvik-Forsander

### 2. BEAUTIFUL LIGHT

The tour continues out of the building, to the top of the stairs leading down to Arabiankatu street and Rihla, a temporary work of art (2). From here you can admire the sea view and the fine light typical of the area. The square in front of you is named after the designer Kaj Franck, and behind you is the main building of the Arabia factory. Kaj Franck's workshop was on the top floor. Frank believed in functionalism and wanted to create stackable tableware suitable for every home. Founded in 1873, the factory is currently part of Fiskars Corporation. From this vantage point you can also see the colourful wall of the Heltech building, which looks like it was made of Lego bricks, but is actually assembled of prefabricated steel panels. It was designed by the architect Pentti Kareoja and the artist Markku Pääkkönen.



3b  
photo Pekka Paikkari

### 3. GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER

When you walk down the stairs and turn left onto Arabiankatu, head towards the light-hearted work of art on the facade of the Käpytikka building. Completed in 2009, the building houses homes for intellectually disabled young people who are moving out on their own. The work of art on the facade is designed by Annika Bergvik-Forsander (3a). As you walk along the street, the first building on your right side is the MS-talo, featuring a work called Pisarat by Kaisu Koivisto (3b) on its wall. The next building is called Loppukiri, which translates as "a spurt towards the finish line". It is a communal house for seniors, and the residents have participated in the design of their homes. The work on the facade collects and presents the residents' thoughts on life. This piece by Pekka Paikkari, a designer working at the Arabia factory, is called Cataracta (3c).



3c  
photo Tuukka Pihlajaniemi

### 4. SAUNA WITH A NEST

On the opposite side of the street, at the corner of Muotolijankatu and Arabiankatu, you can spot a nest in metal. Designed by Markku Hakuri, the work of art also doubles as a balcony for the residents' communal sauna. Communal penthouse saunas are a special feature of the buildings at Arabianranta. The tour continues along Muotolijankatu towards the shores of Vanhankaupunginlahti bay.



4  
photo Markku Hakuri

### 5. DESERT WIND

The red, large-scale piece by Tuuli and Kivi Sotamaa called Sirocco is visible from the open staircase of the Käpytikka building. The curves provide the communal yard with movement, which is concentrated into an object-like outdoor space.



5  
photo Kivi Sotamaa

### 6. MAGIC STONES BY THE SEA

The bronze elements that are found on the ground lead to the pergola arbour which is situated on the water front of the Porcelain Garden. This is a scenic and relaxing location close to the sea where the elements can be seen to their full function as they serve as "spinning" stones for the wanderer to sit on.



6  
photo Päivi Kiuru

### 7. PLANTS IN THE HERBARIUM

Eeva Kaisa and Timo Berry's works of art in the entrances of the buildings remind people of a herbaria, collecting the plants and learning from them. The plants have been accomplished by using a technique called Graphic Concrete. The same technique has been implemented in the reed patterns on the façade elements of the terrace layer.



7  
photo Timo Berry

### 8. REEDS

The sandblasted reeds on the staircase windows of Muotolijaniipiha are designed by Jere Saarelainen. When it is dark, they are illuminated, which provides the tall windows with a lacy impression, as the shadows of the reeds are reflected on the entrances. The yard is completed with an environmental work of art consisting of a secluded place by the wall and stones brought there by the residents, which form a Zen-like path.



8  
photo Jere Saarelainen

### 9. WALNUT, OAK AND BLACK ALDER

Turning right (southwards) takes you to a yard named after the designer Birger Kaipainen. Here you find a work of art by Pertti Metsälampi, linking three buildings and presenting the rare tree species in the area. Besides the actual trees growing in the nearby woods, you can admire the leaves and foliage in the staircase windows. The lush decorations by Birger Kaipainen, such as his classic Paratiisi Arabia tableware, are familiar to many.



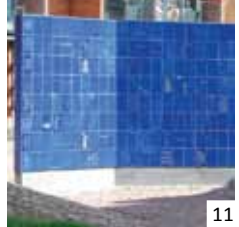
9  
photo Päivi Kiuru

### 10. A STUDENTS' HOME TREE

From Birger Kaipaisen piha, walk towards the entrance of the student housing unit Kyäterinranta on Kaj Franckin katu. Up on the wall of the passage there is a work of art in bronze called Kotipuu (Home tree). Birds have found the nesting box, which is part of this work by Lauri Astala. Along the corridors there are works of art by five photographers; you should be able to spot at least one when taking this tour.



10  
photo Päivi Kiuru



11  
photo Päivi Kiuru



12  
photo Elina Aalto



13  
photo Tiina Kuusari

### 11. HUNTING FOR ARABIAN FACTORY STAMPS

The eight colourful metal pieces by Howard Smith give rhythm to the lawn terrace sloping towards the shore. The blue-tiled enclosure at the start of the street shows the handiwork of the designers from the Arabia factory. The exteriors of the walls are made with Graphic Concrete™; they depict the designers' signatures and Arabia factory stamps.

### 12. A NEARLY FLYING CARPET

The carpet-shaped mosaic by the waterfront wall is designed by Elina Aalto. 11 x 6 m in size, it looks like a real Oriental carpet when you look down from the top floors of the surrounding buildings. The carpet is complete with pattern deviations, just like in a real rug. The piece, Arabian matto (Arabia carpet), received an award for environmental art 2007.

### 13. COMMUNAL WALLS

The next yard formed by three point-blocks, called Gunnel Nymanin piha 2, is a community art project that has been implemented by the residents themselves. The unique doors of the flats and the stencil-painted wall patterns on the facades were created as a joint effort between the artists (Johanna Hyrkäs and Tiina Kuhanen) and the residents. The patterns suggest the ornamental world of Gunnel Nyman, who died at an early age. Recipient of many awards, Nyman was especially known as glass designer.



### 14. FRAGMENTS CAN SPEAK

The relief works in the passages of houses 4 and 8 feature pieces of Arabia porcelainware that the artist Anne Siirtola has collected from the Vanhankaupunginlahti fields. The fields used to serve as a dumping ground, for example, for discarded Arabia products. The oldest pieces are from the 1920s. The Arjen palasia (Fragments of the everyday) works really stand out from the red-brick wall.

### 15. WALLS SPEAK OF CYCLING

The piece by Kirsi Kivivirta has a poetic name: Seinät puhuvat seinät and Kesät talvet (Walls speaking walls, Summers winters). Texts related to cycling written by cyclists of different ages are engraved on the red-clay bricks of Yhteispiha 2. In the pieces in the staircases, the surrounding landscape has been brought inside the building. The motif in the hand-made ceramic tiles is the landscape of Arabianranta: the encounter between water and soil.

### 16. A UNIQUE URBAN PARK

Robert Wilson is one of the most remarkable stage directors in the world, in addition to being a recognised, award-winning visual artist. He is the designer of Tapio Wirkkala Park, to be completed in 2012. The area applies classical park design themes in a wholly novel way. The park is surrounded by residential buildings and an industrial area, and the entrance is through tall gates. The pier-like paths lead you to the square-shaped centre of activity, which is like an island. The American designer skillfully invites Finnish nature and light into this urban park.

The academician Tapio Wirkkala (1915-1985) is known as a multi-talent and a brilliant designer. He has been dubbed the "poet of wood and glass". Wirkkala also worked as the head of what is currently the Aalto University School of Art and Design and won many awards at the Milan Triennial.



14  
photo Anne Siirtola



15  
photo Johanna Kuusari



16  
photo Päivi Kiuru

### 17. A VIEW THROUGH A PERGOLA

From Tapio Wirkkala Park, the tour continues back towards the beach. Tiina Veräjänkorva's pergola-like work Siniset hetket (Blue moments) at the end of Toini Muonan katu frames Vanhankaupunginlahti bay as if in a painting. The work consists of large individual ceramic elements, some of which people can use as places to sit. Ceramist Toini Muona worked for the Arabia factory until her retirement.

### 18. HARDEST GRANITE

The work of the Japanese artist Chiaki Kobinata, who has lived in Finland, combines soft forms and a hard material. The artist hopes that the round shapes reminiscent of the contours of the landscape invite people to touch the piece. The material used for the work is the hardest Finnish black granite.

### 19. THE SHORELINE NOW AND THEN

The work Arabianranta is located in Communal yard 1. This 12-metre-long work by Päivi Kiuru, Maarit Mäkelä and Johanna Rytkölä marks the earlier spot of the shoreline and pier, telling the history of Arabia factories. The ceramic surfaces feature printed pictures of factory workers and buildings.

### 20. MAP OF ARABIANRANTA

The tour passes the staircases and the works of art in them. Hidden to most visitors, the works here include photographic pieces and concrete wall elements implemented using Graphic Concrete™ technology. Graphic Concrete™ is an innovation of Aalto University School of Art and Design graduate Samuli Naamanka and it was used for the first time in this project. Naamanka and Päivi Kiuru used the innovation to implement, for example, the blue map of Arabianranta. On the tour, a mass application of Graphic Concrete™ technology can be witnessed outdoors on the wall surfaces of the Arabia Villa buildings on the beach side of Gunnel Nymanin piha.

### 21. ART FROM RECYCLED MATERIALS

The installations by Hannu Aaltonen (21a) in front of each entrance consist of steel flowers made of cast iron moulds for glass plates. In this building housing students and researchers, they remind the viewer of the importance of recycling. The ceramic tiles in the staircase walls that make up Mirja Niemelä's (21b) work Lehtisade have partly been made of metal-industry waste. The shapes of the ceramic leaves depict the diversity and power of regeneration in nature.

### 22. VIIKKI BIRDS

Once a grim spot in 16th century Helsinki, Hirsipuunkallio ("The gallows rock") is today adorned with 82 cast-bronze birds. The miniature sculptures fixed to the Arabiankatu side of the rock present all the bird species nesting in Vanhankaupunginlahti bay in 2000. Lintuparatiisi is a work by the artist Jukka Vikberg (22a). The fence by Lauri Saarinen (22b) is designed to prevent anyone from falling off.

### 23. ARABIA FACTORY CHIMNEY

The tour ends in the Arabia factory area, and before arriving there you can admire the area's landmark – a 50-metre-high chimney. Arabia Museum, which is part of Design Museum, is located on the top floor of the Arabia factory building (for opening hours and ticket prices, see www.designmuseum.fi).

### 24. ART AT THE LIBRARY

On the tour you can also visit the Aralis Library and Information Centre. In the library hall, a work by Petri Hytönen (24a) comprises five glass paintings on a glass wall. The pictures painted within the silhouettes evoke images of spaces, situations and emotions. Riikka Kevo's (24b) glass mosaic works link the Arabia area to the Helsinki city centre, as the material for the works has been collected from, for example, discarded parts of the Helsinki Cathedral and Tennispalatsi buildings. The works have been hung from the ceiling structures in the library hall, forming a line of windows in the air.

The walking tour lasts a little more than an hour unguided and an hour and a half guided. From the Helsinki city centre, you can access Arabianranta with trams 6 and 8 and buses 68, 71 and 71V and from Hakaniemi bus 74.

Content and texts: Tuula Isohanni, D.A., Arabianranta Art Coordinator, 2010  
Editor: Sari Snellman, MA  
Layout: Päivi Kiuru, MA  
Translation: Mustion Merkitys  
References: Isohanni, Tuula. *Taiteellinen toiminta osana asuinympäristön suunnittelua, tapaus Arabianranta, Helsinki. (Artistic activity in planning a housing district, case Arabianranta, Helsinki, Finland.)* Jyväskylä: Gummerus Printing 2006. Second edition, 2011  
Printed by: Art-Print

www.arabiahelsinki.fi

taik.aalto.fi/en/services/arabianranta More information on the works of art  
www.arabia.fi More information on the designers  
www.iittala.fi More information on the designers



17  
photo Tiina Veräjänkorva



18  
photo Päivi Kiuru



19  
photo Päivi Kiuru



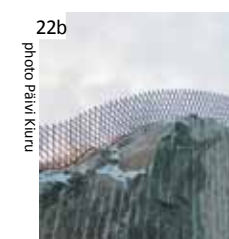
20  
photo Päivi Kiuru



21a  
photo Hannu Aaltonen



21b  
photo Mirja Niemelä



22a  
photo Jukka Vikberg



22b  
photo Päivi Kiuru



23  
photo Päivi Kiuru



24a  
photo Petri Hytönen



24b  
photo Riikka Kevo