

VUORI JA MERENLAHTI MOUNTAIN AND BAY

GUASSI / GOUACHE, 51 X 63 CM, 2003



Besides painting, you have done colour designs for industrial environments. Tell me more about this.

I've had the rare and interesting opportunity to participate in the colour design of large industrial plants. I've designed the colour schemes of machinery lines in several factories, which had a direct impact on work safety and the wellbeing of the employees.

In 1966 I started with designing the colour scheme of the Joensuu plywood and chipboard factory. I became familiar with the technology of a large plywood factory before embarking on the design work. In the 1960s, all industrial environments were greenish grey. My starting point was industrial safety. In my colour schemes, the most dangerous spots, such as cutters, saws, and the like, were in warm colors, while static spots were in cold colours. After Joensuu, I did the colour designs of several factories in, for example, Ristiina and Jyväskylä. And a little later, for the Valmet paper machine factory in Järvenpää, where the Japanese Toshiba supplied Valmet with machinery for working metal and painted this machinery line according to my design. I continued with colour designs until the 1990s. It was a wonderful experience as a lonely artist from an entirely different world to be able to contribute and use my gift in a socially significant way in the industrial world, promote safety at work while bringing in bright colours for the employees to enjoy. I could have continued making colour designs abroad, but that would have meant giving up painting.

You have always been an active participant in local cultural life. What kinds of memories do you have of this?

Lots of good memories of working with other artists. Who else would stand up for artists than artists themselves? When I lived in Joensuu, I was active in the Joensuu Art Association and its project to establish Finland's first art lending service in the facilities of the city library. The idea soon spread around the country.

In Jyväskylä the artists' community was larger, I had my own studio, my own exhibition space and printmaking studio, there were the Alvar Aalto museum and the Museum of Central Finland and a myriad of exhibitions. Before I knew it, I was on the Board of the Alvar Aalto Museum, in the City Culture Committee and on the Board of the Jyväskylä Festival, which is a cultural festival. When I was elected to chair the Board of the Jyväskylä Festival, I was tremendously happy, while also a bit nervous to lead the festival. I had the opportunity to apply all my skills and knowledge into practice.

The festival and its history are unique. The two-week programme featured almost 40 concerts and other musical performances, conferences, seminars, symposiums,