

## Artists on foreign land

The quest to find new impressions is part of human characteristics. Not only man but also the whole animal kingdom can enjoy new situations and experiences. Nature has moulded living creatures to yearn for changes perhaps to make them get on in the ever changing world. Mankind has in comparison to nature changed proportionally fast in a whirlwind way, and at the same time curiosity has developed to become one of man's most important aids. Curiosity is present as well in work, relationships as in enterprise, leisure-time activities, but especially in scientific work, journeys of explorations and artistic creativity.

For an artist new impressions and new experiences are especially important, because without them it would be difficult to create works of art that would satisfy people. Of course we could refer to for example C.G. Jung's theory, according to which travelling is only necessary for the extrovert artist, whereas the more philosophical artist finds the source of creativity from his own inner world. There have really been artist souls to whom external influences were irrelevant, but quite often they too benefited from a change of living place or a visit abroad giving them better opportunities and a more peaceful place to get absorbed in themselves.

In European art history foreign travels made by artists have either been regarded as natural or as completely unnecessary. In medieval times and at the beginning of modern times when painters, sculptors and architects did not yet differ from craftsmen, they had to journey for several years to masters' workshops drawing impressions and learning skills.

During the Renaissance academic education was started for artists in Italy. After that Italy was regarded by the rest of Europe as the Promised Land where the life and learning of man was thought to be the most essential part in growing as an artist.

In Italy they not only valued academies and the works of art by great masters of the Antiquity or the Renaissance, but also nature, local conditions and life experiences. This was quickly noted in the rest of Europe and most countries founded institutes and educational centres in Italy for their own artists. The romanticists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were also awakened by the natural beauty of foreign countries. For those who appreciated the reformation of art, Italy became the most important environment.

At the end of the century neo-romanticists began to appreciate exotic countries and people. In Paris they also became interested in the Nordic countries, especially the nature, culture and people of Norway and Finland. This kind of development supported the success of the National Romantic art of those countries and tempted for example Finnish artists to go deep into their own country's oldest cultural layers. Karelianism opened to the Finnish nation and to the rest of the world a primitive and very exciting culture, as well as the beauty of the forests.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century and particularly during the last decades the whole world has opened to the artists. For the general public and especially in the West it has been understood and recognized that by travelling to another country, the artist does not only enrich himself or his works of art, but also the location that receives him, accommodating him for months and relieving him of everyday problems. For most artists livelihood is uncertain and especially for the young artists a residential visit is often an excellent opportunity to concentrate on collecting impressions and creating work. An artist from abroad can with his exhibitions and appearances give an interesting experience to the locals and certainly people get satisfaction by seeing and being able to experience a bit of modern art in progress.

The professional artists of Estonia already travelled in the Middle Ages around Europe and also artists and masters from elsewhere came to Estonia. Michel Tittow, born in Tallinn ca 1469 and died ca 1525, worked on and off in Holland, Spain, France and elsewhere.

Estonian national art awakened in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the contemporary artists travelled in the footsteps of other foreign artists. Johan Köler and August Weizenberg worked in the mid 1800's in Rome, Amandus Adamson went at the end of the century to Paris.

During the turbulent 20<sup>th</sup> century which often brought hardship to Estonia, the artists chose Finland as their long-term place of exile, as did Ants Laikma after 1905. Sometimes artists ended up further, for example in Paris. Nikolai Triik, Kondrad Mägi and Aleksander Tassa were amongst many more who learned and worked in Helsinki or on the Åland Islands.

The influences of Finland can be seen in their creative work. During the Soviet occupation connections to Finland were very significant to the majority of the Estonians, including the artists.

Finnish radio and television, personal relationships with Finns and occasional trips to Finland were often the most important source of receiving information and influences of western lifestyle and culture. These were of help to the Estonians to keep their own identity, which was a prerequisite for Estonia to become independent again. Free Estonia has developed quickly, although in the view of the undersigned, to a very disunited one causing constant hardship to artists' life and work opportunities. Hence the studio and scholarship provided by Loviisa town are appreciated by grateful artists.

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