



ATENEUM

PRESS RELEASE 24 Oct 2017 / Free for publication

A major exhibition on the von Wright brothers to open at the Ateneum

From 27 October 2017 to 25 February 2018, the Ateneum Art Museum will host the exhibition *The von Wright Brothers*. The artist brothers Magnus, Wilhelm and Ferdinand von Wright are known as painters of portraits, landscapes, and nature subjects, especially birds, and as creators of scientific illustrations of flora and fauna. New contemporary works by Sanna Kannisto and Jussi Heikkilä will complement this colourful major exhibition. The exhibition is part of the programme celebrating the centenary of Finland's independence.

Scientifically accurate works convey a love of nature

The von Wright brothers grew up in a manor in Haminalahti, Kuopio. The brothers' interest in nature originated in the hobby of hunting, as practised by their father, Major **Henrik Magnus von Wright**. Skilled hunters, the brothers began to document the birds they caught. Through watching and painting birds over a long period of time, the brothers gained a wide knowledge of nature. Their works are characterised by detailed scientific accuracy. At the same time, their art conveys a special love of nature. The works reflect the aesthetic values of their time, the 19th century.

The eldest of the brothers, **Magnus** (1805–1868), known especially for his landscape paintings, was an influential cultural figure in Helsinki. He worked as a teacher at the University of Helsinki drawing school and as an expert at the Finnish Art Society. **Wilhelm** (1810–1887) was active mostly in Stockholm and on the island of Orust on the west coast of Sweden. He worked as a scientific illustrator for the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. The most famous of the brothers is **Ferdinand** (1822–1906), who was one of the first visual artists in Finland to make a living from art. He enjoyed the longest career of the brothers, and later attained the status of an old master and earned respect from young artists.

A sobering exhibition to make us think about lessons from nature

"The exhibition is in many ways connected to the present. The themes in the von Wright brothers' art are current at a time when the balance between man and nature, as well as the earth's carrying capacity, is becoming critical for our future", says the museum director, **Susanna Pettersson**.

This exhibition will introduce new perspectives, as it explores the historical significance of the von Wright brothers for Finnish art, culture and science. The exhibition will feature more than 300 works from the Ateneum collection, and from Finnish and Swedish public and private collections. Exhibits will also include birds stuffed by Magnus von Wright, courtesy of the Finnish Museum of Natural History. The chief curator of the exhibition is **Anne-Maria Pennonen**. In 2018, the exhibition will travel to the Kuopio Art Museum and the Tikanoja Art Museum in Vaasa.

The brothers' works will be accompanied by new art by the photographic artist Sanna Kannisto (born 1974) and the conceptual artist Jussi Heikkilä (born 1952). Kannisto photographs nature subjects as still lifes, as she takes the photography studio out into nature. She sees herself as a kind of a collector, adding species, one after another, to her own collection. In his works, Heikkilä comments on the state of the earth and, above all, on the significance of birds as indicators of the state of the environment and the burden on the seas.



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An exhibition book to uncover new research on the brothers

The exhibition will coincide with the release of the book *Veljekset von Wright. Taide, tiede ja elämä* ('The von Wright Brothers. Art, science and life'), published by the Ateneum, which presents a wealth of new research on the brothers. The book is edited by the curator Anne-Maria Pennonen and the special researcher **Erkki Anttonen**, and it will be available in Finnish, Swedish and English. The Ateneum museum shop and the online shop will sell the book at a price of €45.

The merchandise for the exhibition *The von Wright Brothers* will be for sale at the Ateneum and at Suomalainen Kirjakauppa bookshops around Finland. The merchandise includes notebooks, key rings, spectacle cases and canvas bags.

Picks from the extensive exhibition-related programme

Admission is included in the museum entrance fee, or with a Museum Card. Check out all the event information on our website: www.ateneum.fi > Events

Sat 28 Oct at 14:00 | ATTE VON WRIGHT: THE STORY OF THE VON WRIGHT FAMILY

Ateneum Hall. The head of the von Wright family will talk about the history of his family. In Finnish.

Thu 2 Nov and Thu 30 Nov at 17:00 | LECTURES ON THE VON WRIGHT BROTHERS

2 Nov: Curator's lecture: curator Anne-Maria Pennonen, Ateneum Hall. In Finnish.

30 Nov: Expert's lecture, special researcher Erkki Anttonen: The von Wright brothers as makers of lithographs, Ateneum Hall. In Finnish.

Wed 15 Nov, from 10:00 to 20:00 | "ART FOR US!" FREE ADMISSION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

During the day, there will be tours of The von Wright Brothers exhibition, organised by Tringa, an ornithological society for the Uusimaa province. What can you say about the birds and their lives in the paintings, when seen from the point of view of natural science and birdwatching? Free admission for under-25-year-olds.

Fri 17 Nov, from 12:00 to 17:00 | "CONTEMPORARY TAKES ON VON WRIGHT" CONFERENCE

Ateneum Hall. The day's programme will include lectures by experts on The von Wright Brothers exhibition and the concurrently published book, presenting new research and new perspectives on the work of the artist brothers. The speakers include Anne-Maria Pennonen, Allan Tiitta, Julia Donner and Kimmo Ohtonen.

Thu 7 Dec at 17:00 | FILM ESSAY ON THE VON WRIGHT BROTHERS

Ateneum Hall. Georg Grotenfelt's *Speglingar* (2016) is a film essay on the von Wright painter brothers. Interviews with the main characters, images of nature, and manor house landscapes hold a mirror to the lives of the brothers. In Swedish, with Finnish subtitles. Duration: 60 min.

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Press images: press.ateneum.fi | username: ateneum | password: mediat

Opening hours: Tue, Fri 10–18 | Wed, Thu 10–20 | Sat, Sun 10–17 | Mon closed

Admission fees: Normal admission fee €15 | Concessions €13 | Under 18-year-olds free of charge | S-Etukortti loyalty card holders €14

The Ateneum's main corporate partners are Helsingin Sanomat, HOK-Elanto and KPMG. The Ateneum is sponsored by Veikkaus. The partner for the exhibition *The von Wright Brothers* is Helsinki Zoo. The Ateneum Art Museum is part of the Finnish National Gallery, together with the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, and the Sinebrychoff Art Museum. www.kansallisgalleria.fi/en