

HEINOLA ART MUSEUM  
JOHANNA RYTKÖLÄ

GENIE IN A POT AND OTHER STORIES, 13 February - 13 March 2016

During my trips to Italy I have come across many small hill towns with archeological museums and their collections of Etruscan ceramics. The treasures of the Etruscans and their ceramic pots made me feel a deep sense of belonging with this ancient people. I imagined a moment far in the past when the potter was shaping the clay leaving his fingerprints on it. I wondered if he felt the same pleasure I do when I am working with clay. I too wanted to make pots but in my own sculptural way.

The whole series is made out of sculptures resembling pots with an immaterial space in the middle of the work. The first work in the series *Genie in a pot I* was part of the exhibition *Ceramics and Space* overviewing contemporary Finnish ceramic art at Design Museum in Helsinki in the autumn 2014.



*The pulse of the Metropolis I-V*, 2015, diameter 9 cm, height 11-15 cm / Photo: Rytkölä Archives

Doctor of Arts Helena Leppänen writes in an article in the exhibition publication by Design Museum:

***"The glowing red contour of a pot captivates the viewer. The contour emanates from the base, from where it springs upwards on majestically arching sides toward the ring-like opening. The pot-shaped confined interior space does not fulfill traditional function, as***

*the pot is not a vessel for a liquid or other material - it carries another type of immaterial content.*

*Johanna Rytkölä's Genie in a Pot is a strong symbol for the Ceramics & Space exhibition. Many people still view everything on exhibit in the name of ceramics through the idea of a pot imprinted in the human mind. Apart from being a reminder of the tradition, Rytkölä's work can be seen as a magnifying glass that may show us the transformation more accurately: the ceramics spreading through the galleries of Design Museum are part of the diverse reality of contemporary art."*

There is some nostalgia in my most recent works crowned by brass parts inherited from my great uncle brass founder Leo Leino (1888-1954). I had admired them since childhood and when a box full of patinated brass parts of his pieces ended up in my hands I decided to carry out my idea of utilizing Leo's unfinished work. It had been brewing in my mind for so long.

In the works that have come to life now ceramics and metal entwine. I was inspired by Leo's metallic art and I added a sprinkle of gold and platinum onto the surfaces of my other works as well. The exhibition space at Heinola Art Museum felt like the perfect place to premiere the works linking to Leo's legacy.

Water is a theme to which I return time and again in one way or another. I love swimming, the seaside and the soft waters of lakes. In 1988 I wrote about my debut exhibition at Galleria Bronda in Helsinki: *"The subject of my works is oceanic, it is a dive into the underwater ocean of the mind that might exist"*. The water theme is present also in this exhibition through a few small pieces.

After I in October 2015 returned to Finland from a month long visit to New York I made a series of minute colorful sculptures. The bases of the sculptures are round and from them a layered shape reaches up pompously. During my visit I was mesmerized by the skyscrapers in Manhattan, their lights and the grandeur of the metropolis. The pulse of the Metropolis series was born. They could be miniatures of my future larger works.