

HEINOLA ART MUSEUM

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WHO WAS LEO LEINO?



Brass founder **Leo Leino** (1888-1954) was ceramic artist Johanna Rytkölä's grandfather's brother. Leo was a middle child in a series of eight siblings who were all in one way or another interested in the arts. According to family tradition all the children of mason **Karl Victor Leino** (1852-1906), Leo's father, attended at some point evening classes in drawing at Taideteollinen keskuskoulu (Craft School) in the Ateneum building. Leo's father's contracting firm had made the imposing staircase in the entry way at Ateneum. In the steps you can make out trilobites and other fossils.

Leo had already acquired sheet metal worker's qualifications when he started his studies at Taideteollinen Keskuskoulu in 1908. As his journeyman's work piece he had in 1908 made a 54 centimeters high brass chandelier with a hexagonal cross-section. The Jugend style chandelier, as well as Leo's journeyman's certificate, is now part of the collections of Helsinki City Museum. Leo studied at Taideteollinen Keskuskoulu until 1910.

After that Leo continued his studies in Altona near Hamburg in Germany where arts and crafts education in those days was thought to be good. From Germany Leo headed to Kristiania (now Oslo) in Norway and possibly studied there as well.

In the 1920's Leo returned to Finland and started his own company. Leo's workshop was on Kivenhakkaajankatu in Punavuori district in Helsinki. Leo made custom metal work and for example the department store Stockman ordered baroque style chandeliers from him. In the 1930's Leo manufactured shower buckets called Sauna-Ilo (Sauna Joy) that were designed as equipment for country saunas. Sauna-Ilo received publicity for instance in Helsingin Sanomat. According to family tradition even Aino Sibelius, the wife of composer Jean Sibelius, ordered one for Ainola, the Sibelius lakefront villa at Tuusulanjärvi. Many examples of Leo's work - metal cases, jugs, candlesticks, lamps and other objects are still in the family's possession.

Reference: Leo Leino-Ciselör 1888-1954, essay, Hanna Näsänen, Itäkeskus High School, May 1999