



# Iittala Naive Art Station

The first themed art station in Finland has been built in Iittala in the city of Hämeenlinna. The Iittala art station's construction work began during the spring of 2018 and its opening was celebrated on Saturday, 9 June 2018.

/// The venture has already proved the power of cooperation in increasing regional vitality.

Pia Niemikotka  
Linna Business Development





Naive art railway station  
in the village of Iittala, Finland



This picture of the Iittala Art Station got a massive amount of votes from the citizens in Tavastia region in the EU in my region -picture contest. Picture: Ulla Harju



The new station embodies Iittala's history as a village for crafts, design and art. In the future it will also serve as a calling card for the area and please the eyes of those travelling through Iittala on trains.

The station is an entirely new concept in Finland and it will be carried out as a pilot station for the Finnish Transport Agency and as a large joint venture of the local business and community network. The art station is part of the i-laakso (i-valley) 2030 growth programme that aims to increase Iittala's vitality.

## A feat for local skills

The art station consists of three parts: a new art roof for the Iittala station, the station area's landscaping and an outside exhibition of naïvistic art which uses new dimensions created with virtual reality.

The art station is the work of almost 20 actors and has utilised the best local skills. Everything from the art roof's design, materials, engineering plans, the station area's open space plan to the virtual art environment are the work of local companies that have been carried out as part of the i-laakso 2030 programme.

– The venture has already proved the power of cooperation in increasing regional vitality. It has made it possible to conduct local reformatory pilot experiments, and has generated investment and development support as well as nationwide partners. A strong vision to develop the area will come to life one step at a time, when it is backed by many smaller actions and a broad and active group of people, says the venture's leader, **Pia Niemikotka** from Linna Business Development.

## Design with the art put first

– We wanted the art station to be the village's good-humoured landmark to welcome those arriving in Iittala and to differentiate Iittala from all those other stations that trains pass by, the art roof's main designer, construction architect

**Karoliina Härkälä**, describes the basis for the planning.

The naïvistic artworks have been created by the artists of the Naïvists at Iittala, and they will be brought to life by the local Stellarion Oy.

– We have used augmented reality in a way that I've never seen used to this extent in Finland," says **Pihla Rostedt**, CEO of Stellarion.

– We wanted to add something alongside the art that creates a funny and enjoyable experience without drawing attention from the works themselves, but to see and look at them in a new light.

– This is the first Artists at Iittala environmental art project and it will likely not be the last. Naïvism is now expanding from the old wooden school to Iittala's centre and station area. It can have a crucial effect on whether locals decide to lean towards naïvism and see the exhibition visitors as something that adds value to their village's vitality, says the Naïvists at Iittala curator, **Hannu Castrén**.

The station area's open space plan was carried out by the landscape designer **Päivi Sundman** from Hämeenlinna.

– The basis was naturally a naïvistic open space plan, although such a term probably hasn't existed previously. The design process did also take into account usability, train passenger safety and easy maintenance for the area.



## A station to fit littala

The art station has been built from SSAB's COR-TEN® steel that is weather resistant and has been manufactured in Hämeenlinna. The second key material is glass, naturally, considering that we are in a glass area. There are hard-boiled crafts skills in Hämeenlinna and Kalvola's granite has previously found its place in the Finnish Parliament Annex, for example. The third material was, therefore, chosen to be stone.

The idea of the roof's modular structure was born when the technical plans were being worked on.

– A modular structure is cost-efficient and easier to duplicate and commercialise", says design manager **Jari Koivu** from the engineering company 3A Consulting Oy.

The roof's art walls are the result of a joint venture of Ruukki Construction, the engineering shop M.Juselius from Hämeenlinna and the UVET project. The result shows that even steel can be used for art with a new kind of thinking.

The littala art station is hoped to work as an example for the development of other stations by the Finnish Transport Agency.

– The art station is a pilot experiment that we want to use to support the increase in visitors and trains as well as local initiative in the development of stations and services. The Finnish Transport Agency's own resources are quite limited, so the pilot experiment probably couldn't have been carried out so extensively without the activity and involvement of those cooperating, says the passenger transport specialist **Arja Aalto** from the Finnish Transport Agency.

– Previously, the littala station was just another wilted station among hundreds of others. Now it's a new landmark for littala and a trendsetter for other stations and localities around them", says Niemikotka.



Picture: Tanja Lupari

The littala art station is a part of the i-laakso 2030 growth programme which sees inhabitants, businesses and the city cooperating to find and set in motion new ways to support littala's growth. The growth programme's function is to invite more people to littala, whether inhabitants, businesses or visitors.

littala is a strong and internationally famous brand and over 100,000 visitors visit the littala Glass Factory and Lasimäki annually. The Naïvists at littala summer exhibition gathers 20,000 guests from Finland and abroad every summer.

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