

Next 100 Years workshop & conference by Aalto was a success

Aalto University, Design Department, and Iittala organized a workshop and conference, from 2nd to 16th September, 2011. The event was held to honour the **Kaj Franck**, the forerunner in Finnish glass design, but was focusing on developing new ideas and ways to work for the future – in the true spirit of Franck. The seminar was bringing together four different fields of activities starting from Art and Design, and reaching to Education and Business, looking for new solutions to cooperate.

Artist and designers at work

In the workshop at Nuutajärvi glass factory internationally known glass artists and designers were experimenting and testing new approaches to glass: **Dante Marioni**, Artist and Glass blowing specialist from US, **Silvia Levenson**, Multi medium Artist from Italy and **Matti Klenell**, Designer from Sweden. Finnish blowers from Nuutajärvi got the chance to work together with artists and work with challenging items.

Four different fields together

In the seminar the Curator **Kaisa Koivisto** from The Finnish Glass Museum reminded the audience how the strong glass design heritage in Finland has been born as a result of many factors: talented artists, skilful craftsmen, positive attitude in glass industry and professional promotion work on the international markets.

Professor Emeritus **Makoto Shimazaki** from Japan highlighted the meaning of Kaj Franck's travels in Japan and the history of cultural exchange between Finland and Japan.

Chief Strategy Officer at Fiskars Group **Max Alfthan**, brought in the business point of view. Although boundaries between art and design are melting away in today's world, art and business are still often seen as opposites. Alfthan encouraged the audience to look out for new ways to join forces in fruitful cooperation.

Professor **Peter McGrory**, Aalto University, focused on how to generate new ideas in design work today. He also introduced some innovative designers' thoughts and future visions.

Artist, Professor Michael Rogers from Rochester Institute of Technology's College of Imaging Arts and Sciences stated that in US, glass education is part of Art Studies. As an outcome the students produce sculptures, installations or multimedia works of art. is outcome. For them glass is just one material to express your art concept.

When designers **Harri Koskinen**, Dante Marioni, Silvia Levenson, Michael Rogers and Matti Klenell talked about their own work, students had an opportunity to observe different approaches one can take on glass as material. Guest of honour of the event, glass artist Oiva Toikka encouraged the students to go and try to get as much experience with the materials as possible:

-“Glass has its own will, and you have to try to tame it.” as Toikka puts it.

Looking for the future

The aim of the conference – to exchange thoughts, facts and visions to foresee the future of glass design and art – was well achieved. By the end of the intense week all the participants were eager to see and discuss what the future for glass art and design could be like. The work started here is certain to go on.

Kazushi Nakada / RCA MA
Senior lecturer
Aalto University,
School of Art and Design, Design dept
kazushi.nakada@aalto.fi

Tuija Aalto-Setälä
Head of PR, Iittala
Fiskars Home
tuija.aalto-setala@fiskars.com