The works of art in the Arabia area speak of the history and nature of the area, as well as Finland’s unique design heritage. The past and the present are intertwined. At this hub of design, you can catch a glimpse of an enhanced way of living in the future.

The Treasures of ARABIA
a tour of art and design

The writing on the leaf: come.
From the first stone I found the word; vademecum.
Go with me.

I never knew, before I parted.

(Loosely adapted from “Arabia Arabia”, a poem by Tuula Isohanni)
1. **A CERAMIC LAKE**

The tour begins from inside the Arabaikeskus centre, in front of the white ceramic work of art by Rut Bryk. It is located on the wall of the factory outlet by the lifts. Opposite the centre’s information desk you can find a scale model of the red-tiled courtyard area. Besides various factory outlets, the centre houses a café, a restaurant, the popular Arabi Library and Information Centre, and toilet facilities.

2. **BEAUTIFUL LIGHT**

The tour continues out of the building, to the top of the stairs leading down to Arabiankatu street and Riha, a temporary work of art (2). From here you can admire the sea view and the fine light typical of the area. The square in front of you is named after the designer Kaj Franck, and behind you is the main building of the Arabia Factory. Kaj Franck’s workshop was on the top floor. Franck is one of the biggest names of Finnish design. He believed in functionalism and wanted to create stackable tableware suitable for every home. Franck’s hand is still visible in Swedeborg, a temporary work of art that can be admired from the open staircase of the Käpytikka building. The curves provide the encounter between water and soil.

3. **GREAT SPOTTED WOODPECKER**

When you walk down the stairs and turn left onto Arabiankatu, head towards the light-hearted work of art on the façade of the Käpytikka building. Käpytikka is Finnish for great spotted woodpecker. Completed in 2009, the building houses homes for mentally disabled people. The residents have participated in the design of their homes. They also share domestic chores, including cooking. The work on the façade collects and presents the residents’ thoughts on life. This piece by Pelka Piihakka, a designer working at the Arabia factory, is called Cataracta (3c).

4. **DESERT WIND**

The red, large-scale piece by Tuuli and Kivi Sortamaa called Sirocco is visible from the open staircase of the Käpytikka building. The curtains provide the communal yard with movement, which is concentrated into an object-like outdoor space.

5. **SAUNA WITH A NEST**

On the opposite side of the street, at the corner of Muotoilijankatu and Arabiankatu, you can spot a nest in metal. Designed by Markku Hakuri, the work of art also doubles as a balcony for the residents’ communal sauna. Communal penthouse saunas are a special feature of the buildings at Arabianranta. In most new Finnish housing, each apartment has a sauna of its own, but Arabianranta has returned to the more environmentally friendly, communal system. In the yard opposite you will find a work of art by Pertti Metsälampi, linking three blocks and consisting of a secluded place by the wall and stones brought there by the residents, which form a Zen-like path.

6. **REEDS**

The candlelit reeds on the staircase windows of Muotoilijapu are designed by Jere Saarelainen. When it is dark, they are illuminated, which provides the tall windows with a lacy impression, as the shadows of the reeds are reflected on the entrance. In daylight, the delicate drawings are less conspicuous. The yard is completed with an environmental work of art consisting of a secluded place by the wall and stones brought there by the residents, which form a Zen-like path.

7. **WALNUT, OAK AND BLACK ALDER**

Turning right (southwards) takes you to a yard named after the designer Birger Kaipainen. Here you find a work of art by Peretti Metallilampi, linking three buildings and presenting the rare tree species in the area. Several species grow here that are typical of the deciduous forests of more temperate climates. Besides the actual trees growing in the nearby woods, you can admire the leaves and foliage in the staircase windows. The lush decorations by Birger Kaipainen, such as his classic Paratiisi Arabi tabbaware, are familiar to many.

8. **A STUDENTS’ NEST**

From Birger Kaipaisen pih, walk towards the entrance of the student housing unit Rytkerinranta on Kaj Franckin katu. Up on the wall of the passage there is a work of art in bronze called Kuitupu (Home tree). Birds have found a nesting box, which is part of this work by Lauri Astala. Every autumn, the students who live in the building clean the box to have it ready for new feathers and the following spring. Along the corridors there are works of art by five photographers; you should be able to spot at least one when taking this tour.

9. **HUNTING FOR ARABIAN FACTORY STAMPS**

The eight colourful metal pieces by Howard Smith give rhythm to the lawn terrace sloping towards the shore. The blue-tiled enclosure at the start of the street shows the handwriting of the designers from the Arabia Factory. The exteriors of the walls are made with Graphic Concrete™; they depict the designers’ signatures and Arabia factory stamps.

10. **A NEARLY FLYING CARPET**

The carpet-shaped mosaic on the waterfront wall is designed by Elina Aalto. 11 x 6 m in size, it looks like a real Oriental carpet when you look down from the top floors of the surrounding buildings. The carpet is complete with pattern deviations, just like in a real rug. The piece, Arabian matto (Arabian carpet), received an award for environmental art 2007.

11. **COMMUNAL WALLS**

The next yard formed by three point-blocks, called Gunnel Nymanin pihulla, is a community art project that has been implemented by the residents themselves. The unique doors of the flats and the stencil-painted wall patterns on the facades were created in a joint effort between the artists (Johanna Hyrkkä and Tiina Kahanen) and the residents. The patterns suggest the ornamental world of Gunnel Nyman, who died at an early age. Recipient of many awards, Nyman was especially known as glass designer.

12. **FRAGMENTS CAN SPEAK**

The relief works in the passages of houses 4 and 8 feature pieces of Arabia porcelainware that the artist Anne Sirtola has collected from the VanhanKaupunginkatu fields. The fields used to serve as a dumping ground, for example, for discarded Arabia products. The oldest pieces are from the 1920s. The Årjon palasia (fragments of the everyday) works really stand out from the red-brick wall.

13. **WALKS SPEAK OF CYCLING**

The piece by Kirsi Kivivirta has a poetic name: Seinät puhuvat seinät and Kesät talvet (Walls speaking to walls, Summers winters). There are also poems related to cycling written by cyclists of different ages are engraved on the red-clay bricks of Yhteispiha 2. In the pieces in the staircases, the surrounding landscape has been transferred inside the building housing students and researchers, they remind the viewer of the importance of recycling.

14. **A UNIQUE URBAN PARK**

Robert Wilson is one of the most remarkable stage directors in the world, in addition to being a recognised, award-winning visual artist. He is the designer of Tapio Wirkkala Park, to be completed in 2011. The area applies classical park design themes in a wholly novel way. The park is surrounded by residential buildings and an industrial area, and the entrance is through tall gates. The pier-like path leads you to the square-shaped centre of activity, which is like an island. The American designer skillfully invites Finnish nature and light into this urban park.

15. **A VIEW THROUGH A PEROGLA**

From Tapio Wirkkala Park, the tour continues back towards the beach. Tiina Veräjänkorva’s pergola-like work Siniset helikopterit (Blue moments) at the end of Torni Mounan katu frames VanhanKaupunginkatu bay as if in a painting. The work consists of large individual ceramic elements, some of which people can use as places to sit. Blue is a colour that was often used by the ceramicist Toivi Muona. She worked for the Arabia factory until her retirement.

16. **HARDEST GRANITE**

The work of the Japanese artist Chiaki Kobinata, who has lived in Finland, combines soft forms and a hard material. The artist hopes that the round shapes reminiscent of the contours of the landscape invite people to touch the piece. The material used for the work is the hardest Finnish black granite.

17. **THE SHORELINE NOW AND THEN**

The work Arabian ranta is located in the Kuopion puisto area. It is a communal house for seniors, and the residents have participated in the design of their homes. They also host weekly events indoors on the wall surfaces of the Arabia Villa buildings on the beach side of Gunnel Nymanin pihulla.

18. **MAP OF ARABIANRANTA**

The tour passes the staircases and the works of art in them. Hiden to most visitors, the works here include photogenic pieces and concrete wall elements implemented using Graphic Concrete™ technology. Graphic Concrete™ is an innovation of Aalto University School of Art and Design graduate Samuli Naamanka and it was used for the first time in this project. Naamanka and Päivi Kuuru used the innovation to implement, for example, the blue map of Arabianranta. On the tour, a mass application of Graphic Concrete™ technology can be witnessed outdoors on the wall surfaces of the Arabia Villa buildings on the beach side of Gunnel Nymanin pihulla.

19. **ART FROM RECYCLED MATERIALS**

The installations by Hannu Aaltonen (19a) in front of each entrance consist of steel flowers made of cast iron moulds for glass plates. In this building housing students and researchers, they remind the viewer of the importance of recycling.

20. **VIIKKI BIRDS**

Once a grim spot in 16th century Helsinki, Hirsipuunkallio ("The gallows rock") is today adorned with 82 cast bronze birds. The miniature sculptures fixed to the Arabianranta side of the rock present all the bird species nesting in VanhanKaupunginkatu bay in 2000. Imputapuisto is a work by the artist Jukka Vilberg (20a). The fence by Lauri Saarinen (20b) is designed to prevent anyone from falling off.

21. **ARABIA FACTORY CHIMNEY**

The tour ends in the Arabia factory area, and before arriving there you can admire the area’s landmark – a 50-metre-high chimney. Arabia Museum, which is part of Design Museum, is located on the top floor of the Arabia factory building (opening hours and ticket prices see www.desigmuseum.fi). The latest in design is available for sale at the Arabia shop, which also offers postal services.

22. **ART AT THE LIBRARY**

On the tour you can also visit the Arabi Library and Information Centre. In the library hall, a work by Pentti Hytönen (22a) comprises five glass paintings on a glass wall. The pictures painted within the silhouettes evoke images of spaces, situations and emotions. Riikka Keofo’s (22b) glass mosaic works link the Arabia area to the Helsinki city centre, as the material for the works has been collected from, for example, discarded parts of the Helsinki Cathedral and Tennispalatsi buildings. The works have been hung from the ceiling structures in the library hall, forming a line of windows in the air.

The walking tour lasts a little more than an hour unguided and an hour and a half guided. From the Helsinki city centre, you can access Arabianranta with trams 6 and 8 and buses 68, 72 and 146 and from Halkameri bus 74.

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