

AINOLA

Housing, transport and food production cause the majority of global carbon emissions. These everyday functions have been organised at different times based on the prevailing ideas. The Time Machines and Utopias exhibition examines history and present day and asks how we could make sustainable choices when building our future. In Ainola, the Livelihoods exhibition focuses on food and the different methods of food production in different eras. The other parts of the exhibition are showcased in Tarvaspää and Visavuori.

Journey to Ainola

A warm welcome on this tour around Ainola! The map features sights in the museum's surroundings. You can visit the sights in any order. Some feature contemporary art and others stories from the past. Further information on the sights marked on the map is available on the following page. Explore the landscape and imagine its change. What was life like in Ainola before? What will it become in the future?

Time Machines and Utopias: Lifelines

“Food is the best vaccine against chaos, and the lack of food increases unrest and conflicts,” noted the chair of the Nobel Committee when giving the Nobel Peace Prize to the UN World Food Programme in 2020. The committee’s decision reminds us that the necessity to secure basic human needs will further increase with climate change.

In the 1860s, Finland experienced an unprecedented crisis. During the famine, also called the great hunger years in Finnish, a third of the population died of hunger and deprivation. As a result of the worst population catastrophe in the history of Finland, reforms were introduced in the country. One of the measures was to promote kitchen gardening. Through education and training, kitchen gardens became a significant economic resource. Cultivating vegetable plots and growing apple trees and berry bushes ensured families’ welfare and livelihood. A garden was established in Ainola in the spring of 1905, straight after the Sibelius family had moved there. The garden was a lifeline for the Sibeliuses, as its harvest secured the family’s livelihood.

During the Finnish Civil War, the shortage of food caused general unrest. The self-sufficiency afforded by kitchen gardens was considered to promote stability in society. The self-sufficiency ideal is once again topical. Concern for the environment has increased urban residents’ interest in vegetable growing and local food.

Furthermore, the potential of land cultivation as a form of carbon sequestration and the climate impact of different foodstuffs are being studied.

In 2021, food production forms a quarter of the carbon emissions in the world. The question of its reorganisation is critical for the future of the humankind. The lifelines exhibition sheds light on the impacts of food on daily life, community and the changes taking place around us.

Vegetable garden

Everything needed by the household from root vegetables, beans and cabbages to dill, tomatoes and cucumbers were grown in the vegetable gardens and greenhouses of Ainola. Spring vegetables were grown on warm pallets to provide something fresh to put on plates after the long winter. The harvest from fruit trees and berry bushes supplemented the crop from the kitchen

garden, which provided food long into the spring after the winter. Work in the garden and the house was based on annual cycles. Aino rejoiced in the thick snowbanks primarily because that would mean “more water in the spring”. Dry summers could have an adverse effect on harvests and, thus, were a cause for concern. Harvesting was a busy time, and Aino wrote to her mother, Elisabeth Järnefelt, in 1920: “We are about to embark on our busy (!) time. There doesn’t seem to be enough days.” Aino’s signature under the letter was descriptive: “Yours truly, your daughter rampaging in the garden.”

As the years passed, the kitchen gardens were expanded, and at their largest, they covered the lawns of the museum garden. Sibelius was considered to be a wealthy man, but the household would not have managed without the harvest from the garden. In her letter to her sister-in-law, Saimi Järnefelt, in 1926, Aino notes that “Everyone thinks that we are extremely rich, but it’s quite the opposite.” Self-sufficiency afforded by a garden was the ideal in the early 20th century, and people worked hard to achieve it.

The vegetables grown on the sample vegetable gardens in 2021 include a selection of the vegetables grown by Aino Sibelius in 1916. The garden also showcases other old

vegetables that were important to household economy, such as lovage, flax, common soapwort, Aztec tobacco and caraway. In accordance with Aino Sibelius’ customs, you will also find annual summer flowers, such as marigolds and nasturtiums, in Ainola’s flowerbeds.

Apples

Fruit cultivation received a lot of attention in Finland in the early 20th century. Exhibitions and competitions were used to raise the quality of domestic produce and to reduce the quantities of imported fruit. The ideal characteristics of a fruit tree were its hardiness and the flavour and shelf life of the fruit. Aino Sibelius was interested in apple cultivation and planted the first fruit trees in Ainola in spring 1906. The neighbours in the community around Lake Tuusulanjärvi shared Aino’s enthusiasm. Her expertise with fruit trees produced joy both at home and further afield as family members received apple deliveries from Ainola. Sibelius’ apples received awards twice in agricultural fairs in Tuusula.

Ainola's garden produced summer and autumn varieties for eating and winter apples for preserving. The apples were kept in the cellar located in the villa’s stone foundation individually wrapped in tissue paper. The apple orchard expanded over the years from “Rapallo”, the

warmest corner of the garden, down to the front of the house.

In the spring, the flowering apple trees cloak Ainola's garden in a white veil. Pollinators buzz in the trees, and a promise of a new crop is in the air. The trees bear fruit in late summer and early autumn, but the yields fluctuate from year to year. If the yield is good, the apples are used in the museum's café in baking and apple juice.

Ainola's pantry

Food was related to a sense of community both in terms of the wider family circle and among friends as well as over meals with the immediate family. Ainola's cuisine required a lot of work from the mistress of the house both outside in the garden and inside in the kitchen as well as by the desk attending to queries regarding stock shortages and sorting out exchanges. The relationships and networks around food acquisition were tight and crossed class boundaries.

There were times of scarcity at various points during the 20th century that affected Ainola too. For example, during the food shortages of 1917–1919, it was difficult to get hold of seed potatoes. Aino Sibelius enquired about it

several times from her trusted supplier, the author Kalle Kajander, who had a farm in Hausjärvi, but to no avail. The shortages caused unrest, and although there was no actual hunger, the hardship resulted in strong reactions: for example, in Järvenpää, there were guards on fields to ensure that the crop was not stolen.

In Ainola, self-sufficiency ensured livelihood also during difficult times. During World War II, the crops from Ainola's garden provided for the families of Sibelius' five daughters. A cabbage from Aino Sibelius, Ainola Granny, would crown a grandchild's birthday during rationing. A food reserve meant having cellars full of root vegetables but also versatile vegetable and fruit preserves, jams, juices and jellies. Domestic animals, chickens and a pig, boosted the household's self-sufficiency further.

Food waste was an unknown concept in a household in which everything was carefully utilised. On weekdays, the family at Ainola ate gruel, porridge and simple vegetarian dishes made from the garden's produce, but for celebrations the feast included special treats from near and far. In the pantry, the cook laid out midnight nibbles to go with the composer's strong coffee to allow him to keep hammering on the themes for symphonies or maybe his "sandwich pieces" needed to stabilise the family's

finances. The household Aino Sibelius ran enabled life in Ainola – it was the lifeline for everyday chores and art.

Temple

The place in the northeast corner of the Ainola plot is called the temple. That is where Jean Sibelius headed on his walks to admire the sky and the birds. The scene from the temple opened out to the fields and meadows surrounding Ainola's forested enclave. Although the surrounding landscape has changed a lot over the last hundred years, you can still spot a slice of farmland, a shed and the tree line as the Sibeliuses saw them.

Lifelines and utopias

Contemporary art looks for more sustainable solutions for housing, transport and food production in the future – through technology and new inventions – and in the past – by applying old simpler ways of working and tools. The Time Machines and Utopias exhibition's contemporary artists are balancing between these two timeframes. The participating historical and contemporary artists are connected by the idea of doing things differently, the rigorous search for alternatives and the need to produce meaning for everyday life.

The post-World War II era of reconstruction transported Finnish culture into the modern way of life. Finland became urbanised and industrialised. The structure of society changed and with that hopes and ideals changed too.

The artist collective nabbteeri examines in their artwork here (www.taalla.fi) Ainola's garden as a cross-generational space. Gardening traditions, favoured cultivars and seeds are passed on from one generation to the next gradually changing their form. Aino Sibelius' work was the force that established the garden but still only one part of the history of Ainola. After Sibelius, there

have been many gardeners at Ainola who have practised museology by studying the past, replicating it and testing the prospects of forgotten species. A garden is in constant flux. In their work of art, nabbteeri contemplate the prerequisites for garden life as well as the changes in gardens and landscapes in relation to the activities of the human animal. The artwork is located on an online platform, which branches out and sprawls like an untended garden.

As a result of industrial food production, more and more Finns have lost their interest in growing vegetables and gardening. Finnish cuisine has changed quickly with globalisation. Vidha Saumya and Ali Akbar Mehta's ballad talks about lost meadows and the versatility of Finnish cuisine: about rye crispbread, fish baked in a rye crust, pea soup, coffee, buns and oven pancake. The Ballad of the Lost Utopian Meadow online artwork's links allow visitors to explore the social dimensions of food the artists' have recognised. Saumya and Akbar Mehta perform their artwork at Ainola in August 2021.

Plants and food can also be used as materials for art. Vilma Määttänen has produced the pigments for her artwork Shades of Earth from the plants and minerals found in and around Ainola. Määttänen's artworks are

based on a painter's self-sufficiency of sorts. She collects pigments for her paintings from her surroundings and the binder medium – wax and egg yolk – from the chickens and bees she grows at home.

Over the last few years, small vegetable plots have started to reappear in the gardens of houses and in the parks and wastelands of large cities. The lawns outside blocks of flats more and more often feature planters and grow bags for herbs and vegetables. In addition to the joy of food growing, the aspiration is also based on the wish to understand the environmental impacts of food and the chemicals used in food cultivation.

Ecological crises have awakened us to consider the strain of food production on the environment and its carbon emissions. The artist Nestori Syrjälä works with the themes of crises and alternative futures. His recent artworks have dealt with relinquishing and unlearning. They outline how detaching from the current unsustainable lifestyle could be envisaged through various fictive utility objects. The Ainola sauna presents an object, the 2072SAUNA WATER LADLE, made from a MacBook Pro laptop from the 2010s and alder wood, which may tell us about one potential future.

As the climate warms and weather conditions become exceedingly unpredictable, we will need vegetables that prosper in the changed conditions and are rich in nutritional value. One exemplary case is the potato which used to be grown extensively in Ainola. These days, vegetables are grown in the museum's sample vegetable patches in accordance with the principles of crop rotation.

The potato was brought to Europe from the expedition to colonise the Americas and has adapted and adjusted well to Finland. Nevertheless, the variety of species in Finland is relatively limited. The modern potato is an economic policy operator, and seed potatoes intended for sale are carefully monitored under EU legislation. The commercial cultivation of non-registered varieties turns some potatoes into outlaws, and their cultivation is practically illegal.

The climate crisis is the result of the emissions produced by the humankind, and thus, the biggest question of how to solve it is not necessarily connected to technical development but to changing social order. To cope with the changes, people will have to learn to take care of and treat soil, in other words, humus, in a better way, for example, by maintaining a compost. In the future, the way

we produce food could resemble a compost in which any food surpluses would work as a source of nutrients for new food. A compost offers a platform for both disposing of excess or unusable material and producing humus, the building material for growing more food.

Is it possible to imagine that in the future, people and their partner species could share a joint meal, amicably tolerating any frictions? Could shared meals enable peaceful forms of communication and new kinds of friendships? The Flying Squirrels Papan and Norkko expand Ainola's museum garden and host a dinner on Twitter. They look for space on the virtual platform for diverse garden interpretations and test what kinds of possibilities Twitter offers for cooperation between people and squirrels and for growing potatoes.

In Sibelius' time, dinner parties were carefully prepared. The availability of ingredients alone had to be checked way ahead of the day of the feast. In the same way, the squirrels start the preparations for the dinner party by growing potatoes, and the work will culminate at a Potato Feast in Ainola organised in September. Everyone interested, regardless of the type of their skin, fur, chitin shell or molecular structure, is welcome to participate and prepare their own meal from the summer's potato

crop. The dinner party taking place in a virtual garden can, particularly during the pandemic, create new ways of being in contact with others and will help turn an ordinary day into a festivity.

#timemachinesandutopias

CHALLENGE

#aikakoneitajautopioita #arjentekoja #everydayacts

There has been a dramatic change in the last 100 years in how food is consumed. Meat consumption has grown significantly, whilst at the same time, an increasing amount of vegetarian food is also sold. If industrial meat production was to stop, it would, according to some estimates, reduce the amount of land needed to grow crops down to a third. However, a more realistic idea than stopping meat consumption altogether would be to increase the proportion of vegetables in our diet.

We challenge you to take an everyday climate act! Choose a vegan dish in a restaurant, make one at home or grow your food. Photograph your everyday act and post it on Instagram **#aikakoneitajautopioita #arjentekoja #timemachinesandutiopias #everydayacts**

Creators

ARTISTS [in alphabetical order]

Flying Squirrels Papana & Norkko

Vilma Määttänen

nabbteeri

Vidha Saumya & Ali Akbar Mehta

Nestori Syrjälä

Markus Tuormaa

CONTEMPORARY ART CURATION

Hanna Johansson

CURATION OF COLLECTIONS

Sandra Lindblom

EXHIBITION ARCHITECTURE

Alisha Davidow

SOUND DESIGN

Joona Lukala and Eetu Moisio

PROJECT MANAGER

Mari Viita-aho

VISUAL IDENTITY, EXHIBITION GRAPHICS

Tsto

PUBLICATION TEXTS [in alphabetical order]

Mari Viita-aho (editing), Julia Donner, Hanna Johansson, Sandra Lindblom, Päivi Myllylä, Anne Pelin, Minna Turunen & Tuija Wahlroos

The exhibition is part of the artists museums development project executed on funding from the Finnish Cultural Foundation.

EVENTS

Vidha Saumya and Ali Akbar Mehta perform their artwork “The Ballad of the Lost Utopian Meadow”

22 August 2021 Visavuori

29 August 2021 Tarvaspää

13 August 2021 Ainola

Sini Forssell and Timo Järvensivu organise dialogues in Tarvaspää monthly on Saturdays at 10:00AM–1:00PM. Please contact the museum’s info if you are interested in participating.

Follow the audience’s comments and the investigative journalist Meri Parkkinen’s work at aikakoneitajautopioita.fi.