

The Summer Exhibition 2021 at the Finnish Glass Museum

THE WONDER OF MILAN

Finnish design takes over the world

Milan Triennials 1933-1973: glass, silver, textile and wood design

7 May–17 October 2021



Photo: Tapio Wirkkala Kantarelli Iittala, Collection Kakkonen/Finnish Glass Museum collection, photographer Patrik Rastenberger

The ninth Milan triennial in 1951 became legendary, as it was in this exhibition the Finnish artists and designers were awarded with six main prizes, three honorary diplomas, six gold medals and seven silver medals. The Finnish department in the IX triennial consisted of individual industrial art items, mainly unique pieces.

In the Milan triennials of the 1950s and 1960s, the collections of the Iittala glassworks were awarded on several occasions: four Grand Prix prizes and two gold medals. Furthermore, Iittala's designers Tapio Wirkkala and Timo Sarpaneva were acknowledged for their exhibition architecture as well as their pieces in additional materials.

The Finnish design concentrated particularly in the consciousness of the material and the simple form. This was a pronounced contrast to the departments of several other countries with their sometimes even exaggerated and varied industrial art.

The triennials had a profound effect on the Finnish glass industry as well as the progress of Iittala glassworks. During that time, the Finnish glass industry was creating its own direction with design. One can follow the actual changes in style by following the Finnish triennial departments: 1930 – the pioneers of art glass, 1950s and its sophisticated design language and 1960s with its colourful, voluptuous items.

The 2021 summer exhibition of the Finnish Glass Museum will enlighten the entities of the Finnish triennial departments between 1933-1973, when the Milan Triennals in their traditional form were organised.