

Press release 21.1.2025

The Didrichsen jubilee exhibition highlights Reidar Särestöniemi's multifaceted relationship with nature

On the World's Shore – Reidar Särestöniemi 100 years opens at the Didrichsen Art Museum on 8 February. The exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the artist's birth explores Särestöniemi's art from the perspective of his relationship with nature. The focus is on identifying and living side by side with nature and on environmental conservation. The exhibition is open 8.2.–1.6.2025.

The life and art of Reidar Särestöniemi (1925–1981) were strongly linked to nature and traditional beliefs in Lapland. The colourful works of the industrious artist, full of meanings and metaphors, became very popular in the 1960s and 1970s and found their way into many private homes. For Särestöniemi, working from the Särestö homestead in Kittilä was essential – a decision that in many ways shaped his entire career.

One with nature

In many of Särestöniemi's landscapes, the boundary between the observable and the invisible becomes apparent. Beyond the horizon, the world's shore connects the familiar neighbourhood with the wider world. In the same way, the works' connection to nature is both palpably direct and spiritual. Observing and being inspired by the environment is accompanied by an experience that reaches towards a broader understanding of the relationship between the self and nature.

The landscapes of Lapland, the depiction of the seasons and the animal themes in the artworks are filtered through Särestöniemi's experience and are also partly based on Sámi and Lappish beliefs. The artist described identifying with nature, blending into the fells and marshes and sometimes transforming into a ptarmigan, sometimes into a lynx. The connection with nature was an act of introspection. The cycle of the seasons is strongly present in the works — by painting, the artist celebrated a short but intense period of light, foreshadowed the changing seasons and reflected his own feelings.

The fragility of nature

Särestöniemi increasingly took a stand on nature conservation issues in the 1970s as Lapland's industrialisation plans progressed. The threat of the damming of the Ounasjoki river, which flows next to Särestö, concretised this concern. As a public figure, he constantly expressed his support for the environmental movement.

Särestöniemi was concerned about the loss of animal habitat and gave a shape to the disappearing marsh and felled trees. The lone wolf, hunted and cornered with the encouragement of a killing grant, was Särestöniemi's self-portrait. In many ways, he felt threatened with extinction, the last of his species.

Särestöniemi and the Didrichsens

Marie-Louise and Gunnar Didrichsen first visited Reidar Särestöniemi in Särestö in 1968. In the years that followed, they bought several works from the artist. The Didrichsen Art Museum also organised several solo exhibitions with Särestöniemi in the 1970s.

The works in the exhibition have been loaned by the Finnish National Gallery / Ateneum Art Museum, Fortum Art Foundation, Heino Art Foundation, People's Archive, Nordea Art Foundation Finland, Villa Gyllenberg and Turva Mutual Insurance Company. Works from the collection of the Didrichsen Art Museum and numerous private collections will also be on display.

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Opening hours

8.2.2025–1.6.2025
Tue–Sun 10–18
Mon closed

Tickets

16 / 14 / 10 €
Free admission for children under 18
Museum Card
Free admission to the Sculpture Park

Guided tours

8.2.2025–1.6.2025
In Finnish Sat and Sun 1pm and 3pm, Wed 3pm.
In Swedish Sun at 12 noon
In English every first Saturday of the month at 12 noon.

Exhibitions

8.2.–1.6.2025 *On the World's Shore – Reidar Särestöniemi 100 years*
12.6.2025–28.9.2025 *The Didrichsen Art Museum 60 years*
17.10.2025–25.1.2026 *Pro Arte – Antrei Hartikainen*