

English Supplement

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Embedding design in life



Seppo Laakso

have received a unique opportunity and will be taking every advantage of it," says Helsinki Mayor **Jussi Pajunen**.

The title of Helsinki's bid for the designation was Open Helsinki – Embedding Design in Life. The concept expressed by the title will form the basis of Helsinki's ambitious program for the design year 2012.

The World Design Capital project will comprise a large number of design events and bring a great deal

of visibility for the Helsinki region. Program planning and preparations begin immediately.

"We will invite all citizens, enterprises and organizations in Helsinki, as well as visiting design professionals and enthusiasts, to participate in the preparations and the events of the design year 2012," Mayor Pajunen says.

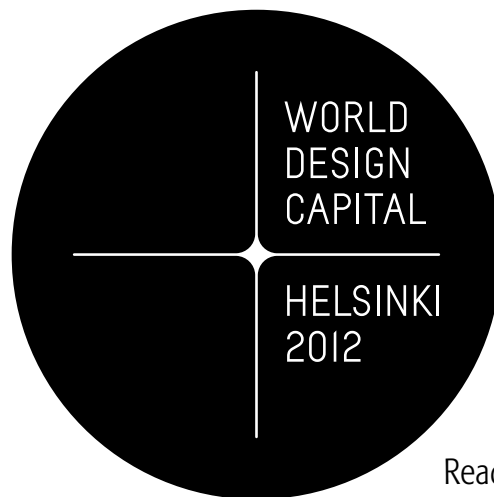
"This is a major challenge for us to use design in Helsinki and in the other participating cities to further the development of our cities from the social, economic and cultural perspectives, according to the World Design Capital project's vision.

"The work begins now. The effort will extend well beyond one year and one city. The World Design Capital 2012 project will support the long-ranging development of the entire region. The project will also

strengthen our role in the international community."

Altogether 46 cities from 27 countries applied for the designation. An international jury first shortlisted Helsinki and Eindhoven of the Netherlands before awarding the designation to Helsinki.

Helsinki will be the third World Design Capital, following Turin (Torino, 2008) and Seoul (2010). The World Design Capital is a biennial designation given to one city at a time.



Helsinki will be the World Design Capital of the year 2012. The designation was announced by the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (Icsid) at the Icsid World Design Congress 2009 in Singapore on November 25, 2009.

"This is a magnificent achievement for Helsinki. It is an important recognition for us and our collaborator cities Espoo, Vantaa, Kauniainen and Lahti, as well as for all the participating organizations and individuals. We



Esko Jämsä

Lasipalatsi - old and modern.

Read more at <http://www.wdc2012helsinki.fi> and <http://www.worlddesigncapital.com>

The most valuable city sections reclaimed for people

FRONT PAGE

By Johanna Lemola

Helsinki is undergoing the largest change in its history. Kyösti Oasmaa explains what this means.

Helsinki Cathedral looms large in the office of **Kyösti Oasmaa** at the **City of Helsinki Economic and Planning Centre**, located across the Senate Square from the cathedral. As if the massive and venerable cathedral would stand as a constant reminder to him, massive tasks lie on Oasmaa's desk – 10 major urban projects in Helsinki that he supervises as Urban

Projects Director, representing homes for 100,000 people and jobs for tens of thousands.

"These projects will fundamentally change the character of the city," Oasmaa says.

"This is a huge opportunity", says Kyösti Oasmaa.

Mari Hottari



Helsinki in transition

FRONT PAGE



Mari Hiltari

Waterfronts according to plan

“As late as the 1980’s, Helsinki’s shorelines were taken up by industrial operations and warehouses,” Oasmaa says. “At that time the City made a study on waterfront land use.

“The first phase of the resulting programme to reclaim waterfronts for people and jobs is over, with Ruoholahti and Herttoniemenranta completed and Arabianranta nearing completion. We are now entering the second and dramatic phase, which follows the move of cargo port operations to Vuosaari.

“As a result, our city, where shorelines used to be largely locked for its citizens, will open up.”

Here Helsinki complies with a global trend in cities. “Traditionally industry and ports have claimed the most valuable parts of cities,” Oasmaa explains, “but now they have to retreat.”

25 years of construction

Oasmaa recalls the time when he started at the City of Helsinki 20 years ago. A large part of Ruoholahti was a

parking lot for trucks, the rest was taken by warehouses, and the whole area resembled wasteland. “Ten years later there was no trace of the old Ruoholahti,” Oasmaa comments.

Now a huge open field lies next to Ruoholahti, the Jätkäsaari former port site, and work has started from the northernmost section of the site. Streets have been re-routed to make space for the construction of a two-level gateway into Jätkäsaari, where pedestrians and bicycles will be below a car deck and have direct access into the city centre via a former railway channel. This “Länsilinkki” (“west link”) development will be completed by summer 2011.

Housing development will start next. The whole Jätkäsaari district should be finished by 2025, complete with housing and services for 16,000 people, jobs for 6,000, and shoreline recreational facilities including promenades, marinas and cafés.

A similar project is underway in the Kalasatama former port site, slated for completion by 2035.

Helsinki in transition

Life amidst construction

What will the new districts be like to live in for the first dwellers, as construction keeps going on?

Oasmaa explains that housing development will start from one section and move further block by block. The built sites will be sealed from construction activity, so people can lead their lives undisturbed.

Construction starts with streets and parks, and housing construction will begin a year later. For example, the Jätkäsaari housing development is scheduled to get underway in 2010.

How the development is financed

The initial investment in the development of new districts is made by the City. In 2010, Helsinki will invest 100 million euros in new districts, largely with borrowed money. If the current economic

downturn could have been avoided, the City would have managed the development without loans.

“This is an investment that will pay itself back in the long run,” Oasmaa explains the City’s financing role. “The payback will come from construction permits, and the City can lease or sell sites to developers. In the next 4-5 years, the City’s investments will be larger than the income, but after that we should be profiting. It will take about 20 years for a new district to pay itself back to the City.”

Districts with brands

With 10 new districts under development, will they end up competing with each other for people and jobs?

Oasmaa replies that the answer is to plan and develop each district with its own profile. “Our new

districts will have brands.”

Arabianranta is already the Art and Design City, thanks to its focus on art and design education and jobs.

Kalasadama will have a focus on culture and food, relying on the old Suvilahti power plant turned into a cultural centre and many food suppliers in the area including a new food wholesale market. Jätkäsaari will continue to host a harbour for cruise ships and ferries to Tallinn, and it will have a strong maritime flavour. Central Pasila will be a place for urban city dwellers, with high-rise apartment buildings.

Many areas can incorporate carless city blocks for people who prefer not to own a car.

“The sky is the limit”, Oasmaa says, foreseeing a future Helsinki which offers people a broad range of alternatives to choose their preferred lifestyle.

He points out, “This is a huge opportunity for Helsinki.”

Construction Glossary

English	Finnish
Economic and Planning Centre	<i>Talous- ja suunnittelukeskus</i>
Construction	<i>rakentaminen</i>
Waterfront	<i>ranta-alue</i>
Industrial	<i>teollinen</i>
Reclaim	<i>voittaa takaisin</i>
Cargo port	<i>tavarasatama</i>
Parking lot	<i>pysäköintialue</i>
Site	<i>tontti</i>
Housing construction	<i>asuntojen rakentaminen</i>
Services	<i>palvelut</i>
District	<i>alue</i>
Brand	<i>brändi</i>
High-rise apartment building	<i>tornitalo</i>

Electric car **ERA** reaps success

By Johanna Lemola

The Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences has developed an electric car that shows promise.

An electric car, named ERA, developed by the Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences has been qualified for the second round in the distinguished Progressive Automotive X Prize contest in the United States.

The results of the first round of the contest were announced in New York City on October 19, 2009. The contest is a tool for the organizer, the X Prize Foundation, to promote automotive product development utilizing energy efficient and environmentally friendly technologies.

Altogether 43 out of 97 teams were qualified for the second round, which will be held in Michigan starting next spring. The final round will take place in July-August, and the winners of three categories will be announced in



September 2010. The prizes total ten million dollars.

ERA is one of the few X Prize contestants from Europe and the only one from Scandinavia.

A car of the future

ERA stands for Electric RaceAbout. It is a full-blooded sports car and a state-of-the-art battery driven electric vehicle. It features extremely low energy

consumption and zero emissions. ERA has been designed from the clean table utilizing the latest electric powertrain technology, battery systems and light-weight manufacturing knowhow.

The Metropolia team believes that ERA represents the future of sports car design. The styling is the result of co-operation between Metropolia and the Lahti Institute of Design.

One of the ERA project's goals has

been to demonstrate that electric vehicles are competitive alternatives to combustion-engine vehicles.

Co-operation across the board

ERA is independent of any manufacturer, and it has given many players opportunities to research, experiment and demonstrate their skills. These players include the Lappeenranta University of Technology and dozens of partnering organizations, in addition to Helsinki Metropolia and the Lahti Institute of Design.

The first test drives will take place in February 2010, in preparation for the second round of the X Prize contest.

Helsinki Metropolia is Finland's largest university of applied sciences, with 14,000 students and 2,500 graduates each year.



By Johanna Lemola

The Baltic is a prime casualty of human activity among the world's seas. The blue mussel may be the most important indicator of what is happening to the sea.

The Cities of Helsinki and Turku launched a campaign to improve the state of the Baltic Sea on the initiative of their mayors, **Jussi Pajunen** and **Mikko Pukkinen**, in June 2007. The cities seek to set an example to others and challenge them to act.

The cities' action plan has eight categories, ranging from their own activities to influencing those of others. The cities improve their sewage networks, seek to reduce wastewater flows from housing outside the networks, and accept discharges from ships and boats free of charge. The activities further include reductions in agricultural loading, removal of contaminated sediments from the sea, international cooperation, new research and funding, and general awareness building.

Helsinki and Turku have spread the Baltic Sea Challenge to other cities and communities, also outside Finland, to civic organizations, schools and universities, shipping companies, industry and governmental agencies – to 700 players so far. By September 2009, 160 had accepted the challenge.

See <http://www.itamerihaaste.net>

Baltic blue mussels.

Photo courtesy Mats Westerborn

*Cities seek to make a difference:
Baltic Sea Challenge*

The state of the Baltic Sea

By Johanna Lemola



FRONT PAGE

Photo Turun Sanomat

Overgrowth of algal blooms in the Turku archipelago.

The Baltic Sea is heavily burdened by human activity. The sea receives effluents from a catchment area that is home to more than 80 million people, and nutrient loading has increased eight-fold in the most heavily affected areas in the past 100 years, leading to widespread eutrophication (overgrowth of algal blooms).

Surrounded by nine industrialized countries, the sea is further troubled by refuse and toxins including radioactive waste. The average depth of the Baltic Sea is only 55 metres, compared to 3,300 metres in the Atlantic, which makes the Baltic highly vulnerable.

The water changes only through the narrow and shallow Danish straits, and it takes 30 years for all water to be exchanged.

Mimma Nummelin



Baltic seals.

Professor Harri Kuosa of the University of Helsinki at the Tvärminne station compares the Baltic Sea to a bathtub: "The situation equals to changing your bath water only once every four months."

The state of the coastline has changed from good to bad throughout the Baltic region. Large areas of the sea bottom are dead from lack of oxygen, owing to eutrophication. High levels of phosphorus feed toxic cyanobacterial blooms.

The climate change will cause the mean salinity of the Baltic to decrease, making the lives of saltwater species like the blue mussel increasingly difficult.

Nevertheless, some hope remains. "The situation is not getting worse and it is possible to improve in some areas," Prof. Kuosa says.

The blue mussel story

Mats Westerbom has been spending 2-6 months per year at the seaside Tvärminne Zoological Station of the University of Helsinki, studying the blue mussel populations that live in the nearby waters.

Blue mussels make up close to 90 percent of the animal biomass in these shallow coastal waters alone. Reflecting the highly important role of the blue mussel in the entire Baltic ecosystem, Dr Westerbom calls the blue mussel the sea's "ecosystem engineer".

The number of species in the Baltic is low, and the loss of any one species can change the entire ecosystem.

"But when an ecosystem engineer dies, the rest of the ecosystem dies with it," Dr Westerbom says. He predicts that the ongoing large-scale changes in the Baltic Sea will substantially affect blue mussel populations.

Architecture in the service of learning

By Johanna Lemola

Kaisa Nuikkinen explores how school architecture promotes student wellbeing and learning in her new doctoral thesis.

Is there a link between good schools and the buildings in which they operate? After all, Helsinki has made a large investment into high-quality school buildings, and Finland today enjoys the best school system in the world according to international assessments.

Kaisa Nuikkinen has worked as Head Architect for the Helsinki City Education Department since 1991, and in May 2009 she completed a doctoral thesis in education science on the effect of school environments on child wellbeing.

An ideal school

"A school building leaves its mark on a person," Dr Nuikkinen says. "A school is an everyday environment, and when the building works well, it leaves time and space for learning."

Good spatial solutions can stimulate and empower students, encourage learning and create

The Soininen School.



feelings of safety. They can enable various pedagogical visions and facilitate interaction.

In her thesis, Dr Nuikkinen compared an ideal school building, as defined by all the various expectations for schools, with the Soininen School in Helsinki. The Soininen School, which is for grades 1-6, was designed by internationally famous Finnish architect Ilmari Lahdelma (Kaira-Lahdelma-Mahlamäki Architects) for an architectural competition and built in 1994.

Dr Nuikkinen interviewed teachers, staff and the children of the Soininen School for her thesis.

To investigate the children's experiences, she used photos to invite their comments. Some of the children would describe their excitement about facilities that signalled upcoming opportunities, such as a computer class, or a "dark" theatre classroom for an annual "idols competition". Some others would talk about feelings of safety created by design solutions.

Helsinki's principles in school design

According to Dr Nuikkinen, a traditional school building is characterized

by long corridors, individual classrooms all of the same size, closed doors, and teachers working alone with their classes.

Contrary to the tradition, most new schools in Helsinki are divided into units consisting of a number of classrooms. There are doors and glass walls between classrooms to facilitate interaction, as well as shared space for group work.

Helsinki's principle is that every new school should have an individual design and be tailored for its curricula and location. The designers should be accomplished architects, and the design process should always involve teachers.

During Dr Nuikkinen's tenure, the City of Helsinki (half a million people) has built or expanded more than 50 schools according to these principles.

The Soininen School is designed by Ilmari Lahdelma.



Season of Light in January

The Season of Light will illuminate Helsinki at the start of January. Light installations will create an exciting atmosphere in what will be the brightest urban event in the Baltic region.

The Season of Light represents a bright turning point in the midst of the holiday season and the darkest time of the year. The event aims to offer residents and visitors positive, refreshing and surprising experiences. Senate Square – the historic architectural centre of the nation's capital – and Parliament House opposite to Finlandia Park will serve as the stages for the light installations at the start of January.

Heijastuksia – Reflections in Senate Square, 2009. Lighting Designer Mikki Kunttu.



Lighting Designer **Mikki Kunttu** has designed unique works of art that reveal these familiar Helsinki landmarks in a new and surprising light that will inspire viewers.

Heijastuksia – Reflections in Senate Square

“Heijastuksia – Reflections” is a voyage through time into the past and onwards into a world of fantasy. Senate Square and its surroundings return to the year 1852 when the St. Nicholas Church (now Helsinki Cathedral) was inaugurated.

From history the light installation transforms into the world of fantasy in which imaginary vines climb up the columns of the cathedral, while various lights, colours, shadows and textures play across the surfaces. The cathedral is shown in a time-worn patina, for example.

The strong visual effect is enhanced further by atmospheric sounds created by Sound Designer **Kasper Laine**. The performance is suitable for the entire family.

Oratoribus at Parliament House

“Oratoribus” borrows its name from the name of the winning proposal in



Mikki Kunttu

Lighting Designer Mikki Kunttu, 2009.

the original architectural design competition for the Parliament House in Helsinki. The light installation emphasises the enduringly powerful presence of the building while bringing out its architectonic details.

The elegantly changing colours and atmospheres add depth to the surfaces and highlight the special position that the building holds in the Finnish mindscape.

Reflections and Oratoribus will premiere on 1 January 2010 at 20 hrs. In Senate Square the performances con-

tinue until 23 hrs, while at Parliament House they will continue nonstop until 9 hrs the following morning.

From 2–6 January 2010 the performances at Parliament House continue from 16 hrs to–9 hrs nonstop and at Senate Square from 17 hrs–23 hrs beginning on the hour and repeating every half hour. Each performance lasts around 15 minutes.

Glögg Café

During the event a special “Glögg Café” serving mulled wine and other

treats will be opened in Sederholm House. The café will be open from at 17–22 hrs on 2–6 January 2010. At the same time visitors can check out the new “Yö-Night” exhibition at the Helsinki City Museum. The exhibition is open daily from 11 hrs. Sederholm House is located on the corner of Senate Square.

- Hallituskatu street will be closed to traffic in Senate Square from 27 December to 10 January, and parking will not be allowed in front of the Cathedral.
- The Season of Light is organised by the City of Helsinki in partnership with Helsingin Energia.

Other co-operation partners include the University of Helsinki, the Cathedral Parish of Helsinki and Parish Union of Helsinki, the Government Palace, Senate Properties and the Parliament of Finland.

- The light installations employ LED technology that is more energy efficient than traditional lighting technology.

www.seasonofflight.fi

www.valonvuodenaika.fi

www.hel.fi/events

www.helen.fi

Chinese New Year in Helsinki

Helsinki will celebrate Chinese New Year in the Lasipalatsi plaza on Saturday, February 13, 2009, kicking off the Year of the Tiger. The plaza will be taken over by coloured lanterns, Chinese delicacies, dragons, lions, acrobats from Beijing Opera, and other Chinese artists. Many of the programmes are targeted at children.

The audience can also watch New Year celebrations from Beijing as a live broadcast. There will be a Chinese market and displays on Finland's par-

ticipation at the Shanghai World Expo 2010. The celebration will start with a procession from Railway Square (13:45) and culminate in major fireworks at Töölönlahti (18:20).

The Chinese New Year in Helsinki, now in its 4th edition, is hosted by the Cities of Helsinki and Beijing.

Chinese New Year Celebration in Helsinki 25.1.2009. Red Fans - Beijing Dance Troupe.

FRONT PAGE



Seppo Laakso

Immigrants develop Web services for themselves

The Info Bank online information service (<http://www.infopankki.fi>) is now developed further with the help of a 15-member focus group, made up of foreign-born people in Finland. They put together ideas on how to improve the service.

The focus group was recruited in summer 2009. The members represent a wide spectrum of foreign-born people – 15 different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They include a refugee, an academic researcher, a student, an immigrant coming to Finland after work, a family member of an asylum seeker, and a former expatriate.

"The focus group is a core tool for our development work and forms one of its cornerstones," says Info Bank project leader **Ahmed Akar**. Info Bank has 65,000 users per month. Finland's foreign-born population today numbers 191,000.

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Info kit

Information for immigrants

Info Bank is an online service aimed at immigrants, offering information on Finnish society and life in Finland in 15 languages. The website also contains local information on Helsinki.
www.infopankki.fi

Information for all residents

Virka Info telephone service (09) 310 1111 (Mon-Fri 9-15) and **information point** in the City Hall lobby, address Pohjoisesplanadi 11-13 (Mon-Fri 9-19, Sat-Sun 11-17). www.virka.fi