



Address by Minister of Education and Culture Sanni Grahn-Laasonen

Dear arts and culture devotees!

Arts and culture enrich our lives and the society in which we live. For each of us as individuals, artistic and cultural experiences can open up new perspectives and ways of thinking. In society, the positive effects of culture are far-reaching and have an impact on the entire community.

Creativity, skills and know-how are all key elements in the cultural environment. Creativity is visible in the arts but is also evident in people's ingenuity and in the innovations and science that result from this. Since its independence – and even before that – Finland has become known for the works of creative and talented Finns, from Sibelius to Esa-Pekka Salonen and from A.I. Virtanen to Angry Birds.

What does the future hold for Finland after the centenary celebrations are over? How will we adjust to the changing world and overcome fears of change – while at the same time holding on to our valuable cultural heritage?

The world has become smaller and the boundaries of its cultural realms more porous. Worldwide information networks, for example, have given us an opportunity to share experiences, as knowledge, arts and culture are accessible to everyone. In the future, digitalisation may improve this accessibility even further as well as expand our conception of arts and culture.

The changing world may appear as a realm of threats and challenges. It is important, though, that we know and have a sense of our roots: where we come from and where we are heading. Music and arts that tell about life and realities in Finland and were inspired by these are the points of reference that can anchor us to our own identity.

Dear visitors, let the arts flow within you. Let the creativity ring out. And let yourself be transported on a great arts and culture journey, keeping your eyes, ears and minds open to new experiences as you go. There is no finer way to contribute to Finland's next hundred years!

Sanni Grahn-Laasonen
Minister of Education and Culture