

Vapaa julkaistavaksi 26.5.1983  
klo 10

Ministeri Gustav Björkstrandin  
tervehdys Kansainvälisen taidearvostelijain  
liiton (AICA) 16. kongressin ja 35. yleis-  
kokouksen avajaisissa Vanhalla ylioppilastalolla  
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Hyvät naiset ja herrat,  
Mina damer och herrar,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Mesdames et messieurs,

On behalf of the Finnish Government I wish to express our sincere  
pleasure of seeing this conference and its participants here in Finland.  
You are all cordially welcome. I hope the meeting will be a great success.

I would also like to thank everyone who has taken part in the

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organization of this important event.

There are many reasons for being pleased about having this 16th  
Congress and 35th General Assembly of the International Association of  
Art Critics here in Finland. Since our country is rather small and  
remotely situated, we are happy to receive such a large number of leading  
international experts from the different fields of art. Undoubtedly there  
are many things which we Finns can learn from you within the scope of the  
official programme of the conference and the general assembly and also  
through personal contacts.

I am happy that you have come to Finland just now. Spring is  
a favourable time of the year for visits to these parts of the world.

One of the main ideas in Finnish visual arts, architecture and design criticism has been to examine national basic elements and to experience nature. For the first time this was brought to international notion at the turn of the century. Another peak occurred in the fifties, when Finnish architecture and design achieved wide international recognition. The last few years have been characterized by international integration also in the field of culture. Everywhere suburbs look alike. In visual arts international fashions spread instantly from one country to another. In design, commercialism is gaining importance.

Nevertheless, national identity is not lost in Finland. Our artists continue to contribute fresh ideas on the international level.

In Finland critics of art and environment are presently concerned with the strengths and many possibilities of art as media. These same concerns will also be expressed in this Congress specially when visual art criticism is being discussed. In this context several questions arise, such as: How does the communication of information function in the field of arts? Is the media a threat to existence of small cultural areas? It is a good idea that these questions are being tackled. We need all attempts possible to find solutions to these concerns common to so many of us.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Typically, the cultural exchange between nations has many levels and many channels. To carry on co-operation, there are official institutions, organizations and individual contacts. This conference is one of the many ways to build up a better knowledge of the subject matter in question and of each other.

On behalf of the Ministry of Education I wish this conference, the general assembly and all the participants every success in your important work.