

## A major exhibition of works by the von Wright brothers at the Ateneum in October

From 27 October 2017 to 25 February 2018, the Ateneum Art Museum will host the exhibition *The von Wright Brothers*. The artist brothers Magnus, Wilhelm and Ferdinand von Wright, who lived during the period of the Grand Duchy of Finland, are known as painters of landscapes, still lifes and nature subjects, and as scientific illustrators. The brothers' works will be accompanied by new art by the photographic artist Sanna Kannisto (born 1974) and the conceptual artist Jussi Heikkilä (born 1952). The exhibition is part of the programme celebrating the centenary of Finland's independence.

This exhibition will introduce new perspectives, as it explores the historical significance of the von Wright brothers for Finnish art, culture and science. More than 300 works will be on display at the exhibition, which will occupy the entire third floor of the museum. The exhibition will feature oil paintings, watercolours, prints and sketches from both the Ateneum collection and other Finnish museums and private collections. Exhibits will also include birds stuffed by Magnus von Wright, courtesy of the Finnish Museum of Natural History. The chief curator of the exhibition is **Anne-Maria Pennonen**. The Ateneum last staged an exhibition of works by the von Wright brothers in 1982.

The exhibition will coincide with the release of a book, *The von Wright Brothers. Art, Science and Life*, published by the Ateneum, that presents a wealth of new research on the brothers. The book is edited by the curator Anne-Maria Pennonen and the special researcher **Erkki Anttonen**, and it will be available in Finnish, Swedish and English.



Ferdinand von Wright: *View from Haminalahti* (1853) | Ferdinand von Wright: *Mallards* (1874) | Wilhelm von Wright: *Cuckoo-Wrasse, Male* (1836–1857) | Magnus von Wright: *Annankatu on a Cold Winter Morning* (1868)

## Father's hunting hobby sparked an interest in nature

The von Wright brothers grew up in a manor in Haminalahti, Kuopio. The brothers' interest in nature originated in the hobby of hunting, as practised by their father, Major **Henrik Magnus von Wright**. Skilled hunters, the brothers began to document the birds they caught.

The eldest of the brothers, **Magnus von Wright** (1805–1868), known especially for his landscape paintings, was an influential cultural figure in Helsinki. He worked as a teacher at the University of Helsinki drawing school and as an expert at the Finnish Art Society, in which capacity he contributed to the establishment of the Ateneum collection. In his paintings of Helsinki, such as *View from Katajanokka* (1868) and *Annankatu on a Cold Winter Morning* (1868), he documented the changes taking place in the city.

**Wilhelm von Wright** (1810–1887) was active especially in Stockholm and on the island of Orust on the west coast of Sweden. He worked as a scientific illustrator for the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. Wilhelm assisted his brother Magnus in illustrating the book *Svenska fåglar*, presenting

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Swedish birdlife: the work contains 182 coloured drawings, illustrating birds with scientific precision. According to today's ornithologists, the illustrations created by the brothers are still accurate. Wilhelm suffered paralysis, which cut his career shorter than that of the other brothers.

The most famous, and youngest, of the brothers is **Ferdinand von Wright** (1822–1906). Ferdinand is known especially for his paintings of birds, such as *The Fighting Capercaillies* (1886) and *An Eagle-Owl Seizes a Hare* (1860). He enjoyed the longest career of the brothers, and later attained the status of an old master and earned respect from young artists.

After being on display at the Ateneum, the exhibition will, in 2018, travel to the Kuopio Art Museum and the Tikanoja Art Museum in Vaasa.

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## Picks from the extensive exhibition-related programme

Admission is included in the museum entrance fee, or with a Museum Card. Check out all the event information on our website: [www.ateneum.fi](http://www.ateneum.fi) > Events

### Sat 28 Oct at 13:00 | ATTE VON WRIGHT: THE STORY OF THE VON WRIGHT FAMILY

Ateneum Hall. The head of the von Wright family will talk about the history of his family. In Finnish.

### Thu 2 Nov and Thu 30 Nov at 17:00 | LECTURES ON THE VON WRIGHT BROTHERS

2 Nov: Curator's lecture: Curator Anne-Maria Pennonen, Ateneum Hall. In Finnish.

30 Nov: Expert's lecture, special researcher Erkki Anttonen: The von Wright brothers as makers of lithographs, Ateneum Hall. In Finnish.

### Wed 15 Nov, from 10:00 to 20:00 | ART FOR US! FREE ADMISSION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

During the day, there will be tours of The von Wright Brothers exhibition, organised by Tringa, an ornithological society for the Uusimaa province. What can you say about the birds and their lives in the paintings, when seen from the point of view of natural science and birdwatching? Free admission for under-25-year-olds.

### Fri 17 Nov, from 12:00 to 17:00 | CONTEMPORARY TAKES ON VON WRIGHT CONFERENCE

Ateneum Hall. The day's programme will include lectures by experts on The von Wright Brothers exhibition and the concurrently published book, presenting new research and new perspectives on the work of the artist brothers.

### Thu 7 Dec at 17:00 | FILM ESSAY ON THE VON WRIGHT BROTHERS

Ateneum Hall. Georg Grotenfelt's *Speglingar* (2016) is a film essay on the von Wright painter brothers. Interviews with the main characters, images of nature, and manor house landscapes hold a mirror to the lives of the brothers. In Swedish, with Finnish subtitles. Duration: 60 min.



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**More information:** Communications officer Anna Kari, tel. +358 40 717 8185, [anna.kari@ateneum.fi](mailto:anna.kari@ateneum.fi)

**Press images:** [press.ateneum.fi](http://press.ateneum.fi) | username: ateneum | password: mediat

**Opening hours:** Tue, Fri 10–18 | Wed, Thu 10–20 | Sat, Sun 10–17 | Mon closed

**Admission fees:** Normal admission fee €15 | Concessions €13 | Under 18-year-olds free of charge | S-Etukortti loyalty card holders €14

The Ateneum's main corporate partners are Helsingin Sanomat, HOK-Elanto and KPMG. The Ateneum is sponsored by Veikkaus. The Ateneum Art Museum is part of the Finnish National Gallery, together with the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, and the Sinebrychoff Art Museum. [www.kansallisgalleria.fi](http://www.kansallisgalleria.fi)