

Birds by Toikka catalogue

Professor **Oiva Toikka** (1931-) is a much admired figure in the world of Finnish art glass and a recipient of numerous awards at home and abroad. His richly coloured, highly individual birds are beautiful examples of the art of glassblowing and sought after worldwide. *Birds by Toikka* is a comprehensive source of information for collectors, and contains photographs and information on virtually all of his birds in English and Finnish.



Flycatcher



Pheasant



Willow Grouse



Annual cube 2004

The first variations Toikka created on his bird theme entered production in 1972, but received their bird name *Flycatcher* only later. These original birds varied in colour from design to design, depending on what color glass was available at the time. This suited Oiva Toikka, who often likes to let the moment guide his imagination.

Born at Nuutajärvi glassworks

Oiva Toikka's first birds were born without any formal advanced planning, as was often the case with art glass of the time, and drew strongly for their inspiration on the unique qualities of the Nuutajärvi glassworks. Thanks to **Kaj Franck's** work in the 1950s and earlier, Nuutajärvi had developed exceptional expertise in working with coloured glass, and the company's designers were given the opportunity to experiment with their artistic ideas over and above their day-to-day work. One-off pieces offered designers and glassblowers alike the chance to experiment with different techniques as well.

When Finland's glass industry celebrated its 300th anniversary in 1981, Nuutajärvi launched the *Pro Arte Vitrea* collection in its honor, together with four Toikka birds – *Pheasant*, *Long-tailed duck*, *Willow grouse* and *Ptarmigan* – which were soon became very popular.

The Toikka's birds were made into a collection of their own in 1994. The range was updated and named *Birds by Toikka*. Since then, the birds have gained many new admirers, particularly in countries like Germany and the Netherlands. Thanks to their international success, Toikka's birds have nowadays become a key feature of Iittala's product range, and they are also one of the biggest hits for Iittala in the US.

Unlimited imagination

The impressive exhibitions of Oiva Toikka's glass sculptures held in recent years have further reinforced and underlined the link between his birds and the rest of his art glass work.

Oiva Toikka creates his pieces very much with his feet firmly on the ground, without any fancy theorizing. Their rich world is born out of a very personal stream of consciousness, but one that is also grounded in the here and now. In particular, he draws on the inspiration his glassblowers provide him with, and he often says that it is only when he sees the glassblower he will be working with that he decides what he will experiment with today, making the most of the craftsman's particular talents.

The spontaneity of glass and the speed at which one has to work with it are a perfect foil for Oiva Toikka, and Oiva's seemingly unlimited imagination is perfect for glass.

Oiva Toikka

- Born 1931 in Viipuri, Finland
- Educated in Institute of Industrial Arts, Helsinki, Finland in 1953–56 and 1959–60.
- Worked at Arabia ceramic factory in 1950s. Started as glass designer at Nuutajärvi glassworks in 1963. Designer of various well known glassware series, such as Kastehelmi, Pioni and Flora. Has created also various unique artworks, including cubical pieces like Lake Palace and colourful Lollipops.
- Awarded with numerous prizes, such as Pro Finlandia Medal 1980, Kaj Frank Design Prize 1992, Finland prize 2000 and Prince Eugen Medal 2001.
- Has works in numerous respectable museums throughout the world.
- Birds by Toikka -collection and Annual Cubes are fancied by many collectors.

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