

Grant application / Around the world - Vuosaari House art entrance

Central Vuosaari is a rapidly growing suburban centre with a population of 40 000 people. The proposed project will be realized on a site at the heart of Vuosaari in front of the cultural centre Vuosaari House. The house is providing the people of Vuosaari and eastern Helsinki with a wide range of cultural events, exhibitions and art education activities and houses a local library. This multi-purpose cultural building has an essential role in meeting the needs of a fast-growing and multilingual district by connecting residents and bringing art and culture close to people's homes. While the House is surrounded by vast public spaces, the architectural design itself makes it hard to navigate to the main entrance. The proposed asphalt art installation will improve the legibility of the site by creating a visual impact which through color and form helps to mark the main entrance of this important community asset. The need for marking the entrance has been identified by a placemaking study carried out in 2020 based on local interviews and urban design analysis.

The site is located in front of the main entrance of the Cultural Centre Vuosaari House. The entrance is along a corridor that runs through two large public squares. The site is highly accessible with a close proximity to the metro station, a local shopping centre and a new high-school.

However, there is a clear need for making the main entrance of the house more visible and inviting. While the route is actively used by pedestrians with a steady flow of people, the entrance is easily passed as it sinks into a glass wall with no distinctive elements to mark it. The entrance is adjacent to a public square owned by the Cultural Centre. The centre organizes events and temporary installations on the square but for most of the time it is underused by the local inhabitants. The proposed colorful asphalt art installation aims at enlivening the public square as well as invites people to meet and also to enter the Vuosaari house, offering communal services to the public.

The project will kick-off in January 2023 with a planning and design phase. The project is introduced to the local inhabitants in May and they will be given opportunities to share their ideas on the game portrayed in the art piece. Based on this feedback, the team of Helsinki Urban Art association will design the game's layout and rules. In June the art piece will be created in workshops together with the local inhabitants and the Urban Art team. Management, communication and monitoring will run throughout the project. The evaluation of the project will be undertaken in August-September 2023.

The design and execution of the asphalt painting will be done by the Helsinki Urban Art organization, which is a renown actor in the Helsinki urban culture scene. The main idea for the art work is to create an adventure board-game-like asphalt painting shaped as Earth, inviting the people to travel around the world. Players themselves act as pawns and the rules of the game will be available on a nearby wall. The painting is created in workshops together with the local residents. The asphalt painting not only beautifies the site but also encourages people to participate and interact together.

Helsinki Urban Art -team will hold primary responsibility over the artistic direction and the execution of the painting. The multidisciplinary team of Helsinki Urban Art consists of a diverse group of urban art professionals. The team has years of experience in creating street art, leading workshops and hosting public events. They have a strong knowledge gained from their previous projects of engaging local communities to participate, of creating beautiful, fun and long-lasting asphalt art works and also of maintaining them.

The project promotes the feeling of community, belonging and empowerment. Local inhabitants are invited to participate both in planning the art piece and painting it in workshops; most importantly they can propose places to be included in the map of the game, so the game will include places which really are considered as meaningful by the local community and individuals. Collaboration will be done with the students of the local high-school and some of the inhabitant associations.