

Jyväskylän University's Main Library refurbishment wins Finlandia Prize for Architecture 2022

*Filmmaker **Klaus Härö** has chosen Jyväskylän University's Main Library refurbishment project as the winner of this year's Finlandia Prize for Architecture. Led by architect **Ari Sipinen**, the refurbishment gives the library a new lease of life while celebrating what is already there. The Finlandia Prize for Architecture is awarded by the Association of Finnish Architects (SAFA).*

A deep sense of respect

In his comments, Klaus Härö notes that the building seems to exude a deep sense of respect towards the historic library and its users and visitors.

"The designers have taken a meticulous and nuanced approach to understanding the purpose the building has served in the past and how it might continue to serve in the future. While they have preserved that which already exists, they have not fallen into an uncritical romanticisation of it just because it happens to match their own aesthetic preferences," he says.

"The respect here is leavened by a confidence to make changes that are meaningful, bold even. This child of its time, skilfully set within the wider built and urban environment that surrounds it, is revitalised by the refurbishment that, with consideration and restraint, allows the old to thrive in its new context."

Original spatial concept and colour scheme retained

Designed by architect **Arto Sipinen**, Jyväskylän University's Main Library was completed in 1974. The recent refurbishment was led by the architect's son, Ari Sipinen (Arkkitehtitoimisto Sipinen), while the spatial and interior design was carried out by **Merja Kiviranta** (BST Arkkitehdit).

"Under no circumstances should we be demolishing our 1970s building stock. With good design and thoughtful adaptation these buildings can be updated to meet 21st century needs," Ari Sipinen says.

"At nearly half a century of age, the building services originally installed in the library were hopelessly outdated, and the university's requirements had changed over time too. This meant that the refurbishment encompassed the entirety of the library, excluding the concrete frame, brick walls and some internal glass walls that have protected status," Sipinen explains.

The "Yellow Library's" original colour scheme was retained in the refurbishment. The interiors feature a palette of primary colours: yellow, black, white, blue and red. New study and social areas were created for both students and staff. Areas that had previously served as book repositories were amalgamated with the upper floors through the addition of new openings between the floors. The library's skylights were also replaced during the refurbishment.

Jyväskylän University's library was shortlisted for the Finlandia Prize for Architecture alongside the Serlachius Art Sauna and Jätkäsaari Comprehensive School.

Finlandia Prize for Architecture and Pre-Selection Jury line up

The Finlandia Prize for Architecture is awarded for the design or renovation design of an outstanding new building or building complex that has been completed within the past three years. The prize may be

awarded either to a Finnish or foreign architect, or to an architectural firm for a project designed for a location in Finland; or to a Finnish architect or architectural firm for a project designed for a location abroad.

The recipient of the Finlandia Prize for Architecture is chosen by a public figure who is a recognised expert in an area other than architecture. The winner is selected from a shortlist of projects chosen by the Pre-Selection Jury. The purpose of the prize is to promote the appreciation of high-quality architecture and to highlight the importance of architecture in generating cultural value and increasing well-being.

In 2022, the Pre-selection Jury comprised Professor **Panu Lehtovuori** (chair), architect **Sarlotta Narjus**, architect **Mona Schalin** and Professor **Rainer Mahlamäki**. The secretariat was provided by **Paula Huotelin**.

The Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA) is a non-profit professional organisation engaged in active efforts to promote architecture and high-quality living environments. Established in 1892, SAFA has approximately 3,100 members, all of whom are architects with a university degree. Additionally, SAFA has around 600 student members.