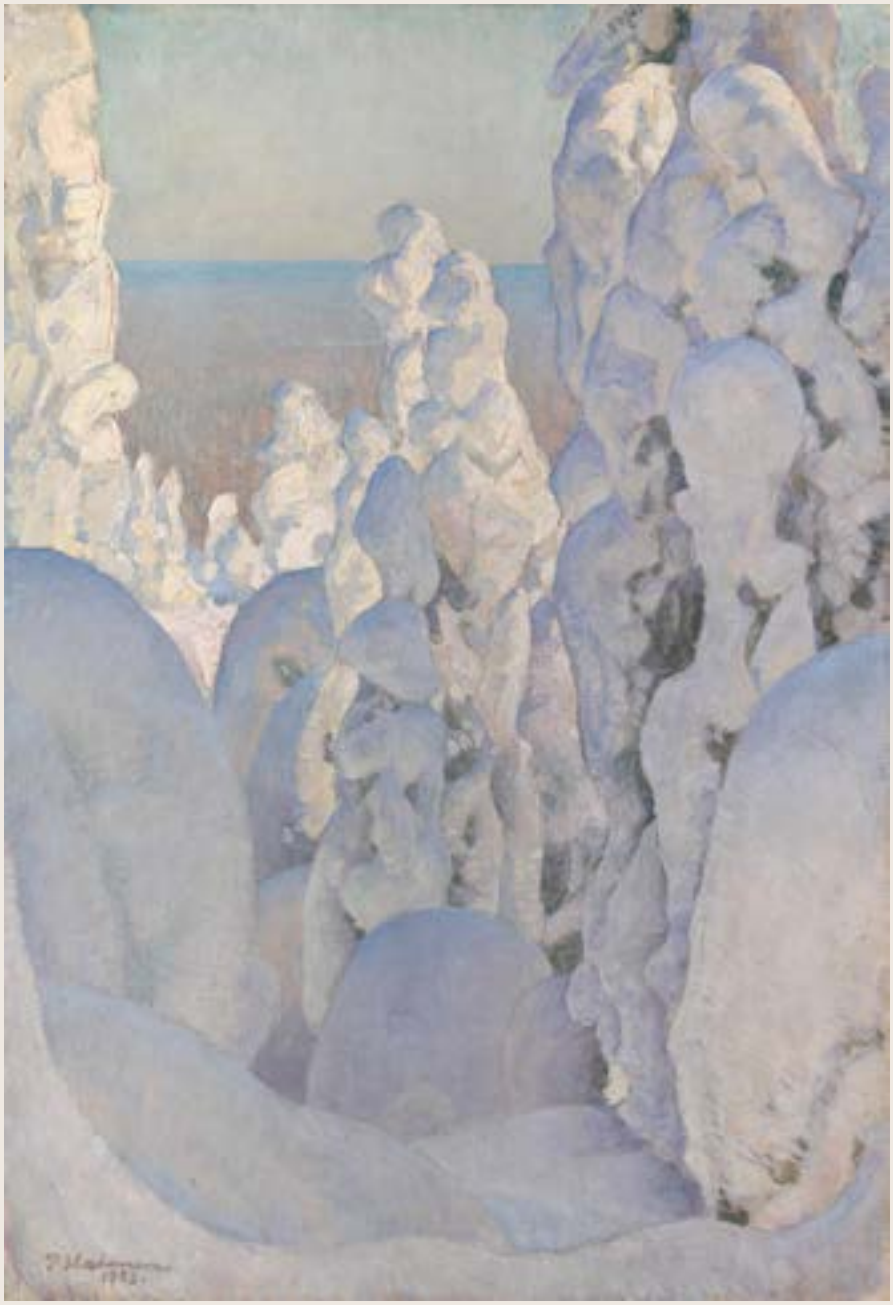
MUSEUM

PRESS RELEASE
19 August 2026



PEKKA HALONEN, *Winter Landscape, Kinahmi*, 1923,
Finnish National Gallery Collection, Ateneum Art Museum, Alfred Kordelin Foundation Deposition,
Photo Jenni Nurminen.

PEKKA HALONEN. THE CALL OF FINLAND
4 SEPTEMBER 2026 – 10 JANUARY 2027

ORDRUPGAARD

PRESS RELEASE
19 August 2026

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This September, **MUSEUM ORDRUPGAARD** turns its gaze far north with the exhibition ***Pekka Halonen. The Call of Finland.*** In **DENMARK**, this marks the first major retrospective of the Finnish painter ***Pekka Halonen (1865–1933)***, widely regarded as one of the most pivotal figures in Finnish art history. The eighty-five works on display span his entire career – from his breakthrough at the 1900 Paris World Exhibition, which contributed to defining Finland's national identity, to his mature works where nature and light verge on the abstract. An entire gallery is dedicated to the breathtaking snowscapes that earned Halonen the epithet of ***'Snow Painter'***. In this exhibition, visitors step into nature's cathedral to encounter some of the artist's most renowned paintings.

'Nature has always been my source of inspiration. For thirty years, I've lived in the same place with the forest right on my doorstep. It's like having the Louvre and the world's greatest treasures a mere stone's throw away. All I have to do is walk into the forest to discover the most wonderful motifs and that's all I need.'

- **Pekka Halonen**, 1932.

Born into modest circumstances in Lapinlahti, central Finland, Pekka Halonen was shaped from an early age by the wild, untamed nature that surrounded him. He spent his life capturing the quiet dignity of country life with a keen sensitivity to the rhythms and beauty of nature. Yet, to view him solely as a native painter, bound by his home environment, would be a simplification. Halonen was an artist with an international outlook, attuned to the new artistic currents of his time. His seminal years in Paris from 1890 to 1894 left a particularly lasting impression. During this period, he studied under Paul Gauguin (1848–1903), whose radical approach to painting proved decisive. Halonen drew upon this inspiration for the rest of his career, most notably in his depictions of the frozen Finnish landscape where flattened perspectives and decorative forms became the very foundation of his figurative language.

Paris in 1900 marked the moment when Finland first emerged as a culturally independent nation, and Halonen was among the artists who put the nation on the global map. His two monumental works for the Finnish Pavilion, *Avannolla (Washing on the Ice)* and *Ilveksenhiihtäjä (The Lynx Hunter)*, both from 1900, caused a sensation. One depicts a woman washing clothes by a hole in the ice near an expansive lakeshore; the other a lynx hunter on skis through a snow-covered landscape. In this large format, such everyday scenes acquire a monumental gravity; already here, a recurring theme began to emerge: the human experience of living and acting within the framework defined by nature.

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HALOSENNIEMI – LIFE BY THE LAKE
After completing his years of study in Helsinki and Paris, Halonen settled by Lake Tuusula, thirty kilometres north of the capital. He personally designed *Halosenniemi*, the home shared with his wife, Maija, and their growing family. Beside the lake, he also became a cornerstone of the Tuusula artist colony and part of the *Nuori Suomi (Young Finland) movement*, which sought to bolster Finnish identity through art.

Halonen often ventured out on foot or skis to paint in the open. He found his inspiration in the shimmering waters and dense forests of summer, as well as the snow-laden spruces of winter – motifs he reverted to time and time again.

SYMPHONIES IN WHITE
Evocative winter scenes are prominently featured in the exhibition. In numerous pictures, Halonen explored the infinite shades of snow, capturing everything from delicate, powdery layers to bold, sculptural shapes. His many snowscapes find a parallel in the exceptionally rich vocabulary for snow that exists in the Finnish language. These winter motifs remained a constant throughout his career, from his early years in the 1890s until his death in 1933, reflecting an evolution of inspiration that spanned naturalism, Japonism, and neo-impressionism. In his later works, the contours of the motifs gradually dissolve, shifting the focus towards a purely painterly approach.

PUBLICATION
The exhibition is accompanied by the first major Danish publication on Pekka Halonen – a lavishly illustrated volume featuring articles by leading experts in the field. Among the contributors are Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff, director, Ateneum Art Museum, Finland; Ingrid Fersing and Maikki Lavikkala, both holding an MA in art history; and Rikke Zinck Jensen, curator at Museum Ordrupgaard.

The publication is bilingual, featuring texts in both Danish and English.

THE EXHIBITION AT MUSEUM ORDRUPGAARD
The exhibition is organised by curators Rikke Zinck Jensen and Babette Honoré. The scenography is designed by Nanna Arnfred, and the lighting by Arthur van der Zaag.

The exhibition receives generous financial support from:
Augustinus Fonden / Aage og Johanne Louis-Hansens Fond

The exhibition has been initiated by Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, Paris Musées and Ateneum Art Museum, Finnish National Gallery, Helsinki, and organized in collaboration with Museum Ordrupgaard and Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede.