

The Annikki Poetry Festival will focus on the personal, featuring notable performers in an idyllic setting.

The Annikki Poetry Festival will explore the importance of personal life experiences as building blocks for artistic work. The festival will be held in the courtyard of the Annikki Wooden Quarter in Tampere, Finland on **8 June 2024** with the theme *Personal*. The keywords are autobiography, personal involvement and autofiction. Attention has also been paid to the diversity of the programme. Annikki gives voice to performers of different ages and various backgrounds.

Held now for the 17th time, the Annikki Poetry Festival will feature international performers, a fine selection of Finnish poets and prose writers, music, an open mic in the basement, children's programme and visual arts. Developed around the poetry festival, Annikki OFF will fill Tampere with dozens of cultural events on the three days before the festival.

Among the performers at the festival will be **Aulikki Oksanen & Kielo Kärkkäinen**. Kärkkäinen will perform classic songs with lyrics written by Oksanen before the latter's poetry performance. To honour the life's work of **Kaj Chydenius**, the set will consist solely of his compositions. A biography of Aulikki Oksanen will be published in autumn 2024, and its author **Helena Ruuska** will also speak at the festival.

Other Finnish performers at the Annikki Poetry Festival will include **Risto Ahti, Sirpa Kähkönen, Maija Kauhanen, Rosanna Fellman, Lyyti, Iida Rauma, Piki Rantanen, Hassan Maikal, Tommi Liimatta, Vilma Talvitie, Tuukka Terho & Heikki Nikula, Ritva Hokka and Ranja Omena**.

One of the international performers next summer is **Abdulla Pashew**, the most important Kurdish poet of our time. Until now, very few Finns have known that Pashew, one of the prominent figures in the Kurdish-speaking world, has been living in Finland since 1995. His appearance at the Annikki Poetry Festival will be his first performance for a Finnish audience. Another international performer is the Irish **Stephen James Smith**, who has been dubbed Dublin's poet laureate.

More than in the previous years, the programme will focus on poetry written to be performed, since it typically highlights personal experiences. For the first time, there will also be an open mic. Annikki Open Mic will run as an independent part of the programme during the festival.

The title artist of this year's poetry festival is **Verna Tervaharju**. Last summer, she painted a mural dedicated to poet **Kirsi Kunnas**, which is titled *Villiomenapuu* (*Wild Apple Tree*) and located near the venue. Next to this is a mural dedicated to poet **Mirkka Rekola**, with the title *Runopuu* (*Tree of Poetry*). Together, they form a combination of poetry and visual arts that is unique of its kind in Finland.

The festival area of the Annikki Poetry Festival will expand, and more diverse food services will be available. For the first time, three restaurants will be selling food in Osmonpuisto Park next to the Annikki Wooden Quarter. Delicious vegetarian and vegan food will be available throughout the festival day at affordable prices. The Annikki Restaurant Park will be open to everyone.

In 2003, the residents of the Annikki Wooden Quarter in Tampere, built over 100 years ago, founded a poetry event in their yard. Still organised by the residents, the Annikki Poetry Festival has developed into one of Finland's biggest poetry events and most original cultural festivals. The artistic director of the event is a poet who recently received the State Prize for Literature, **J.K. Ihäläinen**. The poetry festival is organised by volunteers every two years.

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