

The President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, and Evelin Ilves, who arrived in Finland for a state visit, gave the Finnish Head of State, Sauli Niinistö, and his wife, poetess Jenni Haukio, a piece of graphic art entitled "Taevalinnud" (Birds of Heavens), by Kaljo Põllu, a Finnish language anthology of Estonian poetry that was published in Helsinki in 1940, and a woollen shawl decorated with Estonian and Finnish embroideries.

"Taevalinnud" (Birds of Heavens) was completed by Kaljo Põllu in 1988 and was a turning point for Estonia. It belongs to the "Taevas ja maa" (Heaven and Earth) series (1987-1991), which conveyed the idea of visualising the image our ancestors had of the world.

The series of graphic pieces, which includes "Kodalased" (People at Home), "Kalivägi" (Kali People), "Eesti maastikud" (Estonian Landscapes) and "Maa ja taevas" (Heaven and Earth), helped cement Kaljo Põllu's reputation as a great artist in Estonia and in the Nordic world of art.

When his art was exhibited in the Finnish Institute in Paris in March 1995, the texts that introduced the exhibition stated: "It is characteristic of Kaljo Põllu to notice origins – our authenticity, our changes. /---/ When looking at the pieces of graphic art by Kaljo Põllu, we encounter an internally powerful vision and straightforwardness – starting from the way of depicting people, from the very idea, the works that rely upon a common understanding, a myth. He is sort of shaman: this is how his art is born."

A representative anthology of Estonian poetry, entitled "Eestin runotar", was published by WSOY in Finland in 1940, in times that were highly complicated and even tragic for both nations: in Finland, the Winter War had just ended in early spring and Estonia was deprived of its independence in summer.

The person who compiled and edited the anthology, a critic standing close to Aino Kallas, was Elsa Enäjärvi-Haavio, who in 1932 was the first woman who defended a doctor's degree in the speciality of folklore in Finland. The anthology has a very profound preface.

17 Estonian poets are represented in the anthology: Valmar Adams, Artur Adson, August Alle, Betti Alver, Ernst Enno, Villem Grünthal-Ridala, Anna Haava, Jaan Kärner, Lydia Koidula,

Juhan Liiv, Juhan Sütiste, Johannes Semper, Gustav Suits, Heiti Talvik, Marie Under, Johannes Vares-Barbarus and Henrik Visnapuu.

The poems were translated by Saima Harmaja, Yrjö Jylhä, Aino Kallas, Matti Kuusi, Otto Manninen, P. Mustapää, Aale Tynni, Elina Vaara and Lauri Viljanen.

Mrs. Evelin Ilves gave Jenni Haukio a woollen shawl decorated with Estonian and Finnish embroideries, which was inspired by the motives of South-Estonian hip aprons and plaids. Here and there, interludes from Finnish folk costumes can be encountered. The embroideries were completed by an artist-master of craft, Lembe Marie Sihvre, who is a member of the Estonian Folk Art and Craft Union.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone +372 631 6229