

Åland Islands Emigrant Institute considers it's high time
the Institute acquaints itself with the output its emigrated artists and their descendants have
created and still create in their adopted countries

towards this end

The Åland Islands Emigrant Institute
proudly presents
its
grand venture anno
2009

on display at *Åland Museum's* main hall

a most *unique* exhibit
for Åland, Scandinavia & USA:

ÅLAND → AMERICA

footprints:

WARNER SALLMAN ♦ PHIL FAGERHOLM ♦ HADDON SUNDBLOM

(1892-1968)

-peddling messages-

(1899-1976)

an exhibit displaying both original prints as well as original works
featured at Åland Museum

from

September 23 to 18 October

with Gala Opening

on September 22

2009

The Purpose of this Exhibit:

With this exhibit we wish to bring to public attention - what up to now has been totally unknown to us: The truly mind-boggling influence two of our three featured Åland descending artists have wielded on the grass-root culture on the North American Continent. The third, *Phil Fagerholm*, is still up and coming.

By choice our exhibit avoids to highlight the professional skills each of these three artists exhibit, as both *Warner Sallman*'s and *Haddon Sundblom*'s professional output has been amply described in a multitude of publications.

Instead we wish to direct the focus on the political, social and religious geography within which these individuals lived/live and worked/work, by focusing on the influence the contents of their public images wielded in shaping America's ideals, concerning home, family, dress, behaviour and social interaction.

As neither we here at the Åland Islands Emigrant Institute possessed the information needed, we sent out calls for help "from over there:"

to chart and assess the influence these Åland descendants wielded, still wield, and might yet come to wield on the North American grass-root culture.

Åland Islands Emigrant Institute proudly presents:
our exhibit's

American-Made PANEL of Eminent Scholars

(language: English)

representing the fields of Art History (Duke University), Sociology (University of California at Berkeley), Cultural Geography (Uppsala University), Theology (an eminent emeritus from the central office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America). Additions to be announced.

Our Exhibit's Featured Image Creators:

In addition to being Åland descendants – enticing everyone here on the Åland Islands – our exhibit's Image Creators are in equal measure descendants of Finland.

Additionally they are tied through a third common trait, that of
"peddling messages"

a departure-point all three have in common, which directed and directs their creative endeavours. How we – their viewing audience – perceive their messages is then another matter. We here in Åland hope our panel members will enlighten us, expand our comprehension, deepen our understanding concerning their input and influence both within the American art scene as well as the international one.

Haddon Sundblom

(1899–1976)

The Chicago based **Föglö descendant Haddon Sundblom**'s name is rather unknown today, although this advertising designer was so immensely successful during his lifetime. As an advertising designer he burned into his images views of both the American individual as well as American family, thus shaping/influencing the public's perception of: how one was supposed to look, behave, comport oneself, dress, live, furnish one's home, relate to one's surroundings, such as spouse, children, how to socialise with one's neighbours, with the boss, and engage oneself in politics. Sundblom's advertising images clearly depict how/when the US was drawn in to W.W. II., the military draft, army life, furloughs, discharges, and the welcome on return to home and/or family etc. Thus his images can but bring forth the many questions: were they initiated by Sundblom himself – with or without his studio's colleges' input? Was the propaganda initiated by Sundblom's clients? Or was it-all created upon some other command, such as the Federal Government's various departments?

We hope the eminent members of our exhibit panel will address all these questions, and the many other questions still buried within Sundblom's advertising images.

Warner Sallman

(1892-1968)

As Haddon Sundblom, so was his relative, **Warner Sallman a Föglö descendant from the Åland Islands**. Chicago based, he too worked initially as an advertisement designer engaged by a large men's clothing firm. Then abruptly his career stopped when a medical report confirmed he was confronted with certain death. However, unexpectedly, a most sudden miraculous recovery initiated his second career: his output of a steady stream of both beloved and revered Jesus-inspired images. While their creator remained quite unknown, on the grass-root level these images found their way into ever increasing numbers of North American Protestant, Mormon, Catholic and other Christian denomination homes and churches. And, during W. W. II Sallman's Christ inspired images found their way into the American military's billfolds and uniform breast pockets.

Thus with his and his family's ardent prayers answered, Sallman - now recovered - offered his services to his church. Mostly it seems, it was to bear witness to the miracle of his healing. Standing in front of an audience he made his public testimony while he simultaneously drew from memory onto a large sheet of paper one of the untold numbers of copies of his original, now famous original **Head of Christ**.

There is much published on the original images Sallman created. However less satisfactory is the attention given to the deeper layers in the many-fold dynamic between the miracle bestowed upon Sallman and his parish church. Although, throughout the ages, miracles both old and new have been used for all kinds of purposes. Thus, these and similar patterns of action can hardly be considered unique. Still these particular questions in this particular case keeps surfacing: Who actually gained what, and who benefited the most from Warner Sallman's accumulated art endeavours, and how was this decided and by whom? We hope the eminent members of our exhibit panel will address all these questions as well as those we haven't yet had the brains to pose.

Phil Fagerholm

(born: 1940)

The third of these Image Creators is mostly unknown here on the Åland Islands. He is the deeply religious Seattle-based **Geta-Jomala descendant Phil Fagerholm**, who was born on the San Juan Islands. Contrary to the above two he is not an advertising designer. Neither

must his image-creating-endeavour submit to/satisfy any criteria imposed by others. Contrary to the previous two his approach to his image-creating is so to speak rather backwards. His point of departure is, as always, a carefully selected deeply meaningful Bible verse. Still, all he creates is in one way or another, nothing but an exercise in advertisement. However, the images Fagerholm creates are most assuredly not used to advertise Coca-Cola, laundry powder, Beer, the American Image, or a religious awakening through any miraculous healing. However, what he in his own way wishes and does, is to publicly proclaim the Words of YAHVAH. Thus the core element in everything Fagerholm creates is the Bible quote he so carefully selects. The image itself is merely the visual means through which he directs the viewer's attention to the accompanying Bible quote: the all encompassing Words of Truth. His approach mimics that of the flowers in nature: Through their colourful brilliance they advertise where "*Nectar, the Life-Sustaining Ambrosia*" is found. Although such a concept or method is far from unique. Examples of this can be found in the picture freezes seen on temples of antiquity, as well as in the Bible stories either carved into stone on the exterior walls of medieval churches, or painted onto the interior walls on Nordic churches.

Publication

The Åland Islands Emigrant Institute's intent is to publish the results derived from this experience. We most eagerly invite the members of our exhibit panel to partake in this upcoming venture.



For information please contact the Åland Islands Emigrant Institute:
by e-mail: mailto:emi.inst-footprints@aland.net or by phone: +358-(0)18-13325 (at 12-4 p.m.)

Invitation

You are cordially invited to attend the opening of the Åland Islands Emigrant Institute's Exhibit:

<p style="text-align: center;">ÅLAND → AMERICA footprints: WARNER SALLMAN ♦ PHIL FAGERHOLM ♦ HADDON SUNDBLOM (1892-1968) -peddling messages- (1899-1976)</p>
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at 6 p.m. sharp on Tuesday, September 22 in 2009
featured in the *Special Exhibit Hall*, Åland Museum, Mariehamn, Åland Islands, Finland.

- The Honorable **Britt Lundberg**, Minister of Culture, Autonomous Åland Islands, will officially open the exhibit.
- **Annika Dahlblom**, Director of Åland Museum, will greet everyone Welcome to her museum.
- **Erik Lindholm**, Chairman of the Board, The Åland Islands Emigrant Institute, will introduce the exhibit's distinguished members of the panel.
- **Bertil Lindqvist**, Vice Chairman of the Board, The Åland Islands Emigrant Institute, will introduce distinguished guests.
- **Eva Meyer**, Executing Director, The Åland Islands Emigrant Institute, will offer a few words on "the birth of an idea" and the many questions that arose with the growth of the material, the doers' ignorance in finding answers, and thus the need for a panel of people in the know.

Refreshments will be served.

8.10 p.m. Departure for dinner at Kvarnbo Guesthouse. A short talk on the Åland Islands is featured at Dessert time. This event is open to the public (individual reservations must be made in advance).



Erik Lindholm, Chairman

Bertil Lindqvist, Vice Chairman

Eva Meyer, Director

Program for the Participants: Sept. 22-24, 2009

ÅLAND → AMERICA

footprints:

WARNER SALLMAN ♦ **PHIL FAGERHOLM** ♦ **HADDON SUNDBLOM**

(1892-1968) **-peddling messages-** (1899-1976)

Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2009 Arrival in Mariehamn

- 16.00 Guided tour of the Administrative House (the Parliament Building) of Autonomous Åland.
- 18.00 Åland Museum: Official exhibit opening.
- The Honorable **Britt Lundberg**, Minister of Culture, Autonomous Åland Islands, will officially open the exhibit.
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- Panel members are introduced as well as guests from abroad.
- 20.10 Departure by bus for Kvarnbo Guest House, Saltvik. Dinner.
Program: Visual presentation on the history of Åland emigration with special attention on the Sallman, Sundblom and Fagerholm homesteads.

Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2009

- 9.30-20/21 All day visit to the family home district, Föglö, of Haddon Sundblom and Warner Sallman.
- 9.30 Departure from Mariehamn
- 11.00 Arrival at Föglö: Visit in Sonboda Village, the Sundblom homestead
- 12.00/13.00 Lunch on Board member Ingemar Ekman's terrace
- 15.00 Visit to Föglö church and the Sallman homestead at Bråttö.
- 17.00 Presentation on the history of Åland emigration / the Åland society. Dinner at Seagram, Föglö.
- 20.00/21.00 Back in Mariehamn

Thursday, Sept. 24, 2009

9.00 **Departure by bus to Geta, Långö, to view the Fagerholm-Bergman grandmother home site. Visit to the church in Geta.**

Lunch and program at Enebo Café, Geta. On the way home stop at Stallhagen brewery, Finström.

14.00 Return to Mariehamn

14.00-16.00 Pause / private meeting of the Panel

16.00-17.30 Dinner

17.30 Return to Åland's Museum

17.30-20.00 **Public presentation of results of Panel discussions at Åland's Museum. Summing up and official closing of the event.**

Friday, Sept. 25, 2009

10.00 The Lågskär lighthouse, weather permitting, the place of birth of Haddon Sundblom's father Carl Wilhelm Sundblom / Churches on Åland / Eckerö Mail and Customs House / Excursion to places asked for by remaining visitors.

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