



FINLANDIA

SWEETS

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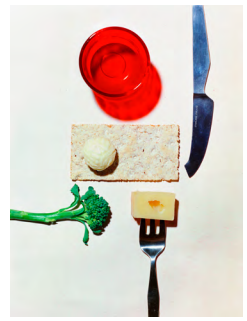
KARL FAZER INC., HELSINKI, FINLAND
Ingredients: sugar, glucose, apple pulp, agar-agar, citric acid,
and natural flavoring and coloring.

© TILMANN AB

KARL FAZER INC.
sugar, glucose,
artificial

AHO & SOLDAN | PHOTO
PHOTO AND FILM FOUNDATION | LONDON

Helsinki, Finland



Colours Colours Everywhere

This motto by Claire Aho comes alive at this year's Photo London in an exhibition organised by the AHO & SOLDAN Photo and Film Foundation. Claire Aho studied journalism and sociology in Helsinki before joining her father's and uncle's legendary film production company AHO & SOLDAN in the late 1940's. After a few years she founded her own studio and soon became a leading colour photography pioneer focusing on advertising and fashion, especially in the 1950's and 1960's. Her innovative images, full of her trademark wit, found their way to numerous magazines and campaigns.

On the occasion of her exhibition "STUDIO WORKS" at The Photographers' Gallery in London in 2013, CNN Online fittingly depicted her as A Woman Photographer in a "Mad Men" (TV series) world considering her many images from the world of advertising in the 1950's. Throughout the 1950's she was also employed by Warner Pathé News in New York as their correspondent in Finland, the only woman among 400 men, documenting everything from the Olympic Summer Games in 1952 to the Soviet Union returning the Porkkala peninsula to Finland in 1956.

[Link to : Interview with Claire Aho - Exhibition «Studio Works» at The Photographers' Gallery in London in 2013.](#)



The Rose Garden INSTALLATION

"A work in progress", Claire Aho took the photo of the Roses - magically "hovering in mid-air" in her studio in Helsinki in the early 1950's when she was in her mid 20's. The image was intended to be used as a cover for a chocolate box or a related commercial. The image gives a rare insight in Claire Aho's thought- and work process in creating the desired image, the desired end result. The various scales, colour codes and metal racks, not to mention the scribbles on the diapositive itself complete what the viewer sees - a work in progress. A revealing image, very seldom, if hardly ever seen in print. A 31-piece installation, fittingly named "The Rose Garden" based on the image will be shown at the exhibition as well.

The Claire Aho Award for Women Photographers

The Award was founded in 2021 celebrating and encouraging women photographers of any age as part of the **Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year Awards**. Open to interpretation, entries may show food in any setting.

Claire Aho was born into one of Finland's greatest cultural and artistic dynasties. Given her first camera at the age of 10, she was a trailblazer in many ways - as a woman working as a commercial photographer from the late 1940s at a time when almost no women were working in this field, in her use of colour photography and in her unique photographic blend of style, wit and vitality. Four additional of her somewhat surrealistic images at this year's exhibition fall into this category.

[Link to : The Claire Aho Award for Women Photographers](#)

Iconic "Coronation Sweets" immortalized in 1952 by Finnish Photographer **Claire Aho**



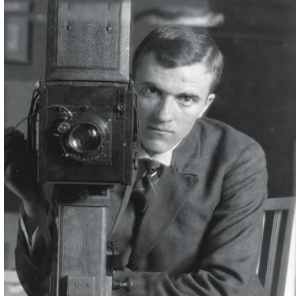
Finlandia Sweets - The Coronation Box

When curating the exhibition at Photo London 2023, the task in front of us which images to choose was, as always, challenging due to Claire Aho's prolific output. However, this year the choice for our leading image was very easy due to the timing of King Charles III's coronation just days before Photo London. The image practically shouted at us: "Choose Me!".

In 1952, Claire Aho documented the new "Finlandia Sweets" jelly box, created on the occasion of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II by the leading Finnish confectionary company Fazer. Since the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902, Fazer has gifted the Buckingham Palace with sweets, a tradition upheld even today, some 121 years later. As a commemoration, the AHO & SOLDAN Photo and Film Foundation presents collectible "Finlandia Sweets - The Coronation Box" - Limited Edition Estate Prints, available at the Photo London Fair's exhibition.



Heikki Aho (1895-1961)



Björn Soldan (1902-1953)



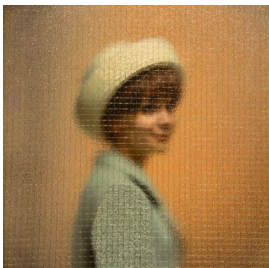
Claire Aho (1925-2015)

The Foundation presents three masters of photography, the pioneering Finnish photographers and filmmakers, Heikki Aho (1895-1961), Björn Soldan (1902-1953), Claire Aho (1925-2015). HEIKKI AHO and BJÖRN SOLDAN were among the leading photographers and documentary filmmakers of their time. Their family is without a doubt one of the most influential families in Finnish cultural history. Their father was the author and journalist Juhani Aho (1861-1921), married to artist Venny Soldan-Brofeldt (1863-1945) - the "artist couple" of their era. It was Venny who gave Heikki his first camera at the age of 12. In 1924 they established their legendary production company AHO & SOLDAN, producing well over 400 films and laying the foundations for the Finnish documentary tradition.

Heikki's daughter CLAIRE AHO, "The Grand Old Lady of Finnish Photography" - who received her first camera from her father at the age of 10 - joined Aho & Soldan in the late 1940's. Having opened her own commercial studio she became a pioneer of colour photography and was especially active in the 1950s and 1960s.

Claire Aho's photographs, full of wit, taken some 60-70 years ago, could as well have been taken today. They are a delightful display of Claire's "Selective Eye", her sense of composition, her humour, but above all her acute sense of colour.

Aho & Soldan and Claire Aho are represented in collections such as the Centre Pompidou, Paris, JP Morgan Chase Art Collection, New York, Liljevalchs Art Hall, Stockholm, The Presidential Castle, The Parliament Building, The Finnish National Gallery Ateneum, Saastamoinen Foundation, Nelimarkka Foundation, Miettinen Collection, Helsinki as well as in corporate and private collections in Finland and internationally.



DOCUMENTARY AND PHOTOGRAPHIC MODERNISTS

Heikki Aho and Björn Soldan founded the Aho & Soldan film company in autumn 1924. Documentary film-making and photography, which had been virtually unknown in Finland up until then, had arrived. Aho was an expert in post-production work and Soldan Finland's first professionally trained cameraman. The brothers and the films they produced during the 1930s made Aho & Soldan a name to be reckoned with and took Finnish documentary work into the international league. Alongside their classic documentaries, they produced nearly 400 black and white shorts.

Heikki Aho and Björn Soldan belonged to the avant-garde ABISS group, which wanted to turn Finland's studio-based photographic tradition on its head. Their thousands of photographs documented a wide range of subjects, ranging from the natural world to modern industry and Helsinki preparing for the summer Olympics 1952.

A NEW STYLE

The latest new technology played an important part in Aho & Soldan's work and their modernist approach. The movie camera equipped with a set of interchangeable lenses that Björn Soldan had brought back from Germany enabled them to shoot virtually any type of scene.

Aho & Soldan's documentary film work extended from impressionist depictions of Finland's forests, waterways, and land to the industry that made use of them. Suomen puu- ja paperiteollisuus (Finland's Timber and Paper Industry), Suomen metsät ja maatalous (Finland's Forests and Agriculture), and Suomen maatalous (Finnish Agriculture) were completed at the end of the decade. Raudanjalostusta Suomessa (Iron and Steel in Finland) completed a series of major industrial documentaries that marked Finland's emergence from the depression years of the 1930s and represented a Finnish variation on the Bauhaus ideal of combining applied science, art, and industry.

Excerpt of text by : Mr Ilkka Kippola, researcher at the Finnish National Audiovisual Institute, KAVI



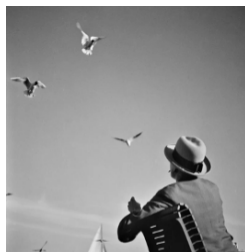


PHOTO EXHIBITIONS, FILM SCREENINGS, BOOKS and MAGAZINES

For more than a 100 years, Aho & Soldan's and Claire Aho's photographs have been exhibited numerous times in Finland and around the world, including at the World's Fair in New York 1939-40. In the 1930s, Aho & Soldan was the largest provider of documentary films to the Finnish Foreign Ministry. Their films are regularly screened at film festivals internationally such as the ICA - Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, Musée d'Orsay in Paris, the Lincoln Center and Bard University in New York as well as the DocPoint film Festival in Helsinki and at Paris Photo 2019.

Over 20 Photo Books have been published since 1931. The latest, "Finland in 1950's Colours" was published in 2019. Aho & Soldan's and Claire Aho's photographs have been published in numerous magazines, books and other publications since the 1920's. 2025 marks the 100 year anniversary of the founding of the Aho & Soldan Company and the birth of Claire Aho.

THE EXHIBITS SINCE 2010 INCLUDE:

- Art Genève, 2023
- Photo LA, 2020
- Photo London, 2020
- Paris Photo, Grand Palais, Paris, 2019
- Bröhan-Museum Berlin, 2019
- Photo London, Somerset House, London, 2019
- British Embassy Helsinki, Stockholm, 2019
- Vaasa Art Hall, Finland, 2018
- Parliament House, Helsinki, 2017-18
- Nordic Museum, Stockholm, from 2017
- Liljevalchs Art Hall, Stockholm, 2017
- United Nations, Nairobi, 2017
- United Nations, Geneva, 2017
- United Nations Headquarters, General Assembly Building, New York, 2017
- The Presidential Palace, Helsinki, from 2016
- Embassy of Finland, London, Beijing, Copenhagen, Vienna, 2011-18
- Helsinki Airport, Vantaa, 2015-16
- Academic Bookstore, Helsinki, 2015
- Lincoln Center, New York, 2015
- Mobilia Museum, Kangasala, 2015
- National Museum, Helsinki, 2013-14
- Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne Paris, 2013
- The Photographers' Gallery, London, 2013
- ICA -Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 2013
- The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, Helsinki, 2011-12
- National Gallery Ateneum, Helsinki, 2011
- Taidehalli (Kunsthalle), Helsinki, 2011
- Helsinki City Hall 's Virka Gallery, Helsinki, 2010, 2011
- Design Museum, Helsinki, 2010, 2012

Suomi
Finland
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Official touring exhibition
"Moments in the Building
of a Nation" 2017,
a celebration of Finland's
100th year as an
independent nation.

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