The Friends of the Nationalmuseum

Eva Qviberg, Chair
Since 1911, when the Friends of the Nationalmuseum was first founded, this society has been crucial to the Nationalmuseum and its collections. In the hundred years that have gone by since the start, the Friends have consistently given many generous donations, initiated endowments and foundations, taken risks by providing collateral for loans, and worked with dedication and commitment, individually and through the board.

A few examples of acquisitions made over the years are the so-called Bielke Bed, a ceremonial 17th-century bed that was donated to the Museum in 1914; The Love Lesson, a painting by Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), purchased with funding from the Friends in 1953; The Cook, a painting by Giuseppe Arcimboldo (c. 1527–1593), donated to the Museum in 1994. The painting Sleeper Awakened by a Young Woman With Fire by Nicolas Regnîer (1591–1667) was the Friends’ gift to the Nationalmuseum to mark the society’s 100th anniversary in 2011.

Fig. 1 Constantin Hansen (1804–1880), A Male Model Playing Flute, 1826–27. Oil on canvas, 118 x 94 cm. Gift of the Friends of the Nationalmuseum. Nationalmuseum, NM 7365.
In 2016, the Friends of the Nationalmuseum contributed to the acquisition of *A Male Model Playing Flute* by Constantin Hansen (1804–1880) (Fig. 1), portrait photographs and portraits marking the 70th birthday of the King, and one remarkable painting that will be presented in connection with the reopening of the refurbished Nationalmuseum building.

Prior to the 75th anniversary of the Friends of the Nationalmuseum in 1986, the board decided that the society will award scholarships to Nationalmuseum staff members annually. The largest of these is a research scholarship which currently amounts to SEK 100,000. The society also awards travel grants to several recipients each year.

The Friends of the Nationalmuseum organise a lively programme of events with the aim of encouraging and increasing interest in the Museum and its activities among our members and the general public (see §1 in our statutes, nationalmuseivanner.se). In 2016, members of the Friends have had the opportunity to attend guided tours of places or themes such as the Bonnierhuset, the Royal Palace, the Tre Kronor Museum, the Spanish Embassy, tile stoves, churches, the Härlemanska Malmgården, the Gustav III Pavilion in Hagaparken, architecture and art walks at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, the Royal College of Music, the Stockholm Observatory, and several exhibitions at the Nationalmuseum/Royal Academy of Fine Arts/Kulturhuset and other museums. Moreover, we have organised excursions to Confidencen, Drottningholm Palace, Sandemar Manor and Sturehof Manor.

This year’s study tours have been to Andalusia, to study Zorn, London on the theme of design, Paris to look at Carl Gustaf Tessin’s collection, which was shown at the Louvre, and Toulouse for a visit to the exhibition on Nordic fin de siècle. The trip to France was one of several journeys where members had the opportunity to accompany the Nationalmuseum’s collections on loan to other parts of the world while the museum premises in Stockholm are closed for refurbishment.

Bengt Julin was involved in the board of the Friends for many years. In 1995, he started the Bengt Julin Fund, which has contributed enormously to the Museum’s ability to buy applied art and design since the beginning. A biennial scholarship was also introduced for Young Craftspersons. In 2016, the jewellery artist Märta Mattsson received a scholarship of SEK 100,000 (Fig 2). During the year, the Fund was able to present the museum with several pieces, including the necklace *Frozen Flora* and the brooch *Frozen Fuchsia* by Märta Mattsson (b. 1982); the object *Päron* by Hans Hedberg (Fig 3); the object *Lipstick* by Åsa Jungnelius (b. 1975); and the figurines *Together at Last* and *Self Possession* by Alexander Tallén (b. 1988).

The newly established Design Fund has contributed funding last year for the acquisition of design objects from various collections, such as the radio *The Sled* by Walter Dorwin Teague (1883–1960), and 21 objects from Torbjörn Lenskog’s collection. Moreover, the Friends have helped fund the Art Bulletin and a soon-to-be-published book about the Nationalmuseum.

I began this text by emphasising that the Friends have been vital to the Nationalmuseum and its collection. In preparation for 2018, when the refurbished building reopens, a new chapter will begin for the Nationalmuseum and its Friends. Would you like to be a part of this phase and get to know the Nationalmuseum and contribute to the development of its collections and activities?

There are many benefits to being a member of the Friends of the Nationalmuseum, and you will also be invited to a preview of the empty, renovated building, and be one of the first to have the pleasure of visiting the reopened New Nationalmuseum and its many exhibitions. You can read more about membership and all its benefits on our website, nationalmuseivanner.se.

![Fig. 2 Märta Mattson (b. 1982) at the scholarship award ceremony.](image1)

![Fig. 3 Hans Hedberg (1917–2007), Sculpture “Pear”, 1970s–1980s. Faience, 46 x 32 cm. Donated 2016 by the Friends of Nationalmuseum, Bengt Julin Fund. Nationalmuseum, NMK 106/2016.](image2)