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# **Kilta and Teema**

## **Tableware by Kaj Franck**

by

**Brian Keaney**

Submitted to the faculty of Complementary Studies  
in partial candidacy for Degree of Bachelor  
of Design in Industrial Design at the National  
College of Art and Design, Dublin, Ireland  
1996

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in particular

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‘Enclosure’

The Finnish Embassy

finally

my father

This thesis is dedicated to my  
mother

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## Chapter 1

# What, Why, When

The chosen subject for this thesis is the 'Kilta' (1953-1975) and 'Teema' (1981- ) ranges of tableware, produced by Finland's foremost ceramics company Oy Arabia Ab.

I decided to choose this subject after studying at the University of Art and Design Helsinki as part of the Erasmus exchange programme. During this time I became enthralled by the classic simplicity of Finnish design, which is in complete contrast to British design which, unfortunately, it must be said, encompasses much Irish design. In Finland ornamentation is kept to a minimum, if at all. The beauty of an object evolves from its function, use, form and the quality of its materials.

In order to research this topic I returned to Finland for a brief period in 1995. I visited the Arabia factory and was brought on a tour of its facilities, including showrooms, museum, artist's studios and production lines. Subsequently I interviewed the Hackmann (who have owned Arabia since 1990) Product Manager, Hilikka Hiltunen. I also made extensive use of the library at the University of Art and Design in Helsinki (UIAH). Since then I have been in correspondence with Arabia and a number of designers, some of whom worked for Arabia, and other artists, such as Sonja Landweer, who was a guest artist at Arabia for six months during the Sixties, and now is living in Ireland. I have also used extensive library research at NCAD and have been in contact with a number of museums such as The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, which held a retrospective of Kaj Franck's work in 1992.

'Kilta' (pronounced Kill-Taa) (Fig. No. 1 a,b,c) is a range of tableware designed by the Finnish designer Kaj Franck (1911-1989). At the time of its launch in 1953, Kilta possessed a number of characteristics unlike that of other tableware ranges, which caused the Finnish Society of Arts and Crafts to proclaim it a "Finnish revolution in the kitchen." Though some of these characteristics were not entirely original to Kilta, this was the first range to combine all of these into the one design.

These characteristics were:

- Kilta's design allowed it to be used either as an everyday service or for more formal occasions, thus reducing the need for 2 tableware ranges in the one home.
- Each piece served a number of purposes e.g. a saucer had no indentation for the cup and so it could be used as a small side plate. This reduced the number of pieces required and allowed the range to be more flexible.
- Kilta was completely stackable. This saved considerable storage space which was of significance in the post war years as houses became smaller with less space for storage. Designed in what might be called a modernist aesthetic, Kilta used simple geometric shapes which lacked applied decoration and were sold in 5 plain colours.
- Kilta was the first range to be sold in individual pieces. This practice continues today, allowing people to gradually build up their collection over time, as their needs dictate. Also, if a piece was broken, it could be easily replaced.
- Kilta introduced the concept of oven-to-table ware. Up to this, separate cooking and serving dishes had been required when using ovenproof cooking vessels and ceramic tableware.

Kätilä (pronounced Kah-Tee) (Fig. No. 1 a,b,c) is a range of tableware designed by the Finnish designer Kai Frankk (1911-1987). At the time of its launch in 1952 Kätilä possessed a number of characteristics unlike most of other mid-century ranges which caused the Finnish Society of Arts and Crafts to proclaim it a Finnish national kitchen. Although some of these characteristics were not entirely original to Kätilä, this was the first range to combine all of these into the one design.

These characteristics were:

- Kätilä's design allowed it to be used either as an everyday service or for more formal occasions, thus reducing the need for 2 tableware ranges in the one home.
- Each piece served a number of purposes e.g. a saucer had no indentation for the cup and so it could be used as a small side plate. This reduced the number of pieces required and allowed the range to be more flexible.
- Kätilä was completely stackable. This saved considerable storage space which was of significance in the post war years as houses became smaller with less space for storage. Designed in what might be called a modernist aesthetic, Kätilä used simple geometric shapes which lacked applied decoration and were sold in 5 plain colours.
- Kätilä was the first range to be sold in individual pieces. This practical arrangement, allowing people to gradually build up their collection over time, as their needs changed. Also if a piece was broken, it could be easily replaced.
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*Kilta range, faience,  
produced in 1953—74.  
Arabia.*



**Fig. No. 1a**

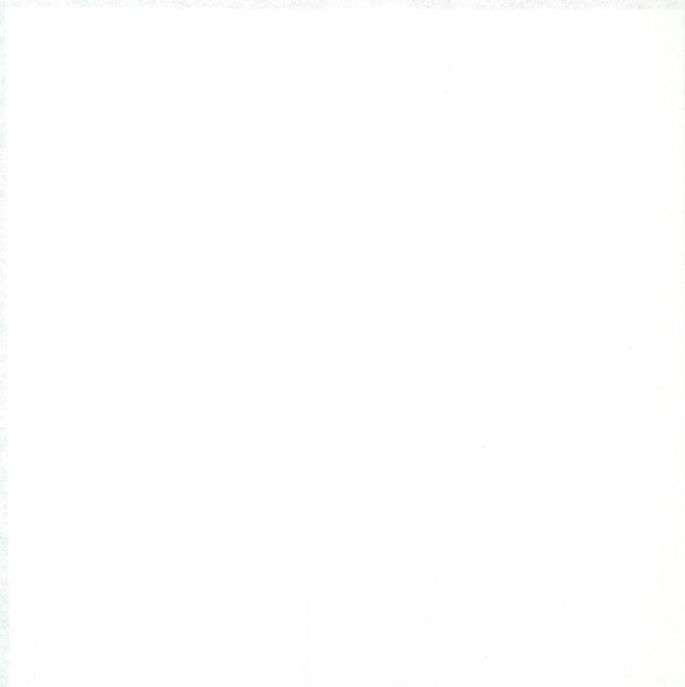
**Fig. No. 1b**



**Fig. No. 1 (a, b, c)  
Kilta**

**Fig. No. 1c**







- Kilta was the first range to use a once-fired process, pioneered at Arabia during the Thirties for sanitary wares. This process could only be used for certain articles in the range, namely the plates, or objects made by a moulding technique, while slip-cast products continued to be twice fired. This could have saved as much as 60% in costs of certain articles during manufacture. This was of considerable importance to Arabia during the post-war years.

Between 1953 and 1975, when the range was withdrawn, Kaj Franck estimated that about 25 million pieces were sold world wide, (Mount, 1992, p.5). The population of Finland during the same period was roughly 5 million, making Kilta quite a considerable success. Later in 1981, with some small redesign, Kilta was reintroduced as 'Teema' (pronounced Thae-Ma). Teema (Fig. No.2 a,b) continues to be sold today.

Victor Papanek (born 1925) in his book Design for the Real World (1972) claimed that "possibly only one profession is phonier [than Industrial Design] ..... advertising." (Black, 1983, p.187). Design for the Real World was written during the seventies, at a time when designers in Scandinavia felt defeated and pessimistic about the future, after their triumphs of the 50's and 60's.

During the 50's and 60's Scandinavia, and in particular Finland, had witnessed unparalleled success, dominating the design world, as illustrated by their success at the Milan Triennales during these years. During the post war years Scandinavia looked to designers to help reform industry following the unprecedented changes in society that had occurred due to the war. In Finland, design was not only used to rebuild the country but also as Tapio Wirkkala (1915-1985), one of Finland's most prominent designers after 1945, explains, "A small country cannot make itself felt in the world of power politics, its heroes are artists and athletes," (Hatch, Design, December 1967, p.40).

\* Kälta was the first range to use a once-fired process, pioneered at Acheson during the 1930s for sanitary ware. This process could only be used for certain articles in the range, namely the plates or objects made by a moulding technique, while slip-cast products continued to be twice fired. This could have saved as much as 60% in costs of certain articles during manufacture. This was of considerable importance to Acheson during the post-war years.

Between 1953 and 1975, when the range was withdrawn, Kap Frank estimated that about 15 million pieces were sold world wide (Molloy, 1992, p. 5). The population of Finland during the same period was roughly 2 million, though Kälta gave a considerable success. Later in 1981, with some small redesign, Kälta was reintroduced as 'Forma' (pronounced 'Fina-Ma'). Techna (Fig. 2a,b) continues to be sold today.

Victor Papanek (born 1915) in his book *Design for the Real World* (1971) claimed that "possibly only one profession is phronetic [from Industrial Design]... advertising" (Papanek, 1983, p. 187). *Design for the Real World* was written during the recession in a time when designers in Scandinavia felt dejected and pessimistic about the future, after their triumphs of the 50's and 60's.

During the 50's and 60's Scandinavia, and in particular Finland, had witnessed unparalleled success dominating the design world, as witnessed by their success at the Milan I Triennale during these years. During the post-war years Scandinavia looked to designers to help reform industry following the unprecedented changes in society that had occurred due to the war. In Finland design was not only used to rebuild the country, but also as Japio Wikkala (1915-1988), one of Finland's most prominent designers after 1945, explained, "A small country cannot make itself felt in the world of power politics, its heroes are artists and athletes" (Hietala, Design, December 1987,



Fig. No. 2 (a, b)  
Teema

Fig. No. 2a

Fig. No. 2b







Another of those heroes was Kaj Franck, who in time would become known as the “conscience of Finnish design” (Siltavuori, Form.Function.Finland, 3-1987, p.38), due to his continual search for design that was not only profitable to industry but placed the benefit of the consumer above all else. One of his designs which did this was Kilta. When launched in January 1953 at Wäertsiliä’s (Arabia’s owners from 1947-1990) new showrooms on Helsinki’s Esplanadi, “Kilta’s purpose”, said Franck, was “...to smash the concept of the integrated service,” ( ‘Kaj Franck did not want you to notice these objects’, Arabia, 1995). Designed and produced for the ‘ordinary man’, over the next five decades Kilta and Teema would become Finnish institutions, to such an extent that today they may be found in a student’s house, the private residence of the Finnish President at Mantyniemi (Plate No.3 a,b), and Museums around the world, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

The following chapters will show the context and influences which affected the design of Kilta, the difficulty involved in persuading Arabia’s management into launching the range, as well as a detailed account of the main pieces.

Another of those heroes was Kai Franko, who in time would become known as the "conscience of Finnish design" (Silta, 1987, p. 187). His to his continual search for design that was not only profitable to industry but placed the benefit of the consumer above all else. One of his designs which did this was Kikka. When launched in January 1953 at Wamsley's (Archie's owners from 1945-1950) new showroom on Helsinki's Esplanade, Kikka's purpose, said Franko, was "...to smash the concept of the integrated service." (Kai Franko did not want you to notice these objects, Archie, 1987). Designed and produced for the "ordinary man," over the next five decades Kikka and Teema would become Finnish institutions to such an extent that today they may be found in a student's house, the private residence of the Finnish President at Malmi (Plate No. 3, p. 1) and Museums around the world, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

The following chapters will show the context and influences which affected the design of Kikka, the difficulty involved in persuading Archie's management into launching the range, as well as a detailed account of the main pieces.





**Fig. No. 3a**

**Fig. No. 3 (a, b)**  
**Private Residence of**  
**the Finnish President**  
**at Mantyniemi**



**Fig. No. 3b**





# Background, Beauty, and Beliefs

The goal of William Morris (1834-1896), one of the main influences behind the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain during the second half of the 19th century, and to whom Kaj Franck referred as an influence, “was to challenge manufacturers to simplify design not only in order to raise standards and keep unit costs at an affordable level, but also to draw together the designer and craftsman” (Cumming, Kaplan, 1991, p.15). Morris, along with many others, failed to achieve this, unable to gain either the approval of manufacturers, or the broader public. Franck was one of the few to succeed with his design, ‘Kilta’, because unlike Morris, Franck did not view “production by machinery [as] altogether evil” (Morris) (Pevsner, 1936, p.25). Much of what was responsible for Kilta’s achievements lies not only in Franck’s perseverance, with his own beliefs and ideas, against management’s wishes, but also in the past lessons of other tableware ranges, in both Scandinavia and the U.S, some of which aimed at the same goal as Kilta, and from which Franck borrowed heavily for ideas.

The following chapter will outline his beliefs, and the influence of other tableware ranges on the design of Kilta. In order to fully understand the difficulty Franck had in convincing management at Arabia to accept his ideas, it is necessary, first of all, to take a brief look at the history of this factory.

Arabia had been established on November 25, 1873, by the Swedish ceramics company, Rörstrand, and got its name from the area in which it was established, a few Kilometres outside Helsinki. At the time, Finland was a Grand Duchy of Russia, and Rörstrand was hoping to tap the potential of the Russian market but to avoid heavy

# Background, Beauty, and Beliefs

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The following chapter will outline his beliefs, and the influence of other fabricators ranges on the design of Kaja. In order to fully understand the difficulty Frank had in convincing management at Arabin to accept his ideas, it is necessary first of all, to take a brief look at the history of this factory.

Arabin had been established on November 22, 1883 by the Swedish companies, Kallman and Kallman, and got its name from the area in which it was established, a town Kallman's outside Helsinki. At the time, Finland was a Grand Duchy of Russia, and Kallman was hoping to tap the potential of the Russian market but to avoid heavy



duties. "Activity was concentrated on producing household goods and ornamental objects" (Ceramics and Glass, 1973, p.32).

In 1886, the Swede, Thure Öberg (1871-1935) was taken on as Art Director. Up to this, Arabia had mostly copied Swedish styles but Öberg began to use Finnish subjects as hand decoration for plates. At the famous Paris Exhibition in 1900, where Finland managed to exert its independence from Russia and have a separate pavilion, Arabia was awarded a gold medal for Öberg's work.

Arabia's designs continued after the turn of the century to follow closely those of Scandinavia and Europe. In 1916, when Arabia was separated from Rörstrand, their more contemporary designs were the result of Greta-Lisa Jäderholm-Snellman (1894-1973) (Fig. No.4), and though Arabia was the largest ceramics factory in Finland at the time it was very much overshadowed artistically by A.W.Finch's 'Iris' workshops. It was not until the arrival of Kurt Ekholm (1907-1975) in 1932, that Arabia began to become an artistic force in Scandinavian ceramics.

In 1932, Kurt Ekholm was appointed as Artistic Advisor at Arabia. A year after being appointed, Ekholm established the Art Department, "enabling artists to work within the factory independently, using all the facilities that a major industrial company could offer" (Opie, 1989, p 55). The success of the Art Department was quickly illustrated when Toini Muona (1904 -1987) was awarded a Gold Medal at the first Milan Triennale in 1933, becoming one of Arabia's first 'star' artists. Over the next decade, other artists such as Friedl-Holzer Kjellberg (1905-1993), Birger Kaipiainen (1915-1988) and Rut Bryk (born 1916) joined the department. The Art Department established Arabia as the centre of Finnish and arguably Scandinavian 'art ceramics', and it became an "important calling card and source of pride." (Kaj Franck Muotoilija Formgivare Designer, 1992, p.41)

Even during the War, Arabia's artists managed to exhibit at the 1945 Finnish Industrial Arts Exhibition at the NK department store in Stockholm, reaping much praise. However, during the same year Åke Stavenow (1898-1971), editor-in-chief of Sweden's design magazine Form, criticised the unique position the artists had been given which





**Fig. No. 4**  
**ML Dinner Service (1935-1941)**  
**designed by Greta-Lisa Jäderholm-**  
**Snellman. Primavera, a band pattern**  
**was adopted for the service in 1937.**





isolated them from the design of all important utilitarian wares, (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.42). Ekholm defended the position of the artists in the first issue of Form in 1946, but six leading Swedish ceramists, including Wilhelm Kåge (1889-1960) rejected the independence of the Art Department and "appealed to Arabia to direct creative power to the modernisation of utilitarian wares" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.42) Arabia had largely ignored the design of utility wares concentrating artistic effort on more art pieces. This exclusiveness has been a constant feature of Finnish design throughout this century, unlike Swedish design, which has continually been more socially orientated.

It is likely that both Ekholm and Arabia were stung by the debate following the criticism by Åke Stavenow in Form magazine in 1945 and, with no intention of changing the Art Department, decided to employ Franck in 1945, for the job of setting up the Product Design Department, and later the enlarging of the department, when in 1946, Franck was joined by Goran Bäck (born 1923), Karinna Aho (1925-1990), and later Ulla Procopé (1921-1968) in 1948, the only professionally trained ceramist in the department.

When Franck joined Arabia in 1945, the Second World War had just finished. The war had a profound affect on industry all over the world. In Finland, as Franck describes,

"the war and the period of hardship that followed meant that we had to resort again to ways of making things relying on readily available materials and techniques i.e. the popular tradition. What one might call 'the ideology of scarcity began to form the basis of my own planning'" (Franck, Siltavuori, Form.Function.Finland, 1-1981, p.55)

After the war, Finland had large war reparations to pay and, as a result of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, large parts of the Karelia region (where Franck was from) were ceded to Russia. This left 500,00 homeless. Also, when the Germans were fleeing from Finland they destroyed much on their way. Consequently large numbers of houses were required quickly. "In order to master such a gigantic task technically and economically, the size of homes was reduced. As a consequence, the previous furniture and china that

related more than the design of all important utilitarian works (Eino Ruuska, *Designing*, 1942, p. 17). Ekholm, defended the position of the artist in the first issue of *Form* in 1940, but six leading Swedish designers, including Wilhelm Kage (1889-1960) rejected the independence of the Art Department and "appeared in Arabia in direct creative power in the modernisation of utilitarian works" (Eino Ruuska, *Designing*, 1942, p. 42). Arabia had largely ignored the design of utility works concentrating instead on more art pieces. This exclusiveness has been a constant feature of Finnish design throughout this century, unlike Swedish design, which has continually been more socially orientated.

It is likely that both Ekholm and Arabia were stung by the debate following the criticism by Ake Stenroos in *Form* magazine in 1945 and with an intention of changing the Art Department, decided to employ Frank in 1945, for the job of running up the Product Design Department, and later the enlarging of the department, when in 1946 Frank was joined by Gerttu Back (born 1913), Kariina Aho (1922-1992) and later this decade (1951-1968) in 1948, the only professionally trained woman in the department.

When Frank joined Arabia in 1945, the Second World War had just finished. The war had a profound effect on industry all over the world. In Finland as Frank described:

"the war and the period of hardship that followed meant that we had to resort again to ways of making things relying on readily available materials and techniques - i.e. the popular tradition. What one might call the ideology of scarcity began to form the basis of my own planning." (Frank, *Designing in Finland* (Helsinki: Finland, 1995), p. 27).

After the war Finland had large war reparations to pay and as a result of the treaty of Paris (1947) large parts of the Karelian region (before Frank was hired) were ceded to Russia. This left 200,000 homeless. Also when the Germans were fleeing from Finland they destroyed much on their way. "In order to master such a gigantic task technically and economically, the size of houses was reduced. As a consequence, the new ones functioned and often that



had followed the general pattern of living in Europe no longer fitted into the new homes" (Periäinen, 1990, p.20).

The war also had serious consequences on production at Arabia. During the war, Arabia began an "extensive building and renovation programme..", which "..was completed in 1947. The number of employees increased to a couple of thousand" (Kumela, Paatero, Rissanen, 1987, p.69). During this period as Arabia tried to hold on to foreign markets, the domestic market had to be content with seconds and thirds. In 1945, when Franck joined Arabia, management were hoping to change the direction of design chiefly for business reasons. "Arabia saw that the war had changed the style of living everywhere in the world. But the dinner services had remained the same." (Ceramics and Glass, 1973, p 39) Not only did Arabia need new designs but there was a need for the rationalisation of production, besides problems with high fuel costs and rising wages. In the years following the arrival of Franck there were a number of bitter strikes at the factory as the workers demanded better conditions. By 1948,

"Arabia found itself in dire financial difficulties. The answer came in the form of a take-over by the Wärtsilä Group in 1948. Then between 1948 and 1951 Arabia's household production was at its peak. Most of the production was for export, but soon prices fell as competition on the international market tightened, and cheap exports became unviable. New markets needed to be found at home and abroad, and it was soon realised that the only possibility was to concentrate on high quality modern design" (Kumela, Paatero, Rissanen, 1987, p.72).

During the early 50's the services being produced continued to be 33 or 62 piece, complemented by a large number of matching platters, dishes of all sorts, and matching tea and coffee services. The services would normally come in 7 or 8 price brackets, and then there were over 60 patterns being produced at this time (Kumela, Paatero, Rissanen, 1987, p.72). So altogether there was a vast array of articles available, and Arabia was in serious need of rationalisation and modernisation.

It was against this background that Franck was given the task to begin redesigning Arabia's tableware, of which one of the results would be Kilta.

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Prior to his employment at Arabia, Franck had never designed tableware, nor indeed worked in the ceramics industry, having been previously employed as a textile designer. As a result, "the only way to endure the challenge was to start building up a theory" (Franck in Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.44). Franck built up this theory in two ways: Firstly by finding a number of personal influences and inspirations; Secondly through the study of previous tableware ranges, produced by other companies in Finland, Scandinavia, Europe and the US which had begun to introduce new concepts into the design of tableware.

Franck had trained as a furniture draftsman in the Department of Interior Architecture at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, Helsinki between 1929 and 1932. During this time, he became heavily influenced by the huge movement towards functionalism which was prevalent in Sweden and Finland at this time. He admitted that the 1930 Stockholmsutställningen (Stockholm Exhibition of Industrial Art) was his main inspiration as a student. It was this exhibition that launched functionalism in the Applied Arts in Scandinavia. In 1978, when Franck wrote his 'Muotoilijan Tunnustuksia' (Confessions of a Designer) article in the magazine Ornamo, he claimed that the Stockholm Exhibition "burst upon us, we felt this experience so deeply it was as though tomorrow had risen on the wooded shores of Djurgårdsbrunnsviken" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.32), although Franck admits that at the time (when he was only 18) the influence of the Exhibition was more aesthetic, confessing humorously that, "if a fat man had jumped on the funkis [functionalist] writing desk I had drawn, it would have collapsed like an empty cardboard box" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.33).

Franck himself was contributing writings to magazines, while a designer at Arabia and a lecturer at the Institute of Industrial Arts in Helsinki. In an article entitled 'Kauneutta etsimässä' (Searching for beauty) written by Franck for Kaunis Koti (Beautiful House) in 1949, Franck mentions two services by the Hungarian born Eva Zeisel (born 1906). One of the services was 'Museum' (Fig. No.5) which was created under the auspices of the New York Museum of Modern Art and exhibited there in 1946.

"What's special in this American service", wrote Franck, "is the cream jug, which has a round belly and jolly spout just like a penguin. It is also without a handle so you can pick it up like a bottle.....Do not peasant clay



**Fig. No. 5**  
**Museum, Eva Zeisel, MoMA New York**







pots ... and these daring American experimental penguin creamers ... point the way to a healthy and correct form" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.48).

Franck expanded on this point when he wrote that "the basic farmhouse vessel ....that could be used for so many different purposes in the rustic home developed into a kind of ideal functional object design for me" (Siltavuori, Form.Function.Finland, 3-1987, p.44). These farmhouse vessels became one of Franck's more personal influences, though Franck was not the first in Finland to be influenced by its peasant culture. Franck was originally from Viipuri, (now named Vyborg, after being ceded to Russia after the Second World War) a small town in Eastern Karelia (Fig. No.6). As Finland came very late to industrialisation and urbanisation, while Franck would have been growing up during the 20's, Viipuri would have largely been a peasant culture. Indeed during the decades surrounding the turn of the century, Eastern Karelia had provided much of the influence for the National Romantic Movement in Finland, through which Finland had established a cultural identity, and expressed its separateness from its then ruler, Russia. This movement had played an important cultural role in the independence movement which led to Finland gaining its independence from Russia in 1917, of which it had been a Grand Duchy since 1809. It was then, in the 1950's with designs such as Kilta, that this identity truly began to manifest itself.

By linking into this peasant culture, and using functionalist thinking he hoped to rid his designs of timebound fashions: "The basic principle of functionalism, 'form follows function' is the same as for peasant objects, the form of which was shaped for centuries"(Periäinen, 1990, p.34). He also hoped to rid his designs of "the feeling of distance and cold rationality in the.....design...of the day". (Pallasmaa, Form.Function.Finland, 1-1982, p.13) Franck even once quoted Simone Weil (1909-1943): "As regards human needs nothing is more important than the past" ('Kaj Franck did not want you...', Arabia, 1994)

Franck's reinterpretation of the peasant farmhouse vessels, using a "purity of line", became one of the inherent qualities which distinguished "the furnishing art of Finland from that of many other countries" (Toikka-Karvonen, Design in Finland 1962, p.15). Franck used tradition, but as he explained "tradition has always meant continuity and change," ('Kaj Franck did not want you...', Arabia, 1994). Thus he was able to give his

Frank's... on the... when he... that the... research... that  
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Frank was... from... (now... after being... to...  
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Finland had... a... and... from its...  
... This... had played an... role in the  
independence... which led to Finland... from... in  
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Fig. No. 6  
Map of Finland





designs (and Finnish design) a fresh new look. Also by concentrating not on the object , but on “creative solution to the problem in hand” (‘Kaj Franck did not want you..., Arabia, 1994), he avoided “The inauthenticity of mass production” and “The endless gluttony of stylistic imitation” (Siltavuori, Form.Function.Finland, 2-1990, p.49). This also ensured that his objects had a “spirit of truth”, since for Franck, only when the objects were truthful to their function, material and need could they be beautiful, as beauty was a substance of truth, prompting him to claim “Isn’t the ultimate meaning of beautiful necessary, functional, justified, right?” (‘Kaj Franck did not want you..., Arabia, 1994) These theories about design often lead people to refer to Franck as the ‘Conscience of Finnish design’ (Siltavuori, Form.Function.Finland, 3-1987, p.38).

Franck was not the first in Finland to promote a more socially conscious design. He was of course influenced greatly by the work of the designer Alvar Aalto (1898-1976), whom he greatly admired. Aalto had in fact worked in the same area, creating such designs as the Savoy Vase (Fig. No.7), which continues to be sold today. Also during this period , theorists and critics such as the Finns Nils-Gustav Hahl and Ulf Hård af Segerstad (Objects and Us, 1957), the Norwegian Odd Brochmann (born 1909) (Ugly and Beautiful, 1953), and the Swede, Gregor Paulsson (The Use and Mark of Objects, 1956), were all promoting more socially conscious design through their writings.

The first major efforts to modernise tableware, which would ultimately influence the design of Kilta, were made during 1917 at the Hemutställningen (Home Exhibition) held at the Liljevalchs Gallery, Stockholm, organised by Svenska Slöjdöningen (the Swedish Society for Industrial Designers). At this exhibition, "manufacturers and designers presented objects intended to bring rationality and beauty into the homes of the ordinary Swedish citizen by means of simple, economical wares". (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.65) One of the exhibits was the ‘Liljeblå’ (Blue-Lily) tableware known as the ‘Arbetarservis’ (Worker’s Service) (Fig. No.8). Designed by Wilhelm

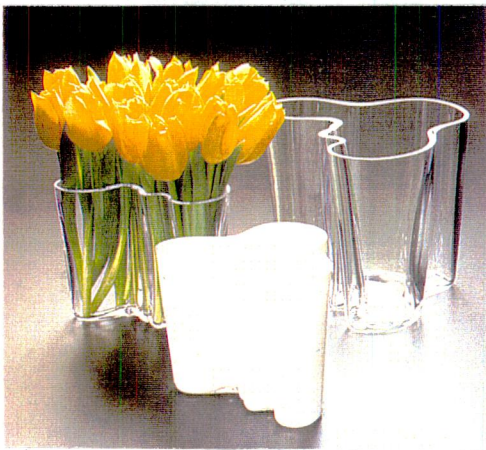


designs (and Finnish design) a fresh new look. Also by concentrating not on the object but on "creative solution to the problem in hand" (Kaj Franck did not want you, Alvaro 1974) he avoided "the mundanity of mass production" and "the endless geometry of sterile imitation" (Sillanpaa, *Form Function* [transl. 1966] p. 49). This also resulted from his objects had a "spirit of truth," since for Franck, only when the objects were truthful to their function, material and need, could they be beautiful as beauty was a substance of truth, prompting him to claim "that the ultimate measure of beauty is truth" (Sillanpaa, *Form Function* [transl. 1966] p. 49). (Kaj Franck did not want you, Alvaro 1974). These theories about design often lead people to refer to Franck as the "Conscience of Finnish design" (Sillanpaa, *Form Function* [transl. 1966] p. 49).

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The first major efforts to modernize interiors, which would ultimately influence the design of Kärr, were made during 1917 at the Hemmeställningen (Home Exhibition) held at the Lilla Teatern (Little Theatre, Stockholm), organized by Svenska Slöjdbesörjningen (the Swedish Society for Industrial Designers). At this exhibition, manufacturers and designers presented objects intended to bring rationality and beauty into the homes of the ordinary Swedish citizen by means of simple, economical ways" (Kaj Franck Designer 1992, p. 62). One of the exhibits was the "Fig. 1" (Fig. 1-1) (Borchmann 1977) known as the "Arbetsstycke" (Worker's Service) (Fig. No. 8). Designed by Wilhelm





**Fig. No. 7**

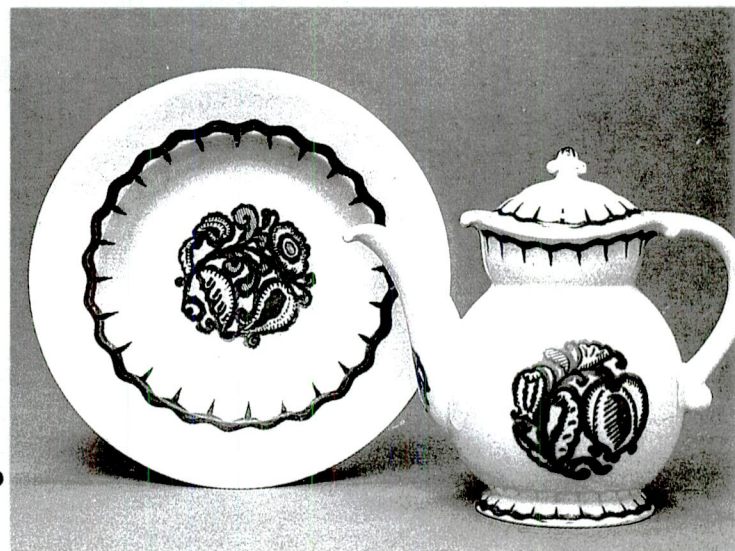
**Savoy Vase, Alvar Aalto, Iittala, Finland**



**Fig. No. 8a**

**Fig. No. 8 (a,b)**

**'Liljeblå' (1917-1949), Wilhelm Kåge,  
Gustavsberg, Sweden**



**Fig. No. 8b**







Kåge (1889-1960), Art Director at the Swedish company of Gustavsberg from 1917-1949, 'Liljebå' was less elaborate than the standard tableware range at the time, the decoration being a simple folk pattern, printed in blue, avoiding costly hand painting. Though hailed by the press, the public continued to prefer the more traditional sets and consequently 'Liljebå' was largely ignored by the public, though it remained in production until 1940.

Then in 1919 Vackrare Vardagsvara (More beautiful things for everyday use) was published by Gregor Paulsson, director of Svenska Slöjdföreningen from 1920 to 1923. This book crystallised ideas in design in Sweden at the time, (Opie, 1989, p.100). This, combined with functionalism and the "social democratic policy...formed a very special socio-aesthetic alloy. It could with good reason be called the Swedish variety of modernism" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.22).

At the 1930 Stockholmsutställningen (Stockholm Exhibition), under the direction of Gregor Paulsson and Gunnar Asplund, Wilhelm Kåge presented his oven proof 'Pyro' (Fig. No.9) service which hinted at the changes that were about to occur in eating habits. "Inexpensive, well designed,...in a heat resistant earthenware named 'Pyromassa'....The range was extremely successful and was made continuously for 25 years" (Opie, 1989, p.108). First shown with a brown painted decoration, later, a blue version, called 'Marina', was introduced.

The oven to table concept had been first introduced in 1917, in the US with the Pyrex Cookware range by Corning Glass Works (Fig. No.10). Good Housekeeping wrote at the time, "Bake in glass! You bake and serve in the same dish...You save...work, time, fuel (money), pantry space" (Hiesinger, Marcus, 1993, p.64).

Then, in 1933, Gustavsberg introduced the 'Praktika' (Fig. No.11 a,b) dinner service (1933- ), again designed by Kåge, which "marked a new direction for Scandinavian ceramic tablewares". (Hiesinger, Marcus, 1993, p123) Kåge had used a functionalist approach to the design, so their shapes were standard, round, and oval. There was no surface decoration, only a simple hand painted decoration. The service was designed to be stackable, and easy to clean. Also some of the pieces were given multiple uses





**Fig. No. 9**  
**'Pyro' (1930-1955), Wilhelm Kåge**  
**Gustavsberg, Sweden**



**Fig. No. 10**  
**Pyrex Cookware, Corning Glass Works**  
**U.S.A**



**Fig. No. 11a**



**Fig. No. 11b**

**Fig. No. 11 (a, b)**  
**'Praktika', (1933-1950), Wilhelm Kåge**  
**Gustavsberg, Sweden**







"such as dishes that also served as lids" (Hiesinger, Marcus, 1993, p123). Flexible, and durable, 'Praktika' was offered in open stock, so that the customers could create their own range to suit their own needs. But, like 'Arbetarservis', 'Praktika' was ignored by the broader public.

Indeed, in the same year,

"a slightly critical attitude to the pared ideals of functionalism can be read between the lines of an Arabia advertisement in Domus (4/1933) with the slogan 'ornamental pieces create the individual home'. It went on to say that the uniformity of modern tube furniture offers little opportunity for expressions of individual taste, 'Whatever your taste, Arabia's abundant assortment of ornaments will make your choice easy: graceful and beautiful vases, charming jewel boxes....all of them artistic pieces designed by our artists to add to the beauty and cosiness of your home in a wondrous way" (Ceramics and Glass, 1973, p.13).

Even one of Arabia's foremost artists at the time, Olga Osol (1905-1994) went so far as to say; "If gold rims and flower patterns on coffee cups bring joy to the dull day, people are fully entitled to that joy" (Ceramics and Glass, 1973, p.18).

In fact, at the same time as Miss Osol, made these remarks, Kurt Ekholm was attempting to modernise the utility wares at Arabia, with two ranges he designed in the years just before the Second World War. The first was his 'AH' tableware range (1936-39) (Fig. No.12 a,b), which used the radical idea of having nothing but a coloured glaze as decoration. "This was done in test runs, but production batches were toned with the addition of ear-of-corn decoration and stripes"(Helkama, Form.Function.Finland, 4-1993, p.32). It was Ekholm's 'Sinivalko' (Blueribbon) tableware range (1939-54) (Fig. No.13 a,b) that marked Arabia's first "authentic functionalist table service" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.40) The pieces were "individual, flexible items that could be used in combinations...and...were totally stackable" (Helkama, Form.Function.Finland, 4-1993, p.32). Close examination of the shapes of the plates and the bowls show they are extremely similar to those of the Kilta.

such as dishes that also served as lids" (Hickmager, *Materials*, 1975, p. 115). The table and  
unusual "Prestik" was offered in open stock, so that the customers could create their  
own range in suit their own needs. Thus, like "Asterisk", "Prestik" was ignored by  
the program maker.

Indeed, in the same year,  
a slightly different attitude to the point of view of functionalism can be seen  
between the lines of an Arabic advertisement in *Design* (1975) with the  
 slogan "functional pieces create the individual home". It went on to say  
that the universality of modern table furniture offers this opportunity for  
"regression to individual taste". "When a room is furnished with abundant  
assortment of furniture will make your choice easy, graceful and beautiful  
cases, changing level boxes, all of them kitchen pieces designed by our  
users to add to the beauty and comfort of your home in a wonderful way."  
(*Design* and *Class*, 1975, p. 13)

It was one of Arabia's foremost critics in the time, Olay Olay (1975-1976) wrote so far as  
to say: "It got into and lower patterns on coffee cups bring joy to the dull day, people  
and fully satisfied to that joy" (*Design* and *Class*, 1975, p. 18).

In fact, at the same time as Miss Olay, made those remarks, Kari Ekholm was  
attempting to moderate the utility values of Arabia with two ranges he designed in the  
years just before the Second World War. The first was his "741" tableware range (1936-  
1941) No. 12, which used the radical idea of having nothing but a coloured glass  
as decoration. "I was alone in that time, but production batches were joined with the  
addition of ear-of-iron decoration and stripes" (Ekholm, *Design* and *Class*, 1975, p. 11).  
No. 12 was Ekholm's "functional" tableware range (1936-1941) No. 12.  
No. 12 was Ekholm's first "functional" tableware range. "I had a range  
(*Design*, 1975, p. 10). The pieces were "unadorned, flexible items that could be used in  
combinations and were mostly stackable" (Ekholm, *Design* and *Class*, 1975, p. 11).  
p. 11. "Close examination of the shapes of the plates and the bowls show they are  
extremely similar to those of the Kitta.





Fig. No. 12a



Fig. No. 12b

Fig. No. 12 (a, b)  
'AH' (1936-1939), Kurt Ekholm,  
Arabia, Finland







**Fig. No. 13a**



**Fig. No. 13b**

**Fig. No. 13 (a, b)**  
**'Sinivalko' (1939-1954), Kurt Ekholm,**  
**Arabia, Finland**





Also during the 30's, two tableware ranges, 'Fiesta' and 'American Modern', were manufactured in the US which used concepts similar to some of those that would be used in the design of Kilta. These ranges were by the American designers Frederick Hurten Rhead (1880-1942) and Russell Wright (1904-1976).

Frederick Hurten Rhead designed the 'Fiesta' (Fig. No.14 a,b) table service, produced by the Homer Laughlin China Company, Ohio in 1935. The service was low in price and used a mix-and-match of five colours. "The colour must be the chief decorative note" (Hiesinger, Marcus, 1993, p140). This was the same with Kilta. It is interesting to note that the management felt "that.. a modernistic interpretation of a formal table service however attractive might be met with some reservation by the every day housewife" (Hiesinger, Marcus, 1993, p.140), which was the case in Scandinavia, and would be the case with Kilta. 'Fiesta' achieved sales of 10 million annually and continued to be manufactured until 1973.

Russell Wright designed 'American Modern' (Fig. No.15) for the Steubenville Pottery East Liverpool, Ohio, which remained in production from 1939 to 1959. The service was sold in interchangeable colours and as a starter set. It was encouraged to be bought by place settings and was sold at a low price. Later, the set could be completed from open stock. While in production, over 80 million pieces of 'American Modern' were sold.

It was through the promotion of low-price open stock purchase, mix and match colours and informality at the table that Rhead and Wright achieved success. These were three key elements in the future success of Kilta. As these ranges were multi-million sellers before and after the war, it is unlikely that Arabia's sales department were unaware of their existence, they may have mentioned them to Franck, although it is unlikely that they had any influence on the work of Ekholm, as they were only being introduced around the same time as his 'AH' range.



Also during the 30's two tableware ranges, 'Prestige' and 'American Modern', were manufactured in the US which used concepts similar to some of those that would be used in the design of Kithia. These ranges were by the American designers Frederick Hurton Rhoad (1880-1943) and Russell Wright (1904-1976).

Frederick Hurton Rhoad designed the 'Prestige' (Fig. No 14 a-b) table service, produced by the former Laughlin China Company, Ohio in 1933. The service was low in price and used a mix-and-match of five colours. "The colour must be the chief distinctive note" (Hessinger, Marcus, 1993, p140). This was the same with Kithia. It is interesting to note that the management felt "that a moderate interpretation of a formal table service however attractive might be met with some reservation by the 'every day housewife'" (Hessinger, Marcus, 1993, p140) which was the case in Scandinavia, and would be the case with Kithia. 'Prestige' achieved sales of 16 million annually and continued to be manufactured until 1973.

Russell Wright designed 'American Modern' (Fig. No 15) for the Scandinavian Pottery East Liverpool, Ohio, which remained in production from 1939 to 1959. The service was sold in interchangeable colours and as a starter set. It was encouraged to be brought to place settings and was sold at a low price. Later, the set could be completed from spare stock. While in production, over 80 million pieces of 'American Modern' were sold.

It was through the promotion of low-price open stock purchase, mix and match colours and informality at the table that Rhoad and Wright achieved success. These were three key elements in the future success of Kithia. As these ranges were multi-million sellers before and after the war, it is unlikely that Arabia's sales department were unaware of their existence, they may have mentioned them to Frank, although it is unlikely that they had any influence on the work of Ekholm, as they were only being introduced around the same time as his 'AH' range.

**Fig. No. 14a**



**Fig. No. 14b**



**Fig. No. 14 (a, b)**  
**'Fiesta' (1935-1933),**  
**Frederick Hurten Rhead,**  
**Homer Laughlin China**  
**Company, Ohio, USA**









**Fig. No. 15**  
**'American Modern' (1939-1959)**  
**Russel Wright, Steubenville**  
**Pottery, East Liverpool, Ohio, USA**



**Fig. No. 16**  
**Red Clay Pottery (1956-1957) by**  
**Marita Lybeck, Kera Oy, Finland**





Another extremely important influence on Kaj Franck was the work of Finnish ceramist Marita Lybeck (1906-1990) who had her own small ceramic production, Kera Oy, in Finland from 1939 to 1957. (Fig. No.16)

"Marita Lybeck sold individual mugs, plates, and dishes which could be added to as necessary. Each piece fulfilled a multitude of purposes and could be combined with any of the others. Different kinds of bowls could be stacked together and the same lid fitted a number of different sizes" (Enbom, Form.Function.Finland, 3-1984, p.52).

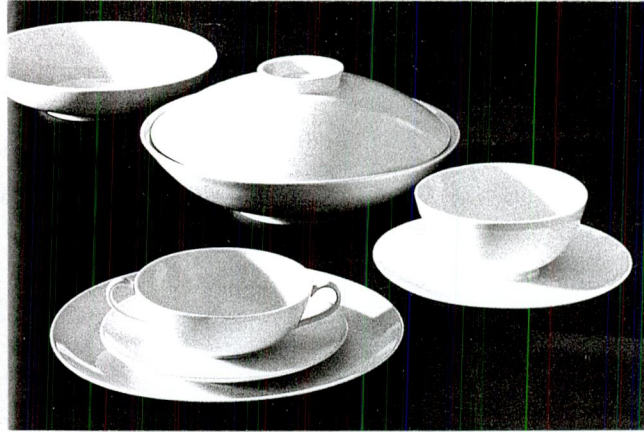
If you examine her saucer and cup from 1956-57, it is almost identical to Kilta. But whether Lybeck or Franck produced the design first, is unclear. Although an article in Form.Function.Finland in 1984 says, "It was later, when ideas similar to those which she had pioneered were taken up by industry that her handmade products began to lose their competitiveness on the market" (Enbom, Form.Function.Finland, 3-1984, p.52).

Harri Kalha interviewed Mrs Lybeck briefly before she passed away,

"She did feel that Franck had been inspired by (had copied basically) some of her ideas, but on the other hand such ideas were 'in the air' anyway, and it is rather risky to start proclaiming who was first" (Letter, Harri Kalha, 17 January 1995).

There also seems to be a strong influence in Franck's aesthetics from the Modernism of Central Europe. If you examine the 'Urbino' (1931), (Fig. No.17) range of tableware, by Trude Petri (1906-1968) for the Staatliche Porzellanmanufaktur, Berlin (Berlin State Porcelain Factory), you can see how similar the plates and other articles are, in their simplicity of line and shape, to those of Kilta. 'Urbino' "subscribed to Werkbund and Bauhaus principles of economy of means and design." (Hiesinger, Marcus, 1993, p.122) Indeed Franck was very influenced by the Bauhaus, employing their methods of teaching, in his own work as a lecturer (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.25). Urbino was both a critical and commercial success.





**Fig. No. 17**  
**'Urbino' (1931), Trude Petri,**  
**Staaliche Porzellanmanufaktur,**  
**Berlin, Germany**

While Franck's personal influences and beliefs were inspired by the peasant heritage and socialist thinking that was prevalent in Scandinavia and Finland at that time, many of Kilta's characteristics were influenced by previous tableware ranges from throughout the world.

So this was the context, the beliefs, and the ranges that helped Franck build up a theory, when he began working for Arabia in 1945.



# Smashing, Battling, and Succeeding

So when Franck joined Arabia in 1945, he brought with him more socially conscious and functionalist beliefs than had been prevalent in Arabia. In addition to this, as he began working on projects and “building up a theory” (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.44), he became largely influenced by peasant culture, which affected his designs not only through simplicity of line and shape, but also through the whole process, from initial concept through to production.

This chapter outlines those projects, the battle to introduce Kilta, gives a detailed description of the items in Kilta, and gives the reasons for Kilta’s success.

One of the first projects Franck did at Arabia, involved Franck redesigning a pastry bowl, the result of which was the ‘DA’ bowl series (in production 1947-68), (Fig. No.18). Franck, realising that little could be done to improve the basic shape, concentrated on its manufacture and basic function in food preparation to rework the design. Franck increased the ranges of its function by giving the bowl a plainer, less stylistic shape. The bowl came in three sizes, pastry, soup tureen and small multi-purpose serving bowls. “In this way the essential ideal of functionalism was achieved of a single object or base shape which offered a maximum number of possible uses” (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.46).

In the same year, 1945, Franck designed the ‘RA’ tableware range (Fig. No.19), with the help of the Population and Family Welfare Federation. Though some of the pieces only lasted for a year or so in production, one point is significant. The minutes to a

# Smashing, Battling, and Succeeding

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This chapter outlines those projects the battle to introduce Killa gave a detailed description of the items in Killa, and gives the reasons for Killa's success.

One of the first projects Frank did at Arabia involved Frank redesigning a pottery bowl, the result of which was the 'DA' bowl series (in production 1943-60) (fig. 10.10). Frank, realising that little could be done to improve the bowl's shape, concentrated on its manufacture and basic function as food preparation to rework the design. Frank increased the range of its function by giving the bowl a plain, less stylistic shape. The bowl came in three sizes, pasta, soup, tureen and small multi-purpose serving bowls. In this way the essential ideal of functionalism was achieved of a single object or base shape which offered a maximum number of possible uses. (Karl Frank Designer, 1991, p.46)

In the same year, 1942, Frank designed the 'BA' tableware range (fig. 10.11) with the help of the Population and Family Welfare Federation. Through some of the pieces only lasted for a year or so in production, one point is significant. The minutes to a





Fig. No. 18  
'DA' Bowl Series (1947-1968)

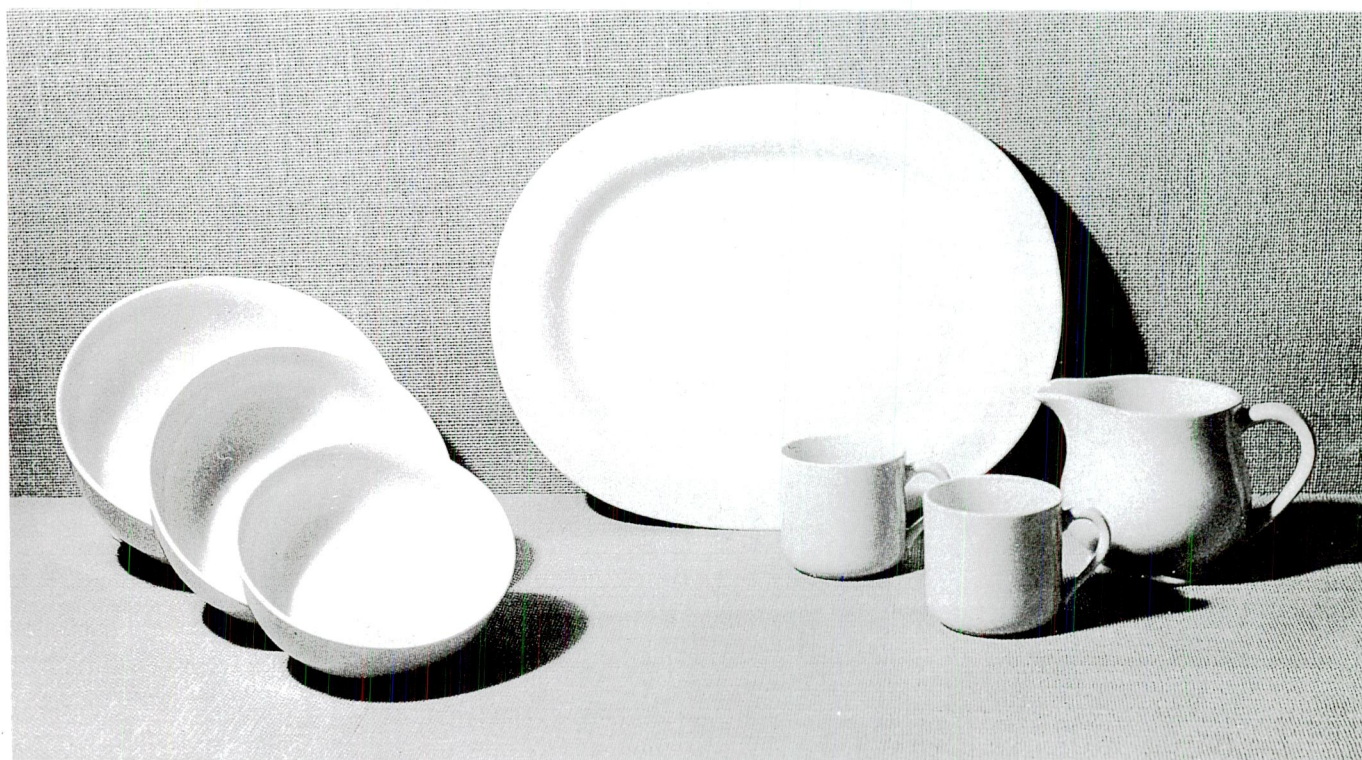


Fig. No. 19  
'RA' Tableware (1945)







Model Planning Meeting on 30-8-1946 refer to the fact “that the service is intended for ordinary people, to be sold individually throughout the country” (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.79). This would later become a major landmark of Kilta, implying that as far back as 1946, management had already given Franck the initial brief which would eventually lead to Kilta.

It is with the design of the ‘MK’ creamer in 1948 (in production 1949-62), (Fig. No.20), that Franck’s ideas can be seen to be beginning to crystallise. Unlike the ‘DA’ bowl series, the creamer was an innovation to suit changing needs in Finland. Designed in porcelain, it could be put into the bag to go to and from the dairy. Since refrigerators were a rare commodity in the Finnish home at the time, to stay cool it could be placed between the double windows common in Finnish homes. Its shape was also suitable for the table, fitting “perfectly with a wide range of coffee table settings”(Kumela, Pattero, Rissanen, 1987, p.76). When Kilta was introduced, it became available in glazed earthenware and in the same colours. To show how much it has suited changing needs, the ‘MK’ creamer is now marketed as a vinegar bottle.

In the same year Franck designed the ‘TM’ tableware range (in production 1953-63), (Fig. No.21). It seems likely that this is the range which would also evolve into Kilta. This range was designed between 1948 and 1952, the same years as Kilta, the cup and saucer are very similar to those of Kilta, and it too had difficulty in being accepted by Arabia’s management.

“A smaller than ordinary cup but larger than a mocha cup. The steep rimmed saucer made a hollow for the cup unnecessary. These non standard features meant that the shape was not welcomed at first by the factory’s marketing department. Eventually it was accepted since it provided a surface that would be easily decorated, although Franck’s intention was....’an intimate tête-à-tête between the black coffee in a plain cup and you” (Opie, 1989, p.63).

The major difference between itself and Kilta was that it was made from porcelain as against earthenware.

Then in 1949, Franck wrote his article ‘Kauneutta etsimässä’ (Searching for Beauty) for Kaunis Koti. It seems to be at this stage that Franck had crystallised his ideas. In the article Franck discusses many of his own beliefs. He called on people to “smash the



**Fig. No. 20**  
**'MK' Creamer (1949-1962)**



**Fig. No. 21**  
**'TM' Tableware (1953-1963)**





services” as he claimed they were out of date and urged people to think about “the original functions of household articles’ which now required quite different materials and shapes” (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.47) During this article Franck hints at the colours which Kilta might be: “earthenware is white ’but it could acquire a fresh blending of colour when glazed, cobalt blue, copper green, or uranium yellow’” (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.48). He argues about the need for a “new form” that takes into account the changing needs of the user. Since the ending of the war, society had changed much. No longer were the old services appropriate, houses were smaller with less storage space. People now had to work to rebuild the country so there was less time to be cleaning and drying. Many having lost their houses and much of their belongings needed to buy wares that were cheap and easily available. For this the old services were inappropriate.

It is likely that Franck used the article to gain support in his battle against the management who were expecting Franck to follow the trends being set in the US and Sweden, with such ranges as ‘Mjuka Formernas’ (Soft Forms) (in production 1945-1969, Fig. No.22) which had been designed by Wilhelm Kåge for Gustavsberg, and rejected the functionalist aesthetic of ‘Praktika’. Also designs, such as the ‘LB’ range (designed 1945, Fig. No.23) by Stig Lindberg (1916-1982) for Gustavsberg, and The ‘Tebe’ range (designed 1946, Fig. No. 24) by Arthur Percy (1886-1976) for Karlskrona, Sweden, which promoted a softer shape, were what Arabia were probably expecting from Franck. Franck admitted later “I also made such things but if I hadn’t made Kilta against the wishes of the management, then I would have remained a nobody to the end of my days, who just did what he was told to do” (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.51). The “such things”, that Franck was referring to, were the ‘RN’ coffee and tea services (in production 1949-61, Fig. No.25). These services, with their soft flowing lines, contrast sharply with the geometric Kilta, implying that the argument with management was not purely an aesthetic question, but rather something else.

The Norwegian designer Knut Yran has said: “Design is a technical profession with a marketing function....and...a designer must realise the concern’s intentions before he realises his own” (Dormer, 1993, pp.21-22). Franck, on the other hand, felt it was the designer’s responsibility “to adapt the production process, materials, and ultimately the objects to best serve the needs of the consumer” (Mount, ‘Kaj Franck Designer April



retreat," as he claimed they were out of date and urged people to think about "the original functions of household articles," which now required quite different materials and shapes" (*Karl Frank Designer*, 1992, p.47). During this article Frank built in the colours which Kitta might be "entirely new is what" but it could acquire a fresh blending of colour when placed, cubit blue, copper green, or burning yellow" (*Karl Frank Designer*, 1992, p.48). He argued about the need for a "new form" that takes into account the changing needs of the user. Since the ending of the war, society had changed much. No longer were the old services appropriate, houses were smaller with less storage space. People now had to work in schools the country so there was less time to be cleaning and drying. Many houses lost their houses and much of their belongings needed to be replaced that were cheap and easily available. For this the old services were inappropriate.

It is likely that Frank used the article to gain support in his battle against the management who were expecting Frank to follow the trends being set in the US and Sweden with such ranges as 'Majors Formations' (1941-1942) for production 1945-1946, fig. No.21 which had been designed by Wilhelm Kage for Gustavberg and replaced the functionalist aesthetic of 'Praktika'. Also designs such as the 'TB' range (designed 1945, fig. No.22) by Sig Lindberg (1916-1982) for Gustavberg and the 'Tide' range (designed 1946, fig. No.24) by Arthur Percy (1886-1976) for Kärnkronan. Sweden, which promoted a softer shape, were what Arabia were probably exporting from Frank. Frank admitted later "I also made such things but if I hadn't made Kitta against the wishes of the management, then I would have remained a nobody to the end of my days, who just did what he was told to do" (*Karl Frank Designer*, 1992, p.51). The "such things," that Frank was referring to were the 'RN' coffee and tea services (in production 1949-51, fig. No.25). These services, with their soft flowing lines, contrast sharply with the geometric Kitta, implying that the argument with management was not purely an aesthetic question, but rather something else.

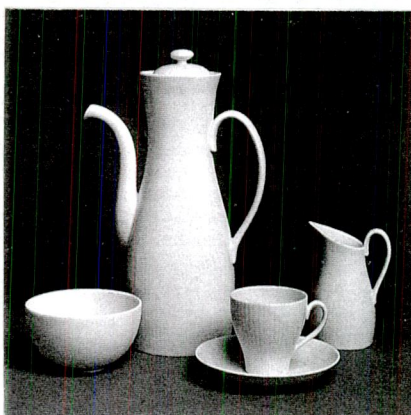
The foreign designer Kitta Yon has said: "Design is a technical profession with a marketing function, and a designer must realise the consumer's intentions before he makes his own" (Yonnet, 1993, pp.21-22). Frank, on the other hand, felt it was the designer's responsibility "to adapt the production process, materials, and ultimately the objects to best serve the needs of the consumer" (*Karl Frank Designer April*).



**Fig. No. 22**  
**'Soft Form' (1945-1969) Wilhelm Kage,**  
**Gustavsberg, Sweden**



**Fig. No. 24**  
**'Tebe' (1952), Arthur Percy,**  
**Karlskrona, Sweden**



**Fig. No. 23**  
**'LB' tableware (1956) Stig Lindberg,**  
**Gustavsberg, Sweden**









**Fig. No. 25a**



**Fig. No. 25b**

**Fig. No. 25 (a,b)**  
**'RN' Coffee Service (1949-1961)**





16-Oct 12 1992', MoMA, 1992) This is what was at the heart of the struggle between Franck and Arabia's management. Franck believed that the time had come for a complete reassessment of the design of tableware, and that the public would embrace this. Arabia's management on the other hand, who throughout the previous decades had openly rejected functionalism, and were probably fearful that a design such as the one being proposed by Franck would follow the same fate as the 'Workers Service' and 'Praktika', proving unpopular with the public, were purely interested in redesigning for stylistic marketing reasons. Management's view of why these ranges had failed to gain approval with the public might be partially explained by a quote from Peter Dormer (born 1948): "Since we only like what we already know - if we are unfamiliar with something we are not able to say with certainty that we like it" (Dormer, 1987, p.16). Being too 'new' in the 20's and 30's, these ranges were rejected by the public before their considerable advantages were able to be shown. But when Franck's struggle was taking place it was nearly 20 years since 'Praktika' had been launched, and in that time the world had witnessed the horror of the Holocaust and the Second World War. Franck obviously felt that the time was now right for this type of service. A possible explanation about why the time was right could be taken from an essay by Wilhelm Worringer, 'Abstrakten and Einfühlung' from 1914:

"While a naturalistic art, is the result of a happy pantheistic relation between man and the outside world, the tendency to abstraction, on the contrary occurs in races whose attitude to the outside world is the exact contrary. This feeling of separation naturally takes different forms at different levels of culture" (Read, 1964, p.218).

Had this taken form at the level of household objects in the aftermath of the war? Was man so disgusted with the world around him that the general aesthetic of the public went from one of organic and 'naturalistic', to a more geometric 'abstraction'? Did Franck have his finger on the pulse and realise this ahead of the marketing managers? Perhaps this is reading too much into a quote from 1914; maybe the success of Kilta owed more to its pure practicality and an effective marketing campaign, considering that many of Arabia's ranges, designed after Kilta, reverted once again to a more 'naturalistic' style. Though Wilhelm Worringer's argument does seem to hold some measure of truth; While Kilta remained Arabia's most popular model during the second half of the Fifties, and early Sixties, as Finland and the rest of Europe recovered from the War and a more materialistic society developed, Kilta's popularity waned in



favour of these more 'naturalistic' ranges, like 'Paratiisi' (in production 1970-74, 1988-) (Fig. No.26), designed by Birger Kaipainen.

In 1948, while Franck's struggle with management, was taking place and in particular his struggle with Holger Carring, the Marketing Manager of Arabia (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.264), Kurt Ekholm said "The more we rationalise the production methods and standardise mass production, the freer the scope we must give to artistic expression" (Ceramics and Glass, 1973, p.47). Whether he was referring in any way to the struggle that was occurring between Franck and the management I am not certain, but it is certain that he would have been aware of this struggle and may also have meant this as a reference to designers, so putting his support behind Franck. It should be remembered that Ekholm had attempted unsuccessfully to convince management in the 30's to accept some of the ideas Franck was now proposing, one of the main arguing points being the decoration of the ranges. Franck was proposing to do as Ekholm had proposed in the Thirties and use nothing but a coloured glaze, which management were rejecting, demanding instead the use of applied pattern. This was largely due to the fact that traditionally the patterns were designed by the Industrial Art Department, which was a separate department from the Product Design Department, whose purpose, management believed, was purely to create the 'articles' to which the ornament would be applied. Applied decoration was also viewed as an essential part of marketing.

Franck, it would in fact seem, only finally got the go ahead to design his "curious" range at the Model Planning Meeting on the 3 September 1951. The minutes of that meeting read "GAS[Gunnar Ståhle] gave Franck the task of creating an entirely new service in which the primary consideration was KF's own idea of what would be the most favourable model from the factory's point of view" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.91).



Fig. No. 26

'Paratiisi' (1970-), Birger Kaipainen,  
Arabia, Finland







This concession by management was only after Wilhelm Wahlforss, (1891-1969) the highly respected General Manager of the Wärtsilä Concern, had ordered Arabia's hesitant managers to "At least give him a chance'..... His knowledge of the designer's dilemma came from his wife, the go-between being the energetic advertising and PR manager of Arabia and Nuutajärvi, H.O.Gummerus" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.54).

But this surrender by the management, who were so afraid that Franck's service would not be a success, was only after Franck himself had compromised. "The need for another model was also discussed, the shape of which should specifically accord with the tastes of the salesmen" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.91). The price for designing Kilta was the 'B' range (Fig. No.27), which was designed by Franck at the same time as Kilta, and remained in production from 1953-1972. ( Kilta is also called the 'BA' range) It is interesting to note that the first issue of Arabia and Nuutajärvi's new magazine, Keramiikka ja lasi (Ceramics and Glass), launched in 1953, for the purposes of promoting their products among the sales staff, was dedicated to the 'B' range with no mention of Kilta except that it was still undergoing "Technical Development" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.54). It should also be noticed that while Kilta was marketed as a whole range, the 'B' range was marketed similar to older ranges, with the tea and coffee service being marketed as a separate service, from the main dinnerware. (Fig. No.28, and Fig. No.29)





**Fig. No. 27**  
**'B' tableware (1953-1972)**

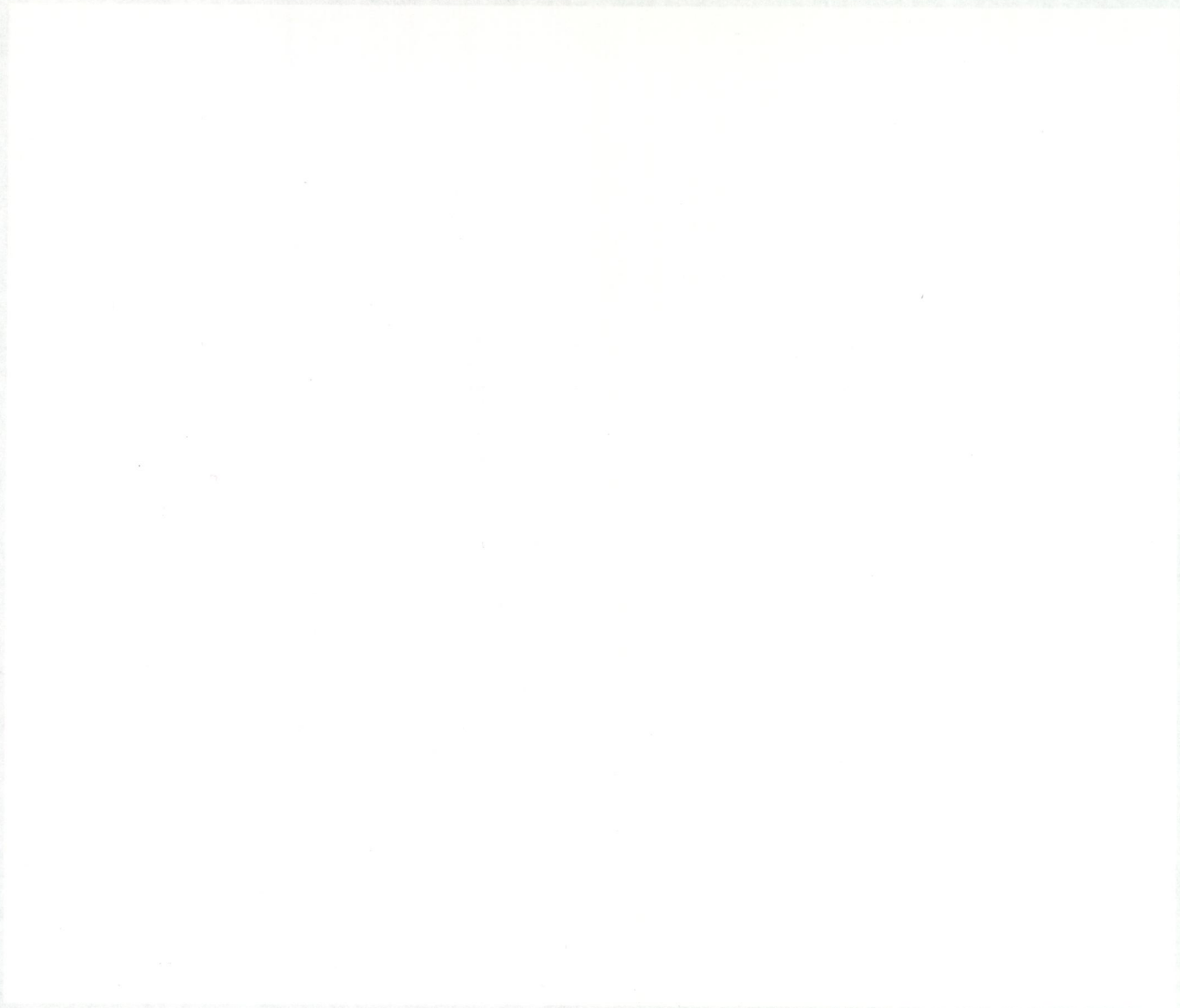




Fig. No. 28

'B' tableware as shown in the Arabia Catalogue 1967

ARABIA

RUOKA-ASTIASTO MATSERVIS DINNER SET

MALLI MODELL SHAPE: B

KOVA FAJANSSI HÄRD FAJANS HARD FAIENCE



1.



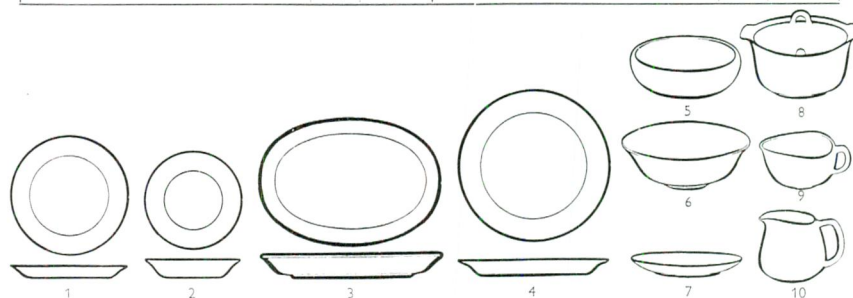
2.



3.

KORISTEET DEKORER DECORS: 1. PELLERVO 2. PLATINA 3. ARKI kultaraita guldrand gold line

MALLI MODELL SHAPE	Koko Storlek Size Ø	Tilav. Rymd Contents	MALLI MODELL SHAPE	Koko Storlek Size Ø	Tilav. Rymd Contents
	cm	Ltr		cm	Ltr
LAUTANEN TALLRIK PLATE					
1. B matala flat flat	26,0		6. VIHANNESMALJA SALLADSKÅL SALAD BOWL	25,5	2,00
B » » »	23,5		R		
B » » »	19,7		7. VIHANNESASTIA SALADJÄR VEGETABLE DISH		
B » » »	17,0		B	23,0	
2. B syvä djup deep	19,7		8. LIEMIMALJA TERRIN SOUP TUREEN		
PAISTIVATI STEKFAT PLATTER			B 1		
3. R soikea ovals oval	27,5		9. KASTIKEASTIA SÄSSKÅL SAUCE BOAT		0,60
R » » »	36,0		B 1		
R » » »	39,0		10. KAADIN TILLBRINGARE PITCHER		1,10
4. B pyöreä runt round	30,0		B 1		
5. KULHO KAROTT BAKER					
B 1	22,0	1,46			



4

1

2

3

4

7

10





Fig. No. 29  
 'B' tableware as shown in the Arabia Catalogue 1967

ARABIA

KAHVIASIASTOT KAFFESERVISER COFFEE SETS



MALLI MODELL SHAPE: B  
 KOVA FAJANSSI HÄRD FAJANS HARD FAIENCE  
 KORISTEET DEKORER DECORS:  
 PELLERVO

PLATINA

MALLI MODELL SHAPE				Koko Storlek Size Ø	Tilav. Rymd Contents
				cm	Ltr
KAHVIKUPPI	KAFFEKOPP	COFFEECUP	B 1 1/2		0,15
KERMAKKO	GRÄDDKANNA	CREAMER	B 1		0,18
SOKERIMALIA	SOCKERSKÄL	SUGAR	B 1		0,25
LEIPÄLAUTANEN	BRÖDTALLRIK	PLATE	B	17,0	
LEIPÄVATI	BRÖDFAT	CAKEPLATE	B	26,0	





Kilta was first introduced to the public at the Industrial Arts Exhibition in Helsinki during the autumn of 1952, but it was not until January 1953 that Kilta was launched for public sale, at which time it comprised of eight items:

- a) Cup (0.2 L) with a saucer; from the cup was made the creamer with spout and lid, and a sugar container without spout and handle but with a lid.
- b) 2 flat plates 19.7 and 21.5cm in diameter
- c) A square vegetable dish 14cm
- d) A pitcher with cover (1.3 L)
- e) A deep plate 15cm
- f) Oblong platter 32.5 x 22.5cm.

These items were available in five plain colours, black, white, green, blue, and yellow. "A brown series was also made in trial runs for a short time" (Kumela, Paatero, Rissanen, 1987, p.75).

As Franck describes, he

"decided to put his faith in the combination of objects varying in basic shape and colour.....In conjunction with the plates....the round and rectangular dishes not only fulfilled the dictates of purpose, but also provided an aesthetically pleasing table setting, even when used sparingly. The objective was not only to eliminate unnecessary objects, but also to offer the opportunity of expansion in accordance with changing needs and improving living standards" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.52).

But the concerns of "Arabia's hesitant managers" proved well founded when initially Kilta did not sell well shortly after its launch. This is illustrated by the fact that during 1953, fewer than 30,000 pieces of Kilta were made. It was not until, both, "The idea behind Kilta was introduced to the ladies organisations and the press by means of displays of table settings, demonstrations etc" (Ceramics and Glass, 1973, p.40), and "when it was made more 'artistic'/ commercial by applied decoration, most notably 'emilia' decor by pattern designer Kaija Uosikkinen that it became popular" (Letter, Harri Kalha, 12 November 1995). Not until 1958, five years after its launch, did Kilta reach a million piece production annually, which it was to maintain for much of the next two decades.

Where the name of 'Kilta' originated from is now unknown. 'Kilta' is a Finnish word, which all the books I have read translate as 'Guild'. This could be a reference to the

Kitta was first introduced to the public at the Industrial Arts Exhibition in Helsinki during the autumn of 1951, but it was not until January 1953 that Kitta was launched for public sale, at which time it comprised of eight items:

- a) A cup (10.5 cm) with a saucer, from the cup was made the creamer with spoon and lid, and a sugar container without spoon and handle but with a lid
- b) 7 flat plates (9.7 and 11.5 cm in diameter)
- c) A square vegetable dish (14 cm)
- d) A pitcher with cover (14.5 cm)
- e) A deep plate (15 cm)
- f) A serving platter (22.5 x 33.5 cm)

These items were available in five plain colours: black, white, green, blue and yellow. A brown series was also made in trial runs for a short time. (Kinnunen 1987, p. 73)

As I have described in

'decided to put his faith in the combination of objects varying in basic shape and colour... in conjunction with the plates, the round and rectangular dishes not only fulfilled the duties of purpose, but also provided an aesthetically pleasing table setting, even when used sparingly. The objective was not only to eliminate unnecessary objects, but also to offer the opportunity of expansion in accordance with changing needs and improving living standards' (Kari Frank Designer 1992, p. 82)

that the concept of 'Arabia's peasant managers' proved well founded when initially Kitta did not sell well shortly after its launch. This is illustrated by the fact that during 1953, fewer than 30,000 pieces of Kitta were made. It was not until 1954, the idea behind Kitta was introduced to the ladies organisations and the press by means of displays of table settings (Kinnunen 1987, p. 74) and when it was made more 'visible' commercial by applied decoration, most notably 'cotton' decor by pattern designer Kari (Koskinen 1992, p. 83). Kitta became popular (Kinnunen 1987, p. 75). Five years after its launch, the Kitta reach a million piece production annually, which it was to maintain for much of the next two decades.

While the name of 'Kitta' originated from a now unknown Finnish word, both all the books I have read translate as 'Kitta'. This could be a reference to the



medieval Guilds which controlled standards in excellence and good quality. But Kilta also means 'Banquet Feast' and 'Society Club'. So the name may have been a reference to a number of different ideas. The fact that Kilta was marketed using a name and not a letter such as the 'B' range was also unusual. (What these letters stand for is now unknown, sometimes they were the designers initials, but it seems most likely that they were part of some system.) Though ranges were often given names like 'Sinivalko' (Blueribbon) these often referred to the applied decoration, in this case a plain blue band on each article. The base model was normally still referred to as a letter. Perhaps this use of a name had to do with the fact that Kilta had no applied decoration, and in order to allay the Marketing Manager's fears, and to help in the marketing, a name was given. Whether the name originated from Franck or from the Marketing Department is also unknown. In my own opinion it seems very likely that the idea would have come from the Marketing Department, but that the name may have been Franck's. This seems quite likely considering the influence that William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement had on Franck's beliefs. Very much part of the Arts and Crafts Movement was an attempt to revive the Medieval Guild System. Other reasons why I believe that the name may have been Franck's are that many of Franck's glass pieces have very lyrical engravings, designed by himself though engraved by a skilled engraver. Also, he has often been referred to as "a wonderful story teller" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.266). Taking this into account it seems very likely that it may have been Franck who gave the name 'Kilta' to his range, a name that seems loaded with meaning.

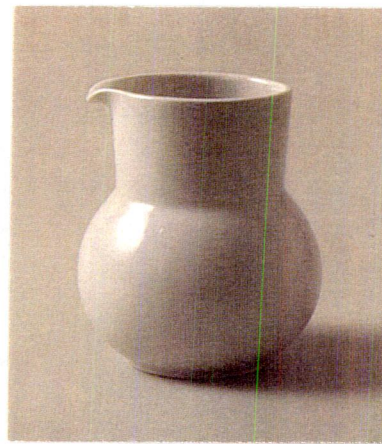
Shortly after Kilta began to become successful, it became a type of brand name, when additional items, using 'Kilta' glazes, began to be marketed under the name of Kilta. These items, listed on the next page, were not only designed by Franck, but also by Karrina Aho and Ulla Procopé.

Other articles added to the range were:

Designed by:

<b>Kaj Franck :</b>	Cream Bottles :	‘MM’ ‘MK’	Fig. No.30
	Casserole Dishes :	‘EE’ 1 ‘EE’ 2	Fig. No.31
	IS Jars		Fig. No.32
	Butter Dish		Fig. No.33
	Serving Bowls		Fig. No.1(a)
	Coffee/ Tea Pot		
	Pitchers		
	Baker Series		
	Triangular Dish		Fig. No.34
	Cruets		
<b>Karrina Aho :</b>	Castors		Fig. No.35 (a,b)
	Cutting Board		Fig. No.36
	Egg Dish and Cover		Fig. No.37
<b>Ulla Procopé :</b>	Marmalade Jar and Cover		Fig. No.38





**Fig. No. 30**  
**'MM' Creamer**



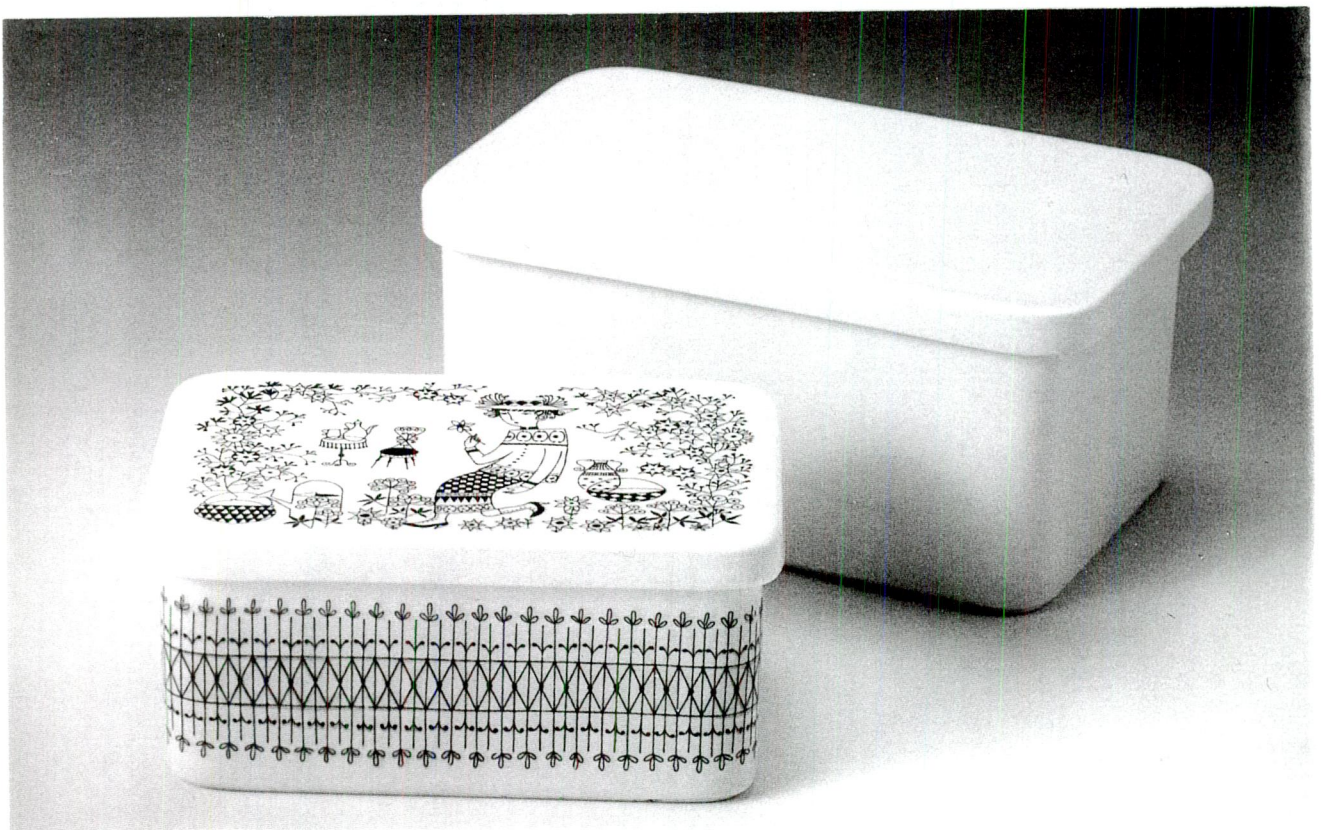
**Fig. No. 31**  
**'EE' 1, 2 Casserole Dishes (1953-1975)**







**Fig. No. 32**  
**'IS' Jars (1953-1975)**



**Fig. No. 33**  
**'KA' 1, 2 Containers (1958-1971)**

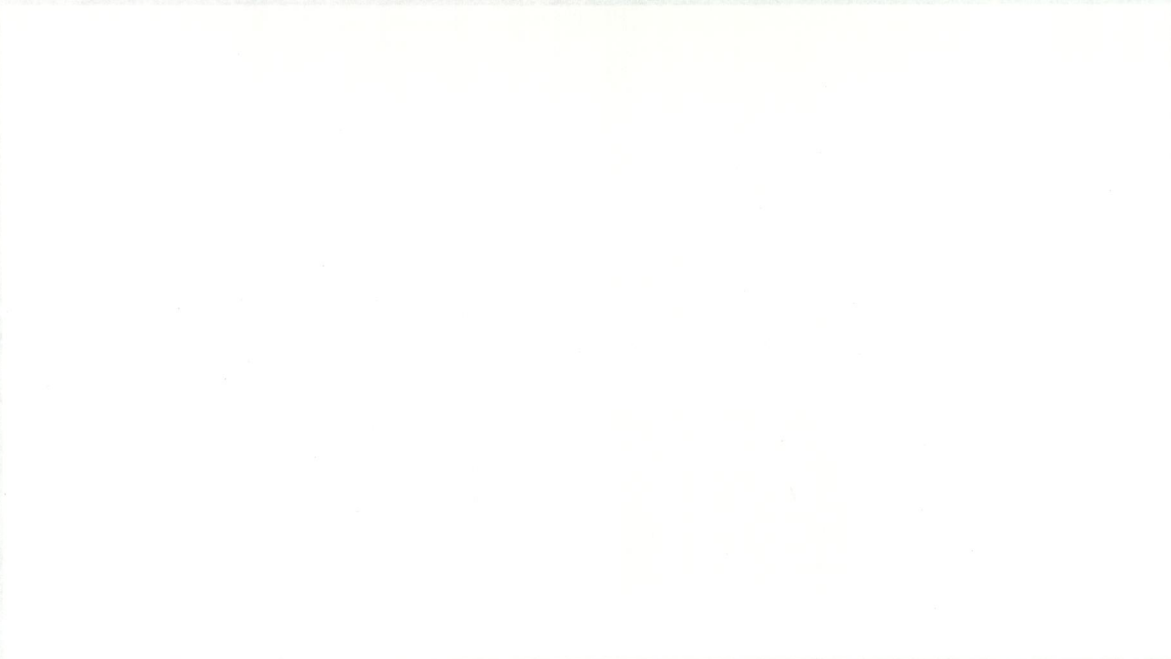




Fig. No. 34

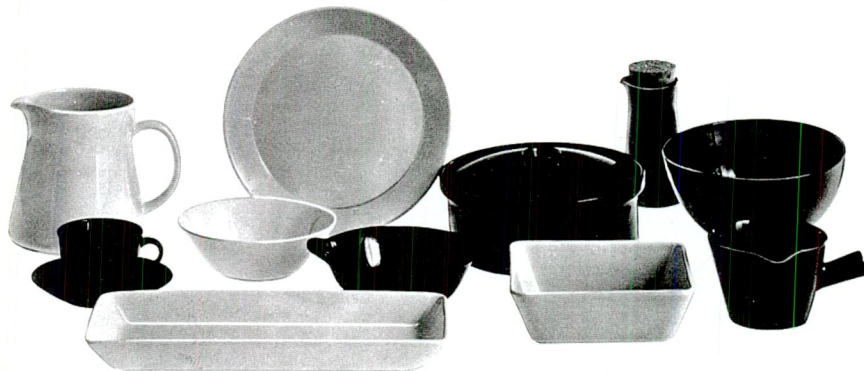
'Kilta' as shown in the Arabia Catalogue 1967

ARABIA

UUNINKESTÄVÄ SARJA UGNSELDFAST SERIE OVENPROOF SERIES

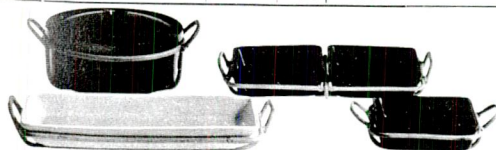
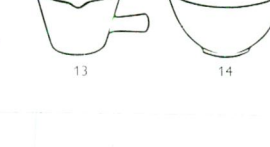
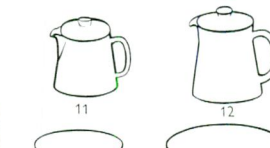
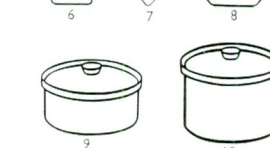
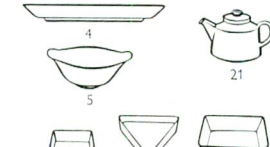
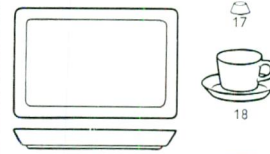
»KILTA»

KOVA FAJANSSSI HÅRD FAJANS HARD FAIENCE



VÄRIT : VALKOINEN KELTAINEN MUSTA SININEN VIHREÄ  
 FÄRGER : VIT GUL SVART BLÅ GRÖN  
 COLOURS : WHITE YELLOW BLACK BLUE GREEN

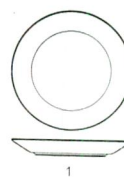
MALLI MODELL SHAPE	Koko Storlek Size Ø	Tilav. Rymd Con- tents	MALLI MODELL SHAPE	Koko Storlek Size Ø	Tilav. Rymd Con- tents
	cm	Ltr		cm	Ltr
LAUTANEN TALLRIK PLATE			13. KULPPI VARREN KERA SPILKUM MED HANDTAG CASSEROLE WITH HANDLE		
1. BA matala flat flat	23,5		BA 0		0,35
BA » » »	21,5		BA 1 1/2		1,70
BA » » »	19,7		14. KULPPI SPILKUM BOWL		
BA » » »	15,0		BA 1	13,3	0,50
BA » » »	13,0		BA 2	18,0	1,80
2. BA syvä djup deep	15,0		BA 3	23,5	2,60
PAISTIVATI STEKFAT PLATTER			15. PIKARI BÄGARE MUG		
3. BA 1 suorakaide fyrk. square	15x32,5		BA		0,25
BA 2 » » »	22x32,5		16. PURNUKKA BURK BOX		
4. BA pyöreä runt round	28,0		BA 1 kann. kera m/l. w/c.	11,0	0,37
5. KULHO KAROTT BAKER			17. MUNARENGAS ÄGGRING EGGRING		
BA 1	17,0	0,50	BA	4,0	
BA 2	19,5	0,60	18. KUPPIPARIT KOPP-PAR CUPS AND SAUCERS		
VIHANNESASTIA SALADJÄR VEGETABLE DISH			BA 1 1/2		0,15
6. BA nelikulm. 4-kant. square	9,0		BA 2		0,22
7. BA kolmio 3-kant. triang.	12,0		19. KERMAKKO GRÄDDKANNA CREAMER		
8. BA nelikulm. 4-kant. square	14,0		BA		0,22
BA » » »	17,0		20. SOKERIRASIA SOCKERASK SUGAR		
LIEMIMALJA TERRIN SOUP TUREEN			BA kann. kera m/l. w/c.		0,22
9. BA 1 kann. kera m/l. w/c.		1,35	21. TEEKANNU TEKANNA TEAPOT		
10. BA 2 » » »		2,60	BA 4		1,16
KAADIN TILLBRINGARE PITCHER					
11. BA 0 kann. kera m/l. w/c.		0,70			
12. BA 1 » » »		1,20			



ROTTINKIKEHYKSET ROTTNGHANDTAG RATTAN BASES

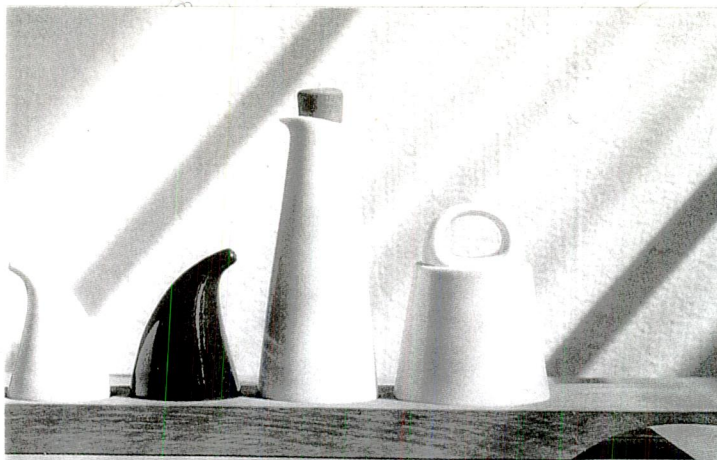
PAISTIVATI STEKFAT PLATTER } BA 1 VIHANNESASTIA SALADJÄR VEGETABLE DISH } BA 14 cm\* LIEMIMALJA TERRIN SOUP TUREEN } BA 1  
 BA 2 } BA 17 cm\*

\*) Yhdelle tai kahdelle För en eller två For one or two







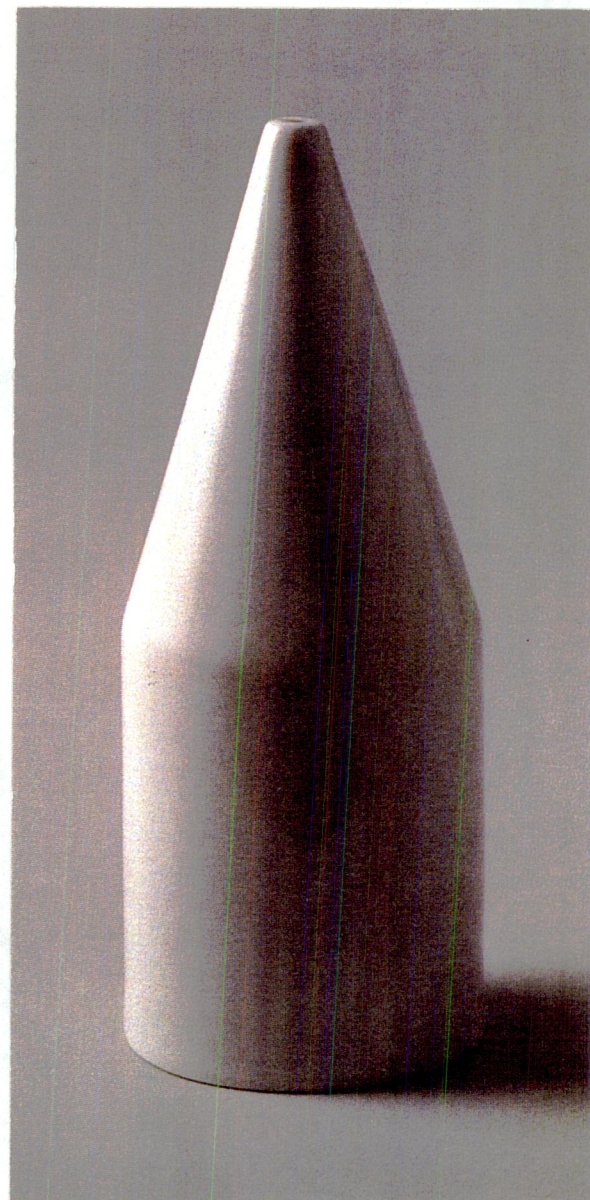


**Fig. No. 35a**



**Fig. No. 35b**

**Fig. No. 35 (a,b,c)**  
**Cruets and Castors**



**Fig. No. 35c**



**Fig. No. 36**  
**Cutting Board (1956), Karrina Aho,**  
**Arabia, Finland**







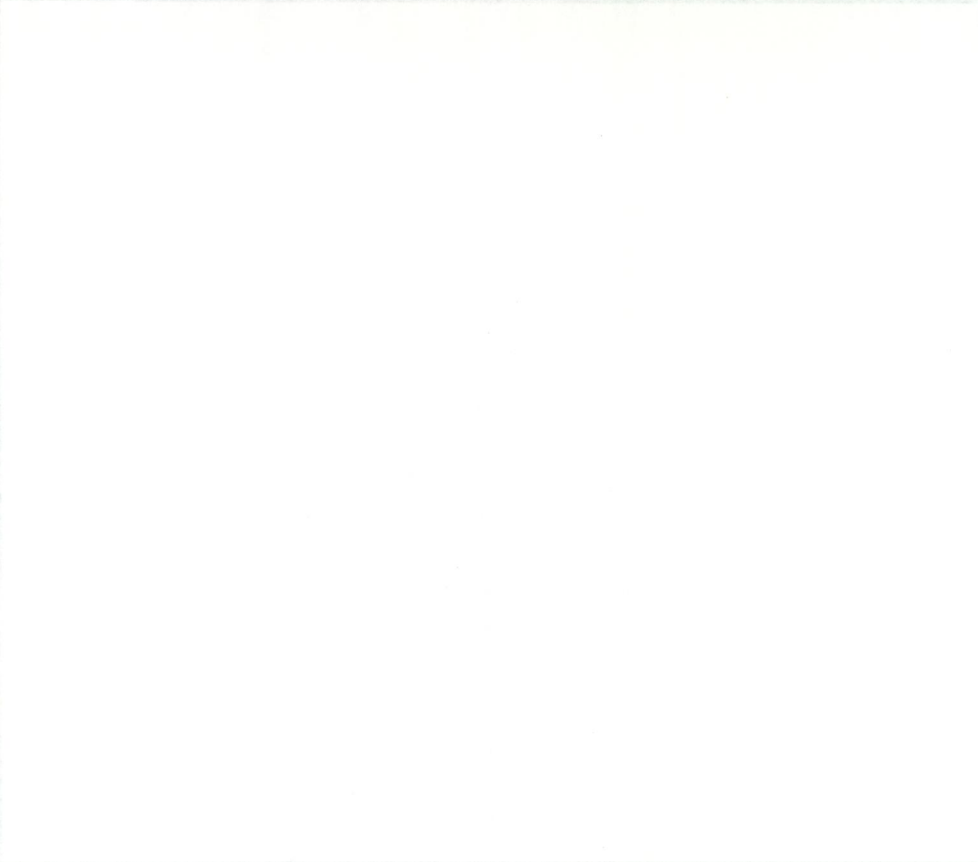
**Fig. No. 37**

**Egg Dish and Cover, and Egg Ring  
Karrina Aho, Arabia, Finland**



**Fig. No. 38**

**Marmalade Jar and Cover (1957)  
Ulla Procope, Arabia, Finland**





Most notable of these were the 'IS' jars, which the management originally believed would be unsuccessful, as illustrated by the Minutes of the Model Planning Meeting, dated the 6th November 1952. "The 'IS' jars...were discussed....[but] could not be accepted...because such objects have no commercial potential" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.85). In the end, these jars became one of the classics of the range and remained in production from 1953 to 1975.

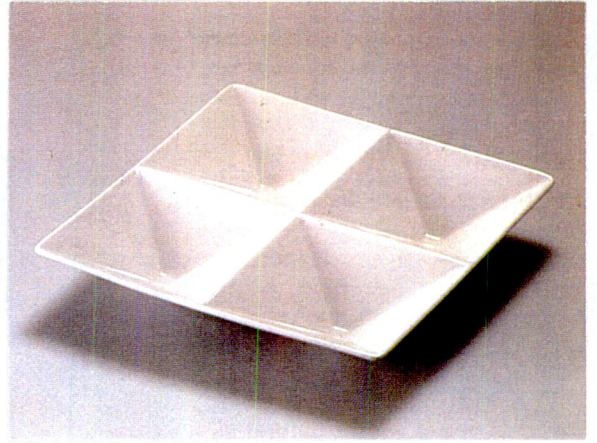
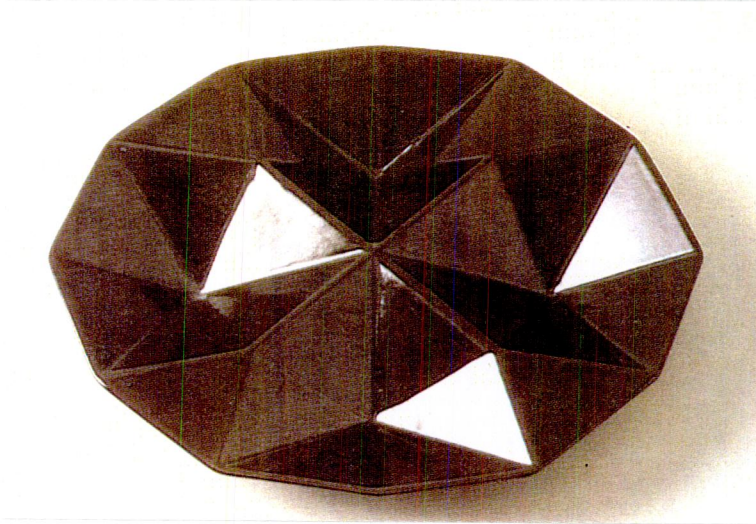
Another couple of articles of note were the two Hors d'oeuvre dishes (Fig. No.39, and Fig. No.40) designed by Franck in 1957, and in production from 1958 to 1962. Their designs are at the same time simple and complex, and wonderfully original, complementing Kilta with their geometricity. Even today they are refreshing to look at, and in fact the square dish was again in production in 1990-91, as part of the Arabia Pro-Arte collection.

While working for Arabia, Franck was also designing pieces for a glassworks, Nuutajärvi (Nuutajärvi, Finland), another company owned by Wärtsilä. One of the ranges he designed for this company, was the 'Kartio' (Fig. No.41) range of glasses. 'Kartio', meaning tapered, were designed to complement Kilta, introduced in 1958; it remained in production until 1975, the same year that Kilta was withdrawn. In 1990 Hackman reintroduced the glasses through Iittala glassworks. (Nuutajärvi merged with Iittala in 1987 to form a new company, marketed internationally as Iittala.) These glasses are sometimes referred to as 'Teema' glasses (Franck, Siltavuori, Form.Function.Finland, 1-1981, p.90).

But most of these additions, though designed by Franck, were compromising the concept of Kilta. As Franck describes, "Kilta was intended as some kind of basic series aimed at radical simplification not only in form but also in regard to the number of parts and the widest variety of use. Every addition was actually a submission and weakening of the original series" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.88). So it could be argued that Kilta was so successful that Franck, and others, had to compromise the concept of Kilta by producing a wider range of articles to support it.

**Fig. No. 39**

**Hors d'oeuvre Dish (1958-1962) (1990-1991)**



**Fig. No. 40**

**Hors d'oeuvre Dish (1958-1962)**



**Fig. No. 41**

**'Kartio' (1958-1975)  
Nuutajärvi, Finland**





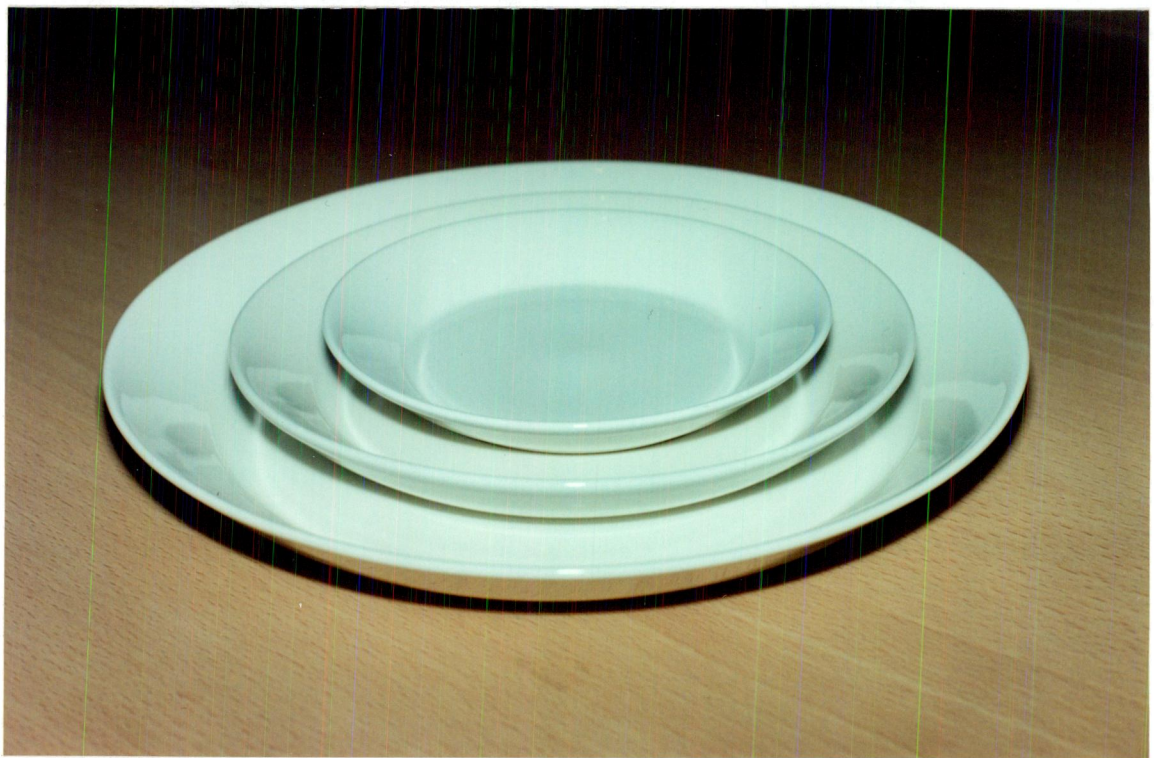
(b)(7)(D)

The shapes that Franck developed for Kilta gave each object any number of basic functions and led to their being termed as “tools for eating” (Christopher Mount, “Kaj Franck Designer”, MoMA, 1992), and as a “system” (Leena Manula, Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.51) Shown below, are detailed descriptions of some of the main objects, in this “system” of “eating tools”; these will help to give an insight into why Kilta was so ‘revolutionary’ and successful.

### **The Plates (Fig. No. 42)**

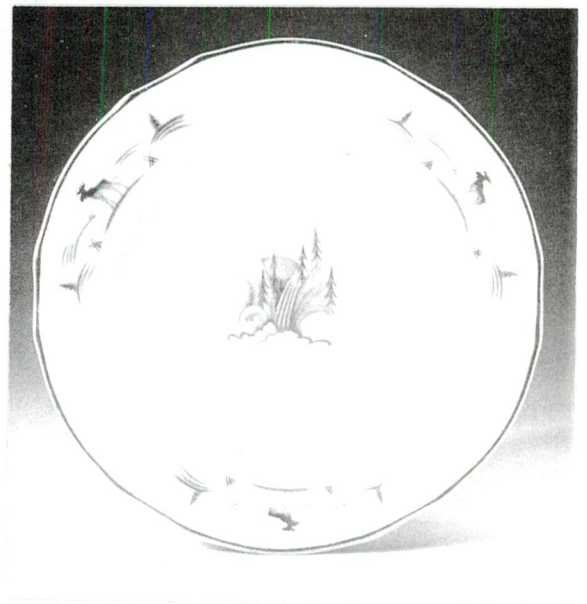
Typical of the plates being manufactured before and after 'Kilta' was introduced is one from the 'Satu' range (Fig. No.43, in production 1934-1941). The design for this type of plate had come from the dining habits of the upper classes in Europe, who would have had their meals served to them by servants. The wide rim allowed the servants to hold the plate without coming in contact with the food, and as the meal often contained quite a number of courses, as many as eight, the plates tended to be quite small. (Brett, 1968, pp.198-199) But in Finland few people had servants, or ate these many courses and yet these services sold. Why? A likely reason was the fact that the lower classes felt that they were achieving some sense of status by owning services which copied those that the richer members of society owned; some might call it ‘delusions of grandeur’, although this instinct still lies at the heart of most marketing today. After the war this began to change. People required objects that were functional not fanciful. The housing crisis had hit and now less space was available in which to store the dinner services of old. Franck's design solved many of these problems. The rim was discarded, you served your own dinners, why did you need a large rim? His new tapered rim allowed more space on the plate. It is also better to eat off as it traps the food like a bowl, allowing you to get every last morsel off the plate. The plates were also easily stacked. While ranges in the past fulfilled this purpose to a certain extent, when too many were placed on top of each other the stack became unstable. With the new rim, the plates could be endlessly stacked and carried easily without fear of the stack tumbling.





**Fig. No. 42**  
**The Plates**

**Fig. No. 43**  
**'Satu' tableware (1934-1941)**  
**Arabia, Finland**



**Fig. No. 44**  
**The Bowls**







### **The Bowl (Fig. No.44)**

These same principles were used in the design of the cereal/ soup/ dessert bowl. Whereas before, bowls were specifically for soup, dessert or breakfast, Franck realised this was no longer wanted or required, since in each case the bowl had the same function. For the same reason as for the plate, Franck discarded the rim. He made the bowl deeper and reduced the diameter. The reduction in diameter, and the fact that now you only required one set of bowls, instead of three, meant that space was saved in the cupboard. This bowl could even be used as a small serving bowl. Like the plates, these bowls could be endlessly stacked (Fig. No.45) without fear of the stack falling while in storage or transport.

### **Serving Bowls (Fig. No.46)**

With the serving bowls, again a simple shape was used, offering advantages in its function. Designed similarly to the DA bowls, in three sizes, these were not function specific, as is well illustrated in the flyer for Teema (Fig. No.47), where the bowls may be seen being used as ovenproof cooking dishes, vegetable dishes, casserole dishes, flower pots, and fruit bowls. The simplicity of the shape suits all of these functions. Indeed, over time, the bowls have never become obsolete.

### **The Cups, and Saucers (Fig. No.48, Fig. No.49)**

This is perhaps the most interesting group because of the clever method of design employed by Franck. The saucer, containing no dip in which to place the cup, is almost like a small plate. This is for a specific reason, which Franck best describes himself: " the saucer ....is flat so that if a cup is broken, the saucer can still serve other purposes (such as a side plate) and not be forgotten in the cupboard or under a flower pot" (Rimala, Form.Function.Finland, 1-1981, p.49). Indeed, the saucer may be used as an ashtray or as a lid for the soup bowl. Another advantage is the extra space available on the saucer for a biscuit etc, as the cup may be pushed to one side.

These same principles were used in the design of the cereal soup-dessert bowl. Whereas before bowls were specifically for soup, dessert or breakfast I now realize this was no longer wanted or required, since in each case the bowl had the same function. For the same reason as for the plate, Frank decided the rim of the bowl should not exceed the diameter. The reduction in diameter, and the fact that now you only required one set of bowls, instead of three, meant that space was saved in the cupboard. The bowl could even be used as a small serving bowl. Like the plate, these bowls could be endlessly stacked (Fig. No. 45) without fear of the stack falling while in storage or transport.

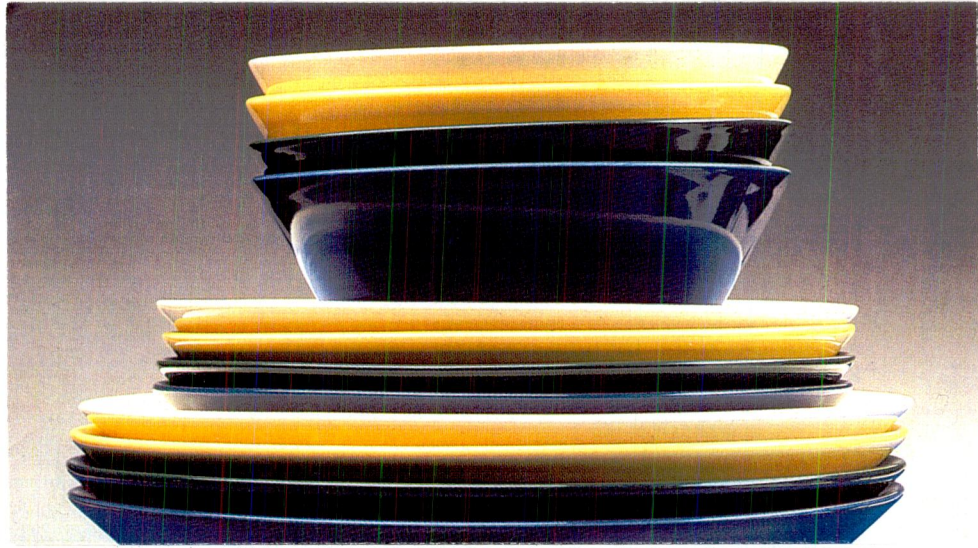
#### Serving Bowls (Fig. No. 46)

With the serving bowls, again a simple shape was used, offering advantages in its function. Designed similarly to the 12A bowls in three sizes, these were not function specific, as is well illustrated in the flyer for Form (Fig. No. 47), where the bowls may be seen being used as overproof cooking dishes, vegetable dishes, casseroles, dishes, flower pots, and fruit bowls. The simplicity of the shape suits all of these functions. Indeed, over time, the bowls have now become obsolete.

#### The Cup and Saucer (Fig. No. 48, Fig. No. 49)

This is perhaps the most interesting group because of the clever method of design employed by Frank. The saucer, containing an lip in which to place the cup, is almost like a small plate. This is for a specific reason, which Frank best describes himself: "The saucer... is flat so that if a cup is broken, the saucer can still serve other purposes (such as a side plate) and not be forgotten in the cupboard or under a flower pot (Kinnaird, Form Function Follows, 1981, p. 49). Indeed, the saucer may be used as an ashtray or as a lid for the soup bowl. Another advantage is the extra space available on the saucer for a biscuit etc. as the cup may be pushed to one side.





**Fig. No. 45**  
**Teema stacking**



**Fig. No. 46**  
**The Serving Bowls**





Fig. No. 47

Teema Flyer 1995



Teema

BAU

KELTAINEN  
YELOW

GUL  
GELB

DESIGN: KAJ FRANCK







**Fig. No. 48**  
**The Cups**



**Fig. No. 49**  
**The Saucer**



**Fig. No. 50**  
**Cup, Creamer, and Sugar Bowl**







While researching, I went into the shop called, 'Enclosure' in Blackrock, Co. Dublin, Ireland, which stocks the Teema range. Sean Carew, the owner, while chatting mentioned that the range had one major flaw. He told me that the saucer was flat which meant that the cup could not be centred and that this had been commented on by customers. I informed him of Franck's reasons for this; he agreed that this was a "good argument", but that people buying such a range wanted to have their table laid out in a "regimental" fashion. It made me begin to wonder how far 'Kilta' had come since being introduced 8 years after the end of the second world war. Then it was not being sold in exclusive designer shops, as a special dinner service, it was everyday ware for 'ordinary people'. Through its use of simple shapes Kilta has been able to cross socio-economic boundaries, being neither cheap nor expensive looking. Unfortunately cultural boundaries are not quite so easily crossed. The Irish, having been strongly influenced in their dining habits by Britain, have a strong element of snobbery when it comes to more formal dining occasions, involving the more 'better-off', who would be the purchasers of this range in Ireland, considering the price of one saucer alone was approximately £5 (or 35 FIM).

The cups are also ingeniously designed; a closer look at the cup, creamer and sugar bowl (Fig. No.50) quickly reveals that all three use the same body. In the manufacture of a cup, the handle is added after the cup is made, and so Franck has used the one mould to create three entirely separate objects, thus reducing dramatically costs which could have been passed on to the consumer.

The vessel with a handle becomes a cup, the vessel without a handle but with a lid becomes a sugar bowl, and the vessel, after being moulded if a small spout is applied by nicking the clay manually before it dries and then given a handle and lid, becomes as Franck describes, a "cream jug", which "can also be used for serving or storing jam or honey. There is even room for a spoon between the lid and the spout" (Rimala, Form.Function.Finland, 1-1981, p.49). Although this may not seem 'revolutionary' today, in 1953 this was a major design innovation. Of course, the same saucer could be used with the cup, creamer, and sugar bowl.

While researching I went into the shop called "The House of Blackrock" in Dublin, Ireland, which stocks the Tescos range. Sean (name), the owner, while chatting mentioned that the range had one major flaw. He told me that the saucers were flat which meant that the cups could not be centred and that this had been commented on by customers. I informed him of Frank's reasons for this; he agreed that this was a "good argument", but that people buying such a range wanted to have their milk laid out in a "regimental" fashion. It made me begin to wonder how far Killa had come since being introduced 8 years after the end of the second world war. Then it was not being sold in exclusive designer shops as a special dinner service, it was everyday ware for ordinary people. Through its use of simple shapes Killa has been able to cross socio-economic boundaries, being neither cheap nor expensive looking. Unfortunately cultural boundaries are not quite so easily crossed. The Irish have been strongly influenced in their dining habits by Britain, have a strong element of snobbery when it comes to more formal dining occasions, involving the more "better-off", who would be the purchasers of this range in Ireland, considering the price of one saucer alone was approximately £5 (or £5.50).

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The vessel with a handle becomes a cup, the vessel without a handle but with a lid becomes a sugar bowl, and the vessel, after being moulded in a small spoon is applied by sticking the clay manually before it dries and then given a handle and lid, becomes as Frank describes, a "cream jug", which "can also be used for serving or storing jam or honey. There is even room for a spoon between the lid and the spoon" (Frank, 1981, p.49). Although this may not seem revolutionary today, in 1953 this was a major design innovation. Of course, the same saucer could be used with the cup, creamer, and sugar bowl.



### **Square and Rectangular Platters (Fig. No.51)**

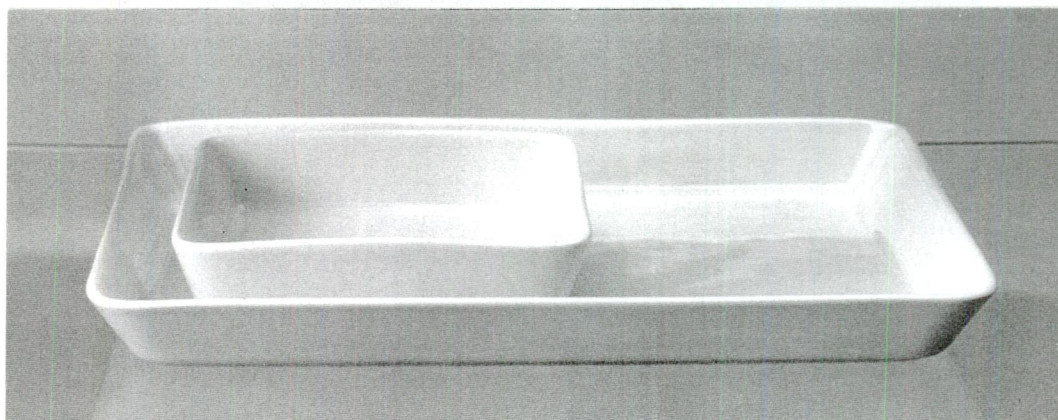
These were the first rectangular dishes to be made at Arabia, having gained tentative acceptance in Scandinavian ceramics via functionalism. These platters could be used for a variety of functions, e.g. vegetable dishes, serving dishes. Shortly after the introduction of Kilta, a range of square plates were introduced. These were the 'G' range (Fig. No.53) (1957-1967) of plates, designed by Franck, and originally intended for the railways. Though not marketed as part of Kilta, this range was sold in some of the same glazes as Kilta, mainly black and white, and according to Kirsti Slotte (interview, 28 November 1995), this range was often mix'n'matched with Kilta. The smallest of these plates could be used as a saucer (Fig. No.54), or as a small side plate, the next as a small dinner plate, and the largest as a main dinner plate. The square and rectangular shapes contrast well with the round dishes and when mixed in a combination of colours look quite striking. These may even be used in conjunction with another service, or on a buffet table, as is quite common in Finland according to Kirsti Slotte (interview, 28 November 1995). Franck also designed rattan bases for these dishes, which were produced for a short period. (Fig. No. 52)

The rest of the objects continue this flexibility: Pitchers, able to be used for gravy, milk, water, orange juice, cut down considerably on storage space and cost; Casserole dishes, small enough for one, reflecting changes in society at the time, could also be used for gravy; The MK creamer, discussed earlier. This flexibility even went so far as the casters he designed, none of them specifically for salt or pepper.

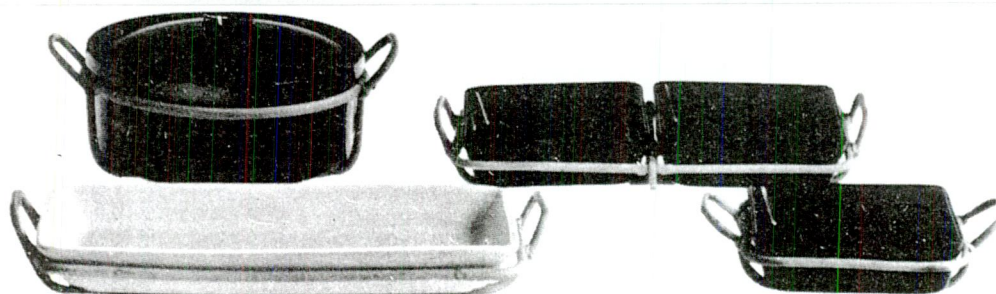
This multi-functionality is largely due to the simplicity of the aesthetics employed. This simplicity in aesthetics, while allowing Franck to design his objects so that they were almost unnoticeable, also allowed Franck to give the objects a sense of individuality, allowing them to survive independently of fellow objects or time. As he once described,

"I do want industrial objects to attract attention in the 'look at me style'." But at the same time, "I regard objects as individuals.....I have no desire to conceal them in a crowd. That is why the articles in the Kilta range are individuals that can get along without 'their' family around them. Each of

**Fig. No. 51**  
**Rectangular Platters**



**Fig. No. 52**  
**Rectangular Platters with**  
**Rattan Bases**









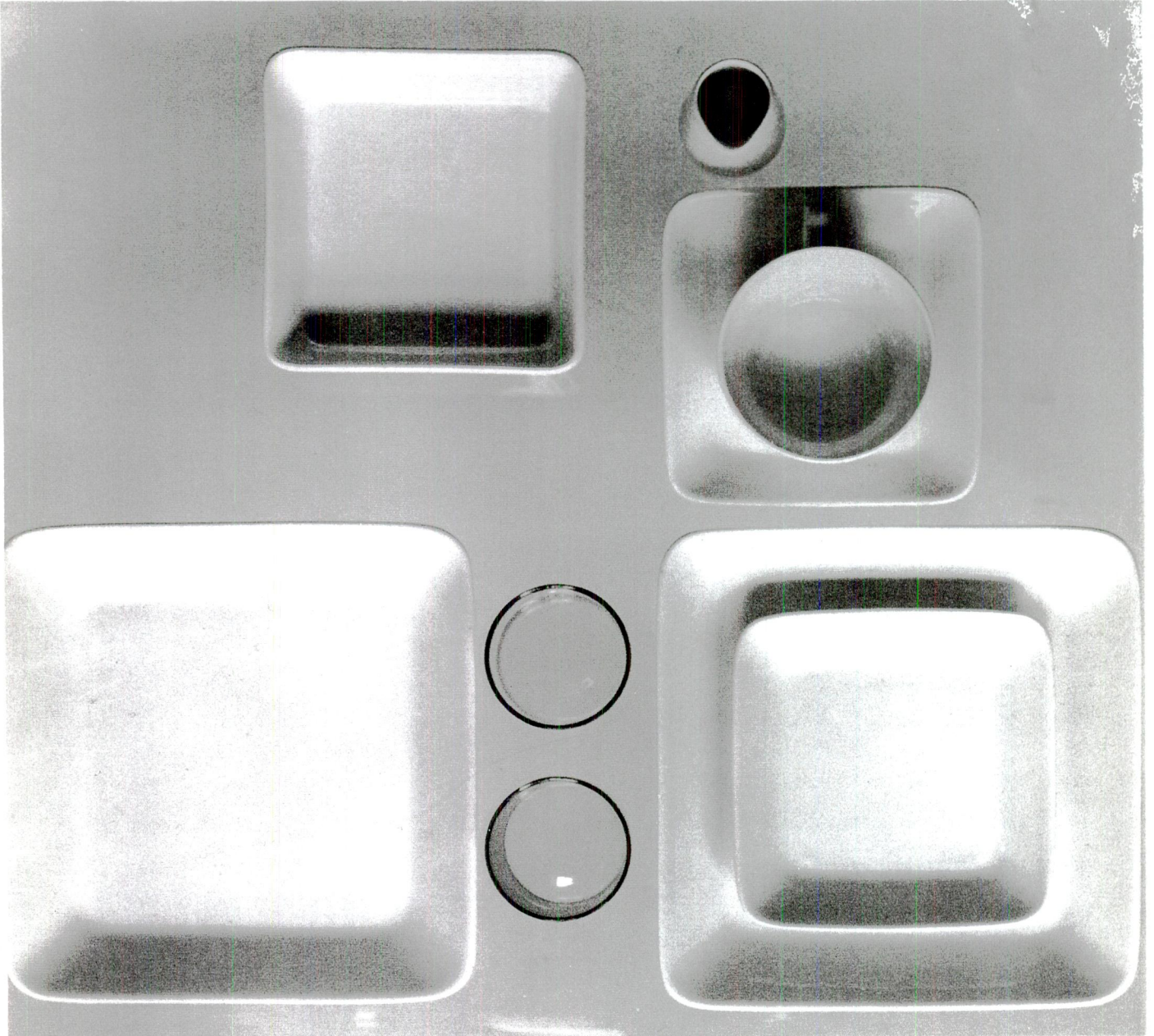
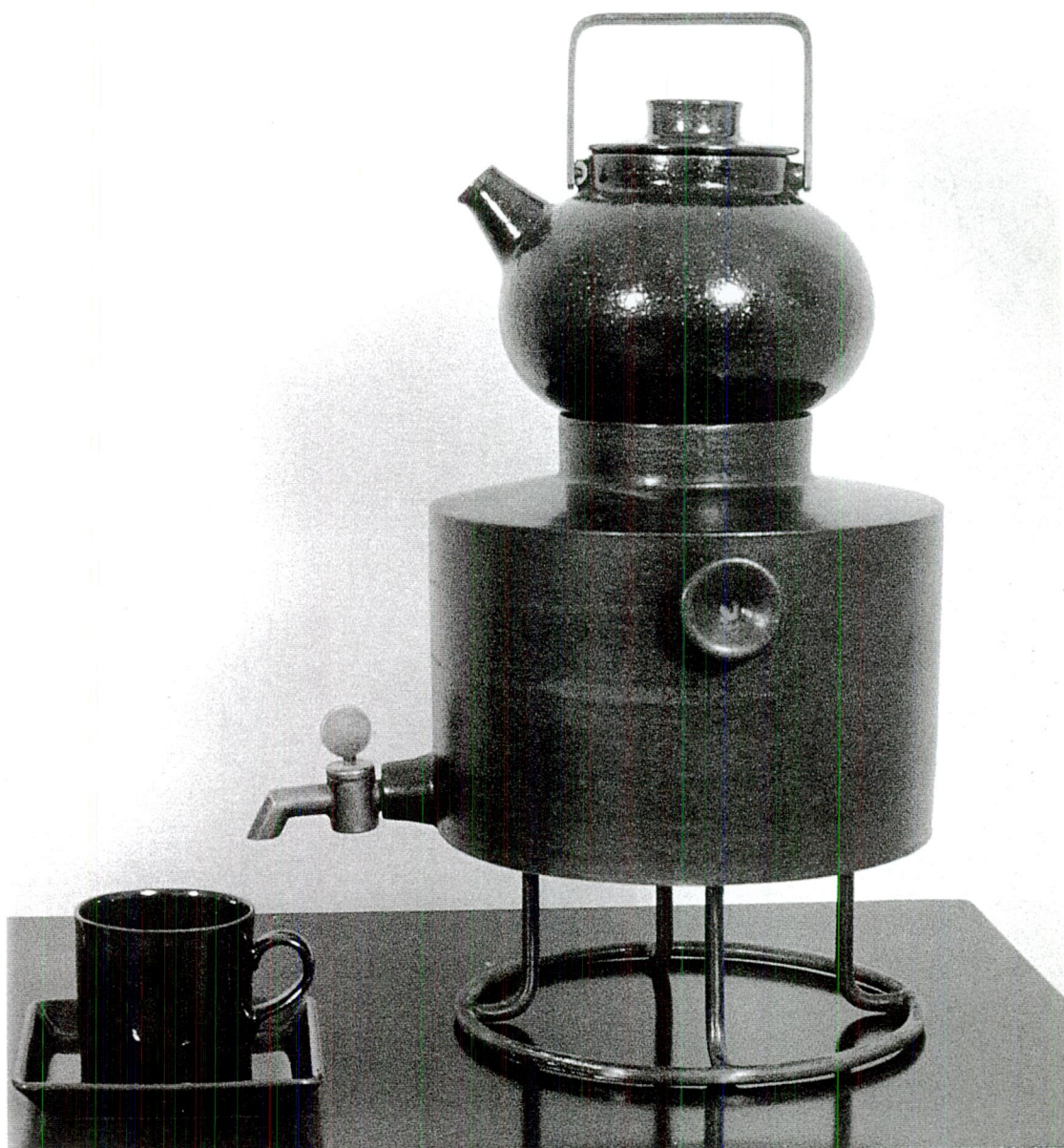


Fig. No. 53  
'G' Plates (1957-1967)







**Fig. No. 54**

**Samover, thrown by Rafael Hansen  
Prototype 1957  
'LM' Coffee Cup, Prototype, 1957  
'G' Saucer**





them can be used on its own" (Siltavuori, Form.Function.Finland, 3-1987, pp.38-40).

Another reason why Franck used this type of aesthetic can be revealed by his remark that, "Man organises his environment through basic geometrical forms. They are eternal shapes as it were, absolutes that he needs to console himself. They give him satisfaction. These basic forms are to be found almost anywhere in nature" (Franck, Siltavuori, Form.Function.Finland, 1-1981, p.52). And so Kilta was given a certain timeless quality by the use of this type of aesthetic. Also this aesthetic was responsible for Kilta being able to cross socio-economic boundaries, being neither distinguishable as expensive or cheap, simply beautiful.

So whether on their own or in a group, the Kilta objects work equally well functionally and aesthetically, and by avoiding the 'look at me style', Franck ensured Kilta did not follow the fashion or trends of a particular time, allowing Kilta to look modern, no matter what decade since its release. So many of the reasons for Kilta's success can be attributed to the objects being multi-functional, unnoticeable individuals, independent of time, because of their simple, fashionless, geometric aesthetic.

Kilta's success, I feel, is also due to another factor. As I have mentioned earlier, Franck was influenced by his own peasant heritage; not only did this influence his functionalist and aesthetic beliefs, but also gave his objects a certain sense of spirituality. Franck had advocated for this spirituality in his 'Kauneutta etsimässä' (Searching for beauty) article from 1949, writing "The ultimate goal is the pursuit of the spiritual not the material" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.47). Indeed, his designs seem to fulfil a certain spiritual aspect rarely filled by other mass-produced objects. This spiritual aspect will never fade, no matter what decade the objects are produced in. It is only the classics which possess this spirituality. Kilta stands alongside such classics as Alvar Aalto's Savoy Vase (1936) and Gerrit Rietveld's Red and Blue chair (1918). (Fig. No.55) This spirituality may even be termed 'art'. Juhani Pallasmaa wrote that "The true function of art or design is not to entertain or to amuse, but to bring man back to his fundamental relationship with the world" (Pallasmaa, Form.Function.Finland, 1,2-1980, p.8). And this is what Franck did by linking into the peasant culture of Karelia. The view that Kilta may be called art is supported by Ulf Hård af Segerstad who wrote in 1955, two



Another reason why Frank used this type of aesthetic can be related to his remark that "When organisms live environment through basic geometrical forms" (1957) and "natural shapes as it were, absolute that he needs to create himself" (1957) and "satisfaction" (1957) and "forms are to be found almost everywhere in nature" (1957). Sillavon (Form Function Finland 3-1987, p. 21). And so Killa was given a certain timeless quality by virtue of this type of aesthetic. Also this aesthetic was responsible for Killa being able to cross socio-economic boundaries, being neither distinguishable as expensive or cheap, simply beautiful.

So whether or not one or in a group the Killa objects work equally well functionally and aesthetically, and by adding the look of his style, Frank wanted Killa did not follow the fashion or trends of a particular time, allowing Killa to look modern in manner what design since its release. So many of the reasons for Killa's success can be attributed to the objects being multi-functional, unobtrusive, aesthetically independent of time, because of their simple, timeless, geometric aesthetic.

Killa's success, I think is also due to another factor. As I have mentioned earlier, Frank was influenced by his own personal heritage, not only did this influence his functional and aesthetic beliefs, but also gave his objects a certain sense of spirituality. Frank had advanced for the spirituality in his "Monuments existences" (Searching for beauty) article from 1944, saying "The spiritual goal is the pursuit of the spiritual not the material" (1944 Frank Design, 1957, p. 17). Indeed his designs seem to follow a certain spiritual aspect rarely filled by other mass-produced objects. This spiritual aspect will never fade, no matter what decade the objects are produced in. It is only the classes which possess the spirituality. Killa stands alongside such classics as Alvar Aalto's Swan Vase (1936) and Gerrit Rietveld's Red and Blue chair (1918) (Fig. No. 55). This spirituality was even by termed and "human Palastman wrote that "the true function of art or design is not to entertain or to instruct, but to bring man back to the fundamental relationship with the world" (Palastman Form Function Finland 3-1980, p. 8). And this is what Frank did by linking into the personal culture of Killa. The view that Killa may be called art is supported by J.H. Frank at 20th century who wrote in 1972, two



**Fig. No. 55**

**'Red and Blue Chair' (1918), Gerrit Rietveld**



years after the release of Kilta; "At the same time as Kaj Franck gives his utility products a natural form he possesses the rare gift of making them beautiful objects...he has produced simple dishes which surpass aesthetically most contemporary art ceramics" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.17). This spiritual aspect in Franck's work will never fade, unlike style which limits a design to a particular era. It must be made clear though, that Franck did not believe that mass produced objects could be art, stating "It bothers me that designers of utility ware seek to approach art" (Siltavuori, Form.Function.Finland, 3-1987, p.45)

Yet it is my view that some of the Kilta objects have the right to be called 'art'. It was William Morris, whom Franck greatly admired, who once exclaimed "What business have we with art unless all can share it?" (Cumming, Kaplan, 1991, p.9) I agree with Morris. However what is normally termed art e.g. by Van Gogh or Picasso, is out of reach of the ordinary man. Another form is required, which is design. It is the designer who is the artist of the people. It is his art which is attainable to all through the possibility of multiplication and low-cost. I do not advocate that all design is art, namely the classics, which have stood the test of time, as Ernest Hemingway wrote in a circular for the National Endowment for the Humanities, "A work of Art endures for ever" (Barzun, 1974, p.18). So, in my view, Kilta, having stood the test of time, contains a certain spiritual aspect which may indeed be called art.

Kilta's influence on tableware at Arabia and at other foreign manufacturers was considerable. Its aesthetic influence is extremely visible in the 'Jubilaum' range (Fig. No.56 (a, b)), designed by Eystein Sandness (born 1924), and introduced in 1959 by Porsgrund, a Norwegian ceramics company. Also its influence may be seen in the 'Regent' range (Fig. No.57), designed by Tias Eckhoff (born 1926) in 1961, also for Porsgrund. The influence in this case is more subtle in the peasant aesthetic similar to both ranges, though the plate is very similar. Regent is also a range which has remained in production for many years, still being in production in 1989.

seems after the release of Kilit. At the same time as Jean Frank gives his ability to produce a natural form he possesses the rare gift of making them beautiful objects. He has produced simple dishes which surpass aesthetically most contemporary art ceramics" (Jean Frank, *Design*, 1992, p. 17). This spiritual aspect in Frank's work will never fade, unlike style which limits a design to a particular era. It must be noted, clear though, that Frank did not believe that mass produced objects could be art, stating "It bothers me that designers of utility were seen to approach art" (Bollman, *Form Function*, 1987, p. 42).

Yet it is not just that some of the Kilit objects have the right to be called art. It was William Morris whom Frank greatly admired, who once exclaimed "What business have we with art unless all can share it?" (Cumming, Kaplan, 1991, p. 9). I agree with Morris. However what is normally termed art e.g. by Van Gogh or Picasso, is out of reach of the ordinary man. Another form is required, which is design. It is the designer who is the master of the people. It is his art which is amenable to all through the possibility of multiplication and low-cost. I do not advocate that all design is art, namely the classes which have stood the test of time, as Ernest Hemingway wrote in a circular for the National Industrial Designers' Association for the Humanities, "A work of Art endures for ever" (Baxter, 1974, p. 12). So in my view, Kilit, having stood the test of time, contains a certain spiritual aspect which may indeed be called art.

Kilit's influence on designers in Arabia and in other foreign manufacturers was considerable. Its aesthetic influence is extremely visible in the 'Jubatan' range (fig. 24) designed by Ezzat Shadoush (born 1934) and introduced in 1979 by Pottery, a Damascus ceramic company. Also its influence may be seen in the 'Regent' range (fig. 25) designed by Tass Eckhoff (born 1936) in 1961, also for Pottery. The influence in this case is more subtle in the peasant aesthetic similar to both ranges, though the plate is very similar. Regent is also a range which has remained in production for many years, still being in production in 1989.





**Fig. No. 56a**



**Fig. No.56b**

**Fig. No. 56 (a,b)**  
**'Jubilaeum' (1959), Eystein Sandness**  
**Porsgrund, Norway**







**Fig. No. 57**  
**'Regent' (1961), Tias Eckhoff,**  
**Porsgrund, Norway**





In terms of production at Arabia, Kilta had a tremendous influence, both direct and indirect. After Kilta, for much of the fifties, the forms of tableware ranges became simpler in their shapes, as well as containing fewer pieces, and no longer was applied decoration seen as necessary. As well, it could be said that Arabia's designs became more Finnish.

As well as this, Kilta had the effect of giving Franck, and the other designers, a freer hand at the factory. As Franck remarked, "We were given the right to re-evaluate" (Siltavuori, Form.Function.Finland, 3-1987, p.43). This is not surprising considering the awards Franck received for Kilta, including, in 1955, the much coveted Scandinavian design award, The Lunning Prize. Also, in 1957, Kilta was awarded a Grand Prix at the Milan Triennale, and Franck won the Italian award, the Compasso d'Oro (the golden compass). Only Marcel Breuer and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, had received this award for industrial design, previously.

Of course Franck benefitted more than others from Kilta's success, with greater say in his role as Artistic Director of the Model Planning Department from 1946-1961 and then later as Artistic Leader of the Silicate Group of the Wärtsiliä Concern from 1968-1973. He even went so far as to call an end to "...the marketing of goods under the name of the designer", for which "...he was showered with the wrath of his fellow designers" (Hassi, Form.Function.Finland, 3-1993, p.19). For a number of years at the end of the sixties and beginning of the seventies, this practice was stopped at Arabia, but was resumed due to marketing pressure. As Hilikka Hiltunen, the present Hackman Product Manager explained, the designer's name is now used as a mark of quality and as a guarantee to the customer. "If you think of our products in the market, they are quite expensive....and you have to tell a lot to the consumer about the product.....and a real designer has designed it." (Interview, 21 September 1995) However Franck, did not agree with this type of view, writing in his article 'Anonymity' in Craft Horizons March 1967, that,

"It is wrong to make the designer the salesman of the article. This offends against the object, the consumer, and the designer. It deprives the article of its value as an article. It inhibits objective judgement by the consumer and restricts his freedom of choice." (Heisinger, Marcus, 1993, p.330)

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As well as this, Kilita had the effect of giving Frank, and the other designers, a foot on the ladder. As Frank remarked, "We were given the right to co-evaluate" (Häkkinen, *From Function Finland*, 3-1987, p.43). This is not surprising considering the awards Frank received for Kilita, including in 1955, the much coveted Scandinavian design award, The Lunning Prize. Also, in 1957, Kilita was awarded a Grand Prix at the Milan Triennale, and Frank won the Italian award, the Compasso d'Oro (the golden compass). Only Alvaro Siza and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, had received this award for industrial design, previously.

Of course Frank benefited more than others from Kilita's success, with greater say in his role as Artistic Director of the Model Planning Department from 1946-1961 and then later as Artistic Director of the Siltanen Group of the Wistaria Concern from 1962-1977. The story goes so far as to call an end to "...the marketing of goods under the name of the designer," for which "he was showered with the wrath of his fellow designers" (Häkkinen, *From Function Finland*, 3-1993, p.19). For a number of years at the end of the sixties and beginning of the seventies, this practice was stopped at Arabia, but was resumed due to marketing pressure. As Hilka Hiltunen, the present Blackman Product Manager explained, the designer's name is now used as a mark of quality and as a guarantee to the customer. "If you think of our products in the market, they are quite expensive...and you have to tell a lot to the consumer about the product...and a real designer has designed it" (Interview, 21 September 1995). However, Frank, did not agree with this type of use, writing in his article, "Anonymity" in *Craft Horizons* March 1967 that,

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Another of Franck's reasons for wanting to end the use of the designer's name was he believed Industrial Design was a team effort, not the creation of an individual, which is implied in the use of the designer's name in the marketing of the product. He went so far as to say "The larger the series of articles it is intended to produce, the greater the responsibility and the larger the number of people who share that responsibility" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.82). The remark is backed up by "the fact that Erik Johansson and Gösta Lindfors, Arabia's plaster model makers, also participated in designing Kilta....and made the work much easier" (Kumela, Paatero, Rissanen, 1987, p.74). This view though, is ultimately hard to accept when the individuality of Franck's designs is taken into account. No matter what 'team' Franck worked with, whether in conjunction with glass, ceramic or plastic or in what decade, the designs all have an identity and character that is clearly Franck's, and not the team's. Surely if the designs were truly the result of a 'team effort', then each team that Franck worked with would have had an individuality of their own! This was not the case.

Later, Franck criticised the lack of individuality in world design, claiming, "Year by year products become more and more uniform in different countries. Companies don't believe in designers anymore. Design like this no longer has its own special character." (Kaipainen, Form.Function.Finland, 3-1982, p.18) Here Franck is in fact saying that it is the designer that is responsible for the design. Franck's problem with the use of the designer's name was more probably to do with the fact that he was a humble man who shunned publicity, and so it is very ironic that the man who wished to remain anonymous is now one of the best known designers in Finland and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Another of Frank's reasons for wanting to end the use of the designer's name was the belief of industrial design was a team effort, not the creation of an individual, which is implied in the use of the designer's name in the marketing of the product. He went so far as to say: "The larger the series of articles it is intended to produce, the greater the responsibility, and the larger the number of people who share that responsibility." (Käpälä, 1992, p. 82). The remark is backed up by the fact that Erik Johnson and Gösta Lindberg, Alvaro's plaster model maker, also participated in designing Kikka, and made the work much easier. (Käpälä, 1992, p. 84). This view though, is ultimately hard to accept when the individuality of Frank's design is taken into account. No matter what team Frank worked with, whether in conjunction with glass, ceramic or plastic or in what decade, the designs all have an identity and character that is clearly Frank's, and not the team's. Surely if the designs were truly the result of a 'team effort', then each team that Frank worked with would have had an individuality of their own. This was not the case.

Later, Frank stressed the lack of individuality in world design, claiming: "You buy your products from one and more nations in different countries. Companies don't belong to designers anymore. Design like this no longer has its own special character." (Käpälä, 1992, p. 18). Here Frank is in fact saying that it is the designer that is responsible for the design. Frank's problem with the use of the designer's name was most probably to do with the fact that he was a humble man who shunned publicity, and so it is very ironic that the man who wished to remain anonymous is now one of the best known designers in Finland and well known so far the five continents.



# Withdrawal, Resurrection and Relevance

By the Sixties, things had begun to change. With most of Europe, including Scandinavia having recovered from the war, and with rising prosperity, there was a return to larger, more colourfully decorated ranges. "The use of excessive decoration reached its peak in the 'Paratiisi' (Paradise) (Fig. No.26) service, designed by Arabia's artist Birger Kaipainen (1915-1988), which came out in 1970 [and is now again in production]" (Kumela, Paatero, Rissanen, 1987, p.92). At the same time, this range shows the influence of Kilta. If you examine the plates, cups and bowls, it is evident that they are very similar to those of Kilta. The casserole dish also relates to Kilta, in its folk quality, and in my opinion aesthetically far out-shines the larger casserole dishes in the Kilta range.

Along with this recovery in central Europe came increased competition for Arabia, this "...continuous tightening of competition in both the foreign and domestic markets forced Arabia to reduce its range of products at the beginning of the 1960's" (Kumela, Paatero, Rissanen, 1987, p.97).

This competition continued to increase in the Seventies, which was a time of general industrial crisis in Scandinavia, particularly in the consumer goods industry. While Scandinavia had enjoyed a dominance during the Fifties and early parts of the Sixties, cheap imports from developing countries, the oil crisis and rising labour costs undermined the competitiveness of many companies, including Arabia. By 1974 Arabia's catalogue only showed 17 tableware services, of which only three were from the Fifties, one being Kilta. (Kumela, Paatero, Rissanen, 1987, p.97) The economic situation continued to worsen, with increasing competition on the international market, and to try to stabilise the situation, Arabia, in 1975, signed an agreement with its Swedish competitor Rörstrand, the original founder of Arabia. By this agreement,

# Withdrawal, Resurrection and Relevance

By the Sixties, things had begun to change. With most of Europe, including Scandinavia having recovered from the war and with rising prosperity, there was a return to larger, more colourfully decorated ranges. The use of excessive decoration reached its peak in the 'Paradise' (Fig. No. 10) service, designed by Arabia's artist Hjalmer Karpman (1915-1988), which came out in 1970 (and is now again in production) (Kumpulainen, Pansanen, Rissanen, 1987, p. 93). At the same time, this range shows the influence of Kilita. If you examine the plates, cups and bowls, it is evident that they are very similar to those of Kilita. The cassette dish also relates to Kilita, in its folk design, and in my opinion aesthetically far outshines the larger cassette dishes in the Kilita range.

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decision-making was transferred to Sweden for a period of three years, in an attempt to eliminate competition between Finnish and Swedish ceramics companies. Shortly afterwards, in the 1975, only 8 services were shown in the catalogue. One of the services withdrawn was Kilta. The decision to withdraw Kilta was taken on the advice of Swedish consultants, a decision which angered Franck and the public, and which was seen as a defeat for good design. The reason given for its withdrawal "was that Kilta was no longer profitable to produce despite its reputation as a cheap and popular series and multi-million sales throughout the world" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.62). Franck disputed the reasons for Kilta's withdrawal, when in 1977 he went public with his side of the story, claiming that "once-fired earthenware products like Kilta could earlier be produced in the huge sanitary ware kilns, almost as by products of lavatory pans and wash basins. This effected considerable savings in energy." (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.63) This remark is slightly misleading though, as only some articles of Kilta were once fired, the rest, continuing like other ranges to be twice fired. Kilta's sales though, had been declining since the early Sixties and it seems likely that, though Kilta was indeed cost saving in its production, this was being offset by its poor sales during the early part of the Seventies. During this period though, the sanitary wares, which were the largest part of Arabia's production, were transferred elsewhere and a complete reorganisation of production took place, including a switch from earthenware to stoneware: it is likely that this had as much an effect on the decision to withdraw Kilta, as did its sales.

Arabia invested FIM 26 million (USD 7 mill) in new techniques and organisation between 1975 and 1980. In 1980 the first stage of the new investment plan was completed. This had involved the building of two new fully automated tunnel kilns, which came into service on the 26th October 1979. What these new tunnels achieved were higher quality, increased productivity, lower energy costs and improved working environment. The new kilns halved the time for firing and reduced the firing temperature considerably, both of which had direct effects on costs. As well as the new kilns, considerable investment was put into a "new production flow system. The flow is now product orientated, not function orientated as earlier: cups are now produced in one line, dishes in another, bowls and jugs in a third, and so on" (Design in Finland, 1981, p.66).

decision-making was transferred to Sweden for a period of three years, in an attempt to eliminate competition between Finnish and Swedish electronics companies. Shortly afterwards, in the 1970s, only 2 services were shown in the catalogue. One of the services withdrawn was Kilti. The decision to withdraw Kilti was taken on the advice of Swedish consultants, a decision which angered Frank and the public, and which was seen as a defeat for good design. The reason given for its withdrawal was that Kilti was no longer profitable to produce despite its reputation as a cheap and popular scores and multi-million sales throughout the world" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p. 63). Frank disputed the reasons for Kilti's withdrawal, when in 1977 he went public with his side of the story, claiming that "once-fitted carboware products like Kilti could hardly be produced in the huge amounts were Kilti almost as by products of its many parts and with waste". This effected considerable savings in energy" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p. 67). This remark is slightly misleading though as only some articles of Kilti were made from the rest, continuing like other ranges to be twice fired. Kilti's sales though, had been declining since the early 1970s and it seems likely that though Kilti was indeed cost-saving in its production, this was being offset by its poor sales during the early part of the 1970s. During this period though, the company was which were the largest part of Artek's production were transferred elsewhere and a complete reorganisation of production took place, including a switch from carboware to stoneware. It is likely that this had as much an effect on the decision to withdraw Kilti as did its sales.

Artek invested £M 26 million (USD 7 mill) in new techniques and organisation between 1975 and 1980. In 1980 the first stage of the new investment plan was completed. This had involved the building of two new fully automated tunnel kilns, which came into service on the 20th October 1979. When these new tunnels achieved were higher quality, increased productivity, lower energy costs and improved working environment. The new kilns halved the time for firing and reduced the firing temperature considerably, both of which had direct effects on costs. As well as the new kilns, considerable investment was put into a "new production flow system". The flow is now product orientated, not function orientated as earlier cups are now produced in one time, dishes in another, bowls and jugs in a third, and so on" (Design in Finland, 1981, p. 66).



The other major changes were that Arabia switched from using earthenware to stoneware, which also allowed Arabia to introduce a completely once-firing process, for all articles.

“Stonegoods are a fresh Arabia medium of which a new grade has been developed by means of the new press. This grade is thinner and more hard wearing than its predecessors. In colour it is all white. A new clay mixture, a purer process and Arabia’s know-how in once firing account for the result” (Design in Finland, 1981, p.66).

The first range to be produced by this new process, in 1980, was ‘Artica’ (Fig. No.58), designed by Inkeri Leivo. This range shows many influences of Kilta, being undecorated, in simple shapes, though with a softer line.

Though he had rejected the Swedish consultants’ proposal to revamp Kilta, Franck had always been interested in redesigning Kilta. During the Seventies, Franck claimed that,

“Today Kilta looks a little clumsy, the colours hopelessly drab. Some technical developments in production methods could allow a cautious redesign of some of the articles.....My idea of redesign lies mainly in trying to accomplish the original intentions e.g. transparent cobalt blue glazing...thinner articles etc” (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.88)

Franck got this chance in February 1981, when Arabia introduced his ‘Teema’ series, which in English translates as ‘Theme’; and “as the name suggests” was “an improved and more complete version of the same theme” (Design in Finland 1982, p.64). ‘Teema’ resulted from continued calls from both dealers and consumers at home and abroad for the return of ‘Kilta’.

The differences between Kilta and Teema are minimal and in fact some of the lids from Kilta can be used with Teema. The most notable change was in the material, and process used. While Kilta was made of earthenware, Teema is made of stoneware in a completely once fired process. This allowed Franck to thin most of the articles giving them a less ‘clumsy’ and more refined look

Some other small changes occurred in the objects themselves. For example a new ‘American high cup’ or “mug”, as it is termed in the Arabia flyer was introduced which

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"Arabia's new first Arabia medium of which a new grade has been  
developed by means of the new press. This grade is thinner and more hard  
feeling than the previous one. In colour it is all white. A new clay mixture  
press process and Arabia's know-how in one stage account for the result."  
(*Design in Finland* 1981, p.60)

The first range is produced by this new process in 1980, was "Arabia" (Fig. 10.18).  
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"American high cup" or "tong", as it is termed in the Arabia liver was introduced which



Fig. No. 58

'Artica' (1980-), Inkeri Leivo,  
Arabia, Finland









previously did not exist. The plates in general are larger in size, as are the serving bowls and the square plates. Also, the serving bowls were given better handles; as Franck describes, "A small but important feature is the Knob, which is now a little larger, fits the hand better and provides better grip" (Franck, Siltavuori, Form.Function.Finland, 1981, p.49). New production methods introduced in 1990 also allowed the rectangular dishes to be produced by a pressure casting technique whereas previously these were produced by slip-casting. This would have considerable savings in time.

What might have pleased Franck is the fact that the range returned to a more basic set, reduced to just 19 pieces so much closer to the original idea Franck had intended. Gone from the range are, among others, the original casserole dishes, egg-ring, baker series and two sized pitchers. Also noticeably absent are the bread board and eggholder by Kaarina Aho, making the range more of a tableware range rather than a kitchen range.

The difficult financial situations during the Seventies, and Arabia's investment in new technology and organisation, forced Arabia to concentrate more and more on the upper end of the market. This has meant that Teema has not been aimed at the same market that Kilta was originally aimed at. This is the greatest pity of all. When launched Kilta had a specific social purpose. It was shortly after the end of the war, money was tight, people needed flexible, cheap, but beautiful looking tableware, which didn't rely on normalised conventions. By the time Teema was launched, it seems as though much of the social aspect was lost. The marketing of Teema seems to rely heavily on the success of its predecessor, Kilta, and on Franck's name. This is made easier with the fact that there is an obvious guaranteed market in people who had originally bought Kilta, and would like to renew their range.

So now, forty three years after its initial launch as Kilta, is Teema losing its relevance? Has society changed too much since 1945? Franck himself commented: "At a time when society does not change rapidly, it is possible to survive for a longer time at the

previously did not exist. The plates in general are larger in size, as are the serving bowls and the square plates. Also, the serving bowls were given better handles as Frank described, "A small but important feature is the knob, which is now a little larger. It is more secure and provides better grip" (Frank, Silberman, From Frankfurt, 1981, p. 49). New production methods introduced in 1990 also allowed the rectangular dishes to be produced by a pressure casting technique whereas previously these were produced by slip-casting. This would have considerable savings in time.

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So now, forty three years after its initial launch as Kitha, is Teema losing its relevance? Has society changed too much since 1945? Frank himself commented, "At a time when society does not change rapidly, it is possible to survive for a longer time in the



level of the past, following technological and social developments.” He continued, “Radicalism is however necessary when progress stops or renewal is only superficial” (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.194).

Has that time for ‘radicalism’ now arrived? Is Teema now only living on its buyers expectations of Arabia’s wares being of good quality, good aesthetics and by a known designer? Is it in fact the name that is being sold and not the idea and the function. If this is the case Franck would be appalled, having remarked once that “the goal is that an industrial article is produced, sold and bought as an object whose own characteristics determine whether it is good or bad, beautiful or ugly” (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.82).

So has Teema lost its relevance? I don’t believe so. Franck imbued his designs with his eternal beliefs of flexibility and an aesthetic which, by linking into peasant culture and its use of geometric forms, has allowed Teema to remain as fresh looking as when first launched in 1953, as Kilta. These are what have allowed such designs as Teema to remain viable products today. The present Arabia catalogue still mentions that “Teema tableware adapts to many purposes.....and separate dishes can be mixed and matched....other tableware as well” (Arabia, Made For Life, 1995, (catalogue)). Another argument to back Teema’s relevance, is that today Teema is Arabia’s joint number one seller along with ‘Artica’. Though this has not always been the case. During the Eighties, ‘Artica’ was by far Arabia’s most popular model, with Teema far behind in second, but since 1990 Teema’s sales have increased by 500%! Frederick Gotthart, a Marketing Manager for Hackman (who now own Arabia), believes that this is not only the result of an increased marketing campaign, but also that “the Nineties are somewhat similar to the Fifties, with more basic values for living, and a less materialistic society, which resembles that of the Fifties” (Interview, 15 February 1996).

Another reason, in my opinion for Teema’s continued presence in Arabia’s range, is not only its popularity but its ‘Finnishness’. Hilkka Hiltunen stressed the importance for Arabia’s image of promoting a Finnish identity:

“We have thought about this quite alot here and also what is the basic idea about the design and what we want it to be. I think we have this national design sense built in somehow, so we choose designers who have this [in their

level of the past, following technological and social developments." He continued:  
"Rationalism is however necessary when progress stops or renewal is only superficial."  
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position as Arabia's designer for Frankman (who now own Arabia) believes that this  
is not only the result of an increased marketing campaign, but also that "the customer are  
somewhat similar to the Frank with more basic values for things, and a less  
materialistic society, which resembles that of the Frank's character." (Kaj Franck, 1997).

Another reason in my opinion for Frank's continued presence in Arabia's range, is not  
only its popularity but its 'Finnishness'. Mikko Hiltunen stressed the importance for  
Arabia's image of promoting a Finnish identity.

"We have thought about this quite a lot and also what is the basic idea  
about the design and what we want it to be. I think we have this national  
design style built in somehow, so we choose designers who have this in their



work]....so we can keep the Arabia line quite distinct" (Interview, 21 September 1995).

Teema/ Kilta certainly does this, being in fact one of the first designs to create this identity during the Fifties.

This Finnish identity, evident in much Finnish Design, is not only the result of a largely agrarian peasant culture, which remained in Finland up until the beginning of this century, but also of other factors. Principally, Finland's geography has affected the Finns' relationship with nature and their political history, also religion, which is largely Lutheran, has resulted in a population which is both diligent and achieving. The Lutheran religion is also very stark in its visuality. Another important factor is Finland's most abundant raw material, wood. This has affected Finnish design in a number of ways, but principally in the simple constructivist manner in which it must be used as a raw material. These principles have since been carried into other materials, by succeeding generations, resulting in a largely simplified form solution. These four factors of geography, peasant culture, religion and wood, have led to a visual form which is simple and sparse with little fear of the plain surface. This form (which is often geometric) and its material qualities create a distinctive overall effect, which is always diligently worked out, so that it is not only beautiful but also completely practical and long-lasting.

The fact that it is this identity that is being sold would have pleased Franck who, as I mentioned earlier, mourned the loss of identity in much design throughout the world. Franck though, according to Severi Parko, did not consciously design his objects to look 'Finnish';

"Few Finnish artists knew so much about ethnographic traditions as Kaj Franck, and he appears to have indirectly applied this knowledge. He had, however, no wish to emphasise Finnishness, for both jingoism and expressionist self-expression were alien concepts to him.

Franck lacked that touch of primitive shamanism that could be sensed in his principal teacher Arttu Brummer and serious competitor Tapio Wirkkala" (Kaj Franck Designer, 1992, p.271).

However I disagree somewhat with this statement. While Franck may not have designed his objects from the starting point that they be 'Finnish', I believe he did consciously attempt to give his designs an identity (as I mentioned earlier), part of

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However I disagree somewhat with this statement. While Frank may not have designed his objects from the starting point that they be Finnish, I believe he did consciously attempt to give his designs an identity (as I mentioned earlier) part of



which was a certain 'Finnishness'. This would seem to concur with Franck's earlier statement, mourning the loss of identity in international design.

I also discussed this point, of cultural identity with Sonja Landweer, a Dutch ceramist who worked as a guest artist for Arabia for six months during the Sixties. She felt that unless you design something using your own cultural background, it would be basically meaningless, and lose its interest very quickly.

"They [the Finns] realised how important it was that you don't just jettison all that has been, but neither that you imitate it, but that you transform it continually into your own time. What has gone wrong in Industrial Design, is that it has flattened out into an international something which doesn't show an identity anymore. People are no longer interested in where it is produced. It is important that it has an identity of its own and that it relates to the culture that it originates from. Every culture has things of importance in it if you look for it and that has been really lost."

We also discussed the importance of individuality of Finnish design; as she explained,

"Special to Scandinavian designers is individuality, so that the design holds something of the individuality of the person. For designers in Scandinavia it would not have been acceptable to cut corners [individuality] to suit prices. And their designs could last so many seasons because it was so individual" (Interview, 26 August 1995).

So Teema's relevance lies now, not so much in its flexibility and functionality, but in its ability to express its individuality, and its heritage, which will last indefinitely, and are so much needed in the market place, which has become so bland, with few designs which express anything of the individual who designed them or the culture from where they have come.

Kilta's and Teema's individuality and cultural background are the result of Franck's unwillingness to compromise with the sales management. On the other hand, the compromise 'B model' designed specifically to please the salesmen was withdrawn from production in 1972, and has long since passed from most people's memory.

which was a certain "Finnishness". This would seem to connect with Frank's earlier statement, mentioning the loss of identity in international design.

I also discussed the point of cultural identity with Sofia Lindstedt, a Finnish economist who worked as a guest artist for Arabia for six months during the sixties. She felt that unless you design something using your own cultural background, it would be basically meaningless, and lose its interest very quickly.

"Then [the Finnish] realised how important it was that you don't just follow all that has been, but neither that you imitate it, but that you transform it, and put it into your own time. What has gone wrong in industrial design is that it has flattened out into an international something which doesn't show an identity anymore. People are no longer interested in what it is produced. It is important that it has an identity of its own and that it relates to the culture that it originates from. Every culture has things of importance to it if you look for it and that has been really lost."

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So Frank's relevance lies more not so much in its flexibility and functionality, but in its ability to express its individuality, and its heritage, which will last indefinitely, and are so much needed in the market place, which has become so blind with too designs which express nothing of the individual who designed them or the culture from where they have come.

Klein's and Frank's individuality and cultural background are the reason of Frank's unwillingness to compromise with the sales management. On the other hand, the compromise "B model" designed specifically to please the salesman was withdrawn from production in 1972, and has long since passed from most people's memory.



## Chapter 5

# Finally

It is now forty three years since the introduction of Kilta, and Teema continues to sell well throughout the world, and its design continues to look as modern as it did when it was first introduced. How has this been possible?

Kilta possessed a number of characteristics unlike those of other tableware ranges when introduced in 1953. These included the concepts of stackability, flexibility, mix-n-match, oven-to-table, once firing and being sold individually. Since then these characteristics have been copied the world over and have become very much part of standard tableware, so that today Teema no longer seems the 'revolutionary' tableware it was when it was introduced. As has been shown, not all the concepts used in Kilta were entirely original. In Sweden, Wilhelm Kåge's 'Workers Service' from 1917 as well as 'Praktika' from 1930, while not commercially successful, paved the way for Kilta. At the same time, at Arabia, Kurt Ekholm had introduced his 'AH' and 'Sinivalko' ranges during the Thirties, which introduced the ideas of functionalism and plain coloured glazes as decoration. Also in the US ranges by Russell Wright ('American Modern'-1939) and Frederick Hurten Rhead ('Fiesta'-1935) both proved that ranges sold in a more flexible manner, and which promoted more flexibility at the table, could be successful. So maybe Kilta was not so 'revolutionary' as the Finnish Society of Arts and Crafts and "the Danish newspaper, Socialdemokraten" (Kumela, Paatero, Rissanen, 1987, p.75), claimed it to be in 1953. It was a number of years though before Kilta became popular, after which it became Arabia's best selling range of all time, before being withdrawn in 1975. Later in 1981, due to popular demand, Kilta was revamped, reintroduced, and renamed Teema.

Franck realised that objects possess a language of their own and can communicate certain aspects of culture to us through them, and so used the peasant culture of Karelia, as a major influence. By linking in to this cultural heritage, Franck rid Kilta and Teema

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of the timebound fashions of the day, and managed to imbue Kilta and Teema with individuality and a timeless aesthetic, which have allowed the objects to cross socio-economic boundaries. This cultural influence also gave these objects a certain sense of spirituality, which I believe may also be termed art.

It was William Morris who once exclaimed, "What business have we with art unless all can share it?" (Cumming, Kaplin, 1991, p.9). I agree with Morris, and I believe that Kilta and Teema may be viewed as art forms which make this possible. It is this art, which is attainable to all through the possibility of multiplication and low-cost; "When everyday objects move into the field of art their meaning expands but at the same time gets fed back into our lives in this expanded version" (Jaukkuri, Form.Function.Finland, 2-1992, p.43). This can change the objects' rapport, from one of fashions and fads to a more personal level where the objects may live independently of time. After this, drinking a cup of tea may become an aesthetic experience, and the ritual of the meal, which has largely been destroyed in western culture, may in some small way be revived.

In long term production at Arabia, Kilta had a tremendous influence. Once Kilta had made its breakthrough, the management of the factory gave designers a freer hand, and the designs at Arabia became more simplistic in their line and shape, with applied decoration no longer being viewed as necessary. Also the designs at Arabia began to use Finnish influences, unlike their previous designs, which had tended to copy European models. This resulted in the designs having a feeling of individuality, which became very much a characteristic of Finnish design, and which was so important in Finland's success in international competitions such as the Milan Triennales during the 50's and 60's, and which recently, since the end of the Eighties, has returned once again. Kilta, and then Teema, have since become two of the most important pieces in Finland's design history, to the extent that even today, Teema is being featured on the cover of the January 1996 edition of the Italian design magazine Abitare (Fig. No.59), still being viewed as one of the standard bearers of Finnish design.

So what can be learnt for design is that individuality and a national identity expressed in mass production can be successful, and a means by which a small country like Finland or Ireland may be able to exert some international influence.

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ALL OF AFRICA IN LONDON



**Fig. No. 59**

**Front Cover of Abitare, January 1995, Vol. No. 347**





For me, Kilta and Teema show all that is best in Finnish design: Simplicity, functionality, and pure timeless beauty. They are objects with a sense of individuality and spirituality which gives them worth beyond their normal functions, unlike so much industrial design today. The last word I will leave to Franck, who I believe describes Kilta and Teema best in all their aspects, when he said, "The duty of design is to serve and that to my mind cannot be overstressed" (Paatero, Design in Finland, 1992, p.27).





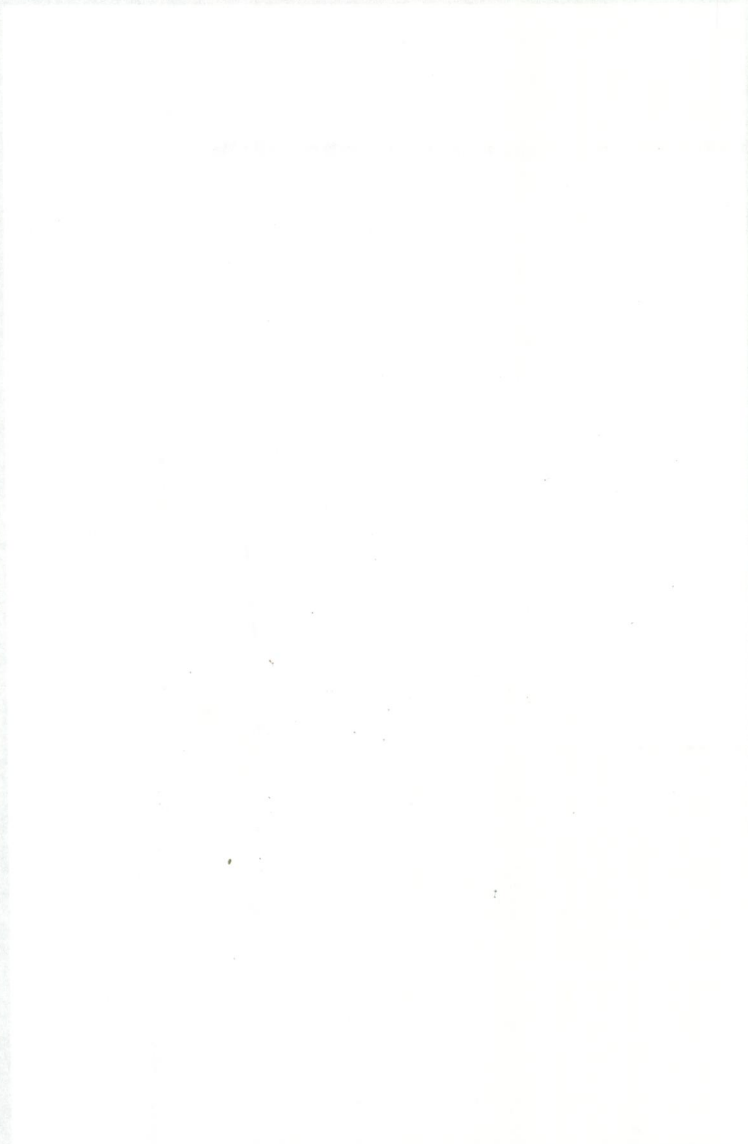
**Fig. No. 60**  
**Kaj Franck, 1959**





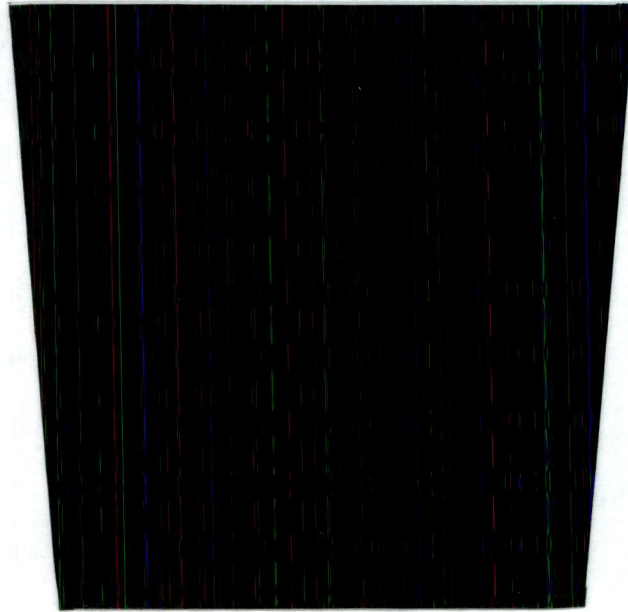


**Fig. No. 61**  
**Arabia, Finland, 1995**





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Hilkka Hiltunen	Product Manager, Hackman, Finland	21 September 1995 Helsinki, Finland
Kirsti Slotte	Wife of the Finnish Ambassador to Ireland	28 November 1995 Dublin, Éire

## Factory Tours

Arabia, Helsinki, Finland	18 September 1995
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## Letters/ Faxes

Harri Kalha	Student, Helsinki, Finland	12 November 1995
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Outi Puhakka	Arabia Factory Hostess, Helsinki, Finland	31 January 1995

