



Oodi
Ode

Helsingin keskustakirjasto
Helsingfors centrumbibliotek
Helsinki Central Library

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The first peek into the Helsinki Central Library Oodi

The Helsinki Central Library Oodi, which is to be opened in December 2018, is an open meeting place at Kansalaistori, right in the heart of Helsinki. Oodi's ground floor will be open to the public for the first time on Tuesday, 22 May. Oodi will also receive the international visibility it deserves as it is presented at the Venice International Architecture Exhibition for six months, starting on 26 May.

Helsinki's new Central Library Oodi will complement the Töölönlahti cultural and media hub formed by Helsinki Music Centre, Finlandia Hall, Sanoma House and the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma. The library of a new era offers a versatile city experience. It serves visitors from early morning to late evening seven days a week. Oodi is expected to draw 2.5 million visitors annually.

Calling card for Finnish architecture

Oodi is a striking building with its glass and steel structures and wooden facade, its design a combination of traditional and contemporary flavours. The energy-efficient library is an impressive calling card for Finnish architecture. ALA Architects is responsible for the architectural planning, and YIT is the building contractor.

"Oodi is a special site due to its location, architecture, and intended use, and it requires an innovative and professional touch from those carrying it out. We are truly excited about participating in the construction of a better living environment and bringing more life and a new meeting place in the heart of Helsinki," says **Kari Alavillamo**, Manager of the Business Premises Division at YIT.

ALA Architects won the open international architecture competition organised for the design of the Central Library in 2013. The starting point was that the building should be a public, open to everyone, safe, and free of charge city space in the heart of the city.

"Oodi will be one of the freest buildings in Helsinki, or even the Nordic Countries, where the visitor can do many things and take initiative in what they want to do," says **Antti Nousjoki**, partner at ALA Architects. "It is a constantly learning and developing tool for those living in or visiting Helsinki."

Oodi will have three floors, each with its own atmosphere. The street level is a fast-paced and changeable space with an open lobby for various events, halls, library information point, book return, and a café. The second floor will include studios, game rooms, work and meeting space, an urban workshop, and facilities for courses and interaction. The third floor resembles a traditional library the most. It will be a place to relax and unwind with its books, reading oases and cafés. You can admire the Töölönlahti park and the city centre from the Citizens' Balcony, opening towards the Parliament House.

The personnel of the Helsinki City Library, cooperation partners, and the city's residents have also participated actively in the design of Oodi. Ideas, tips, and dreams have been gathered at urban events and workshops, and through websites and various campaigns. The name, for example, came from the city's residents. A total of 2,600 suggestions, 1,600 of which were different names, were received in the open name competition organised in 2016. Of these suggestions, the jury picked "Oodi" as the name for the new library.

Oodi presented at the Venice International Architecture Exhibition

The Venice International Architecture Exhibition has become the most respected stage for architecture internationally: the 2016 exhibition drew over 250,000 visitors. The Finnish section responds to the Architecture Exhibition's theme this year, Freespace, by converting the Aalto Pavilion into a temporary library space. In his opening speech of the section on 24 May, **Jan Vapaavuori**, Mayor of Helsinki, will speak about the significance of Oodi and the commitment of Helsinki to culture and architecture.

The exhibition at the Finnish pavilion, Mind-Building, presents the development of Finnish library architecture and looks towards the libraries of the future. As the library of a new era, Oodi plays a natural part in the centre of the exhibition.

"It is wonderful that Oodi is included in the Venice International Architecture Exhibition. It is a way of telling the world about the new library, as well as the Finnish library institution," says **Anna-Maria Soininvaara**, Director of Oodi. "Finnish construction, including wood and energy-efficiency, is an area of interest even abroad," Soininvaara continues.

Architecture Information Centre Finland (Archinfo) is responsible for the exhibition in the Finnish pavilion. The exhibition opens to the public on 26 May, and will remain open for six months.

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