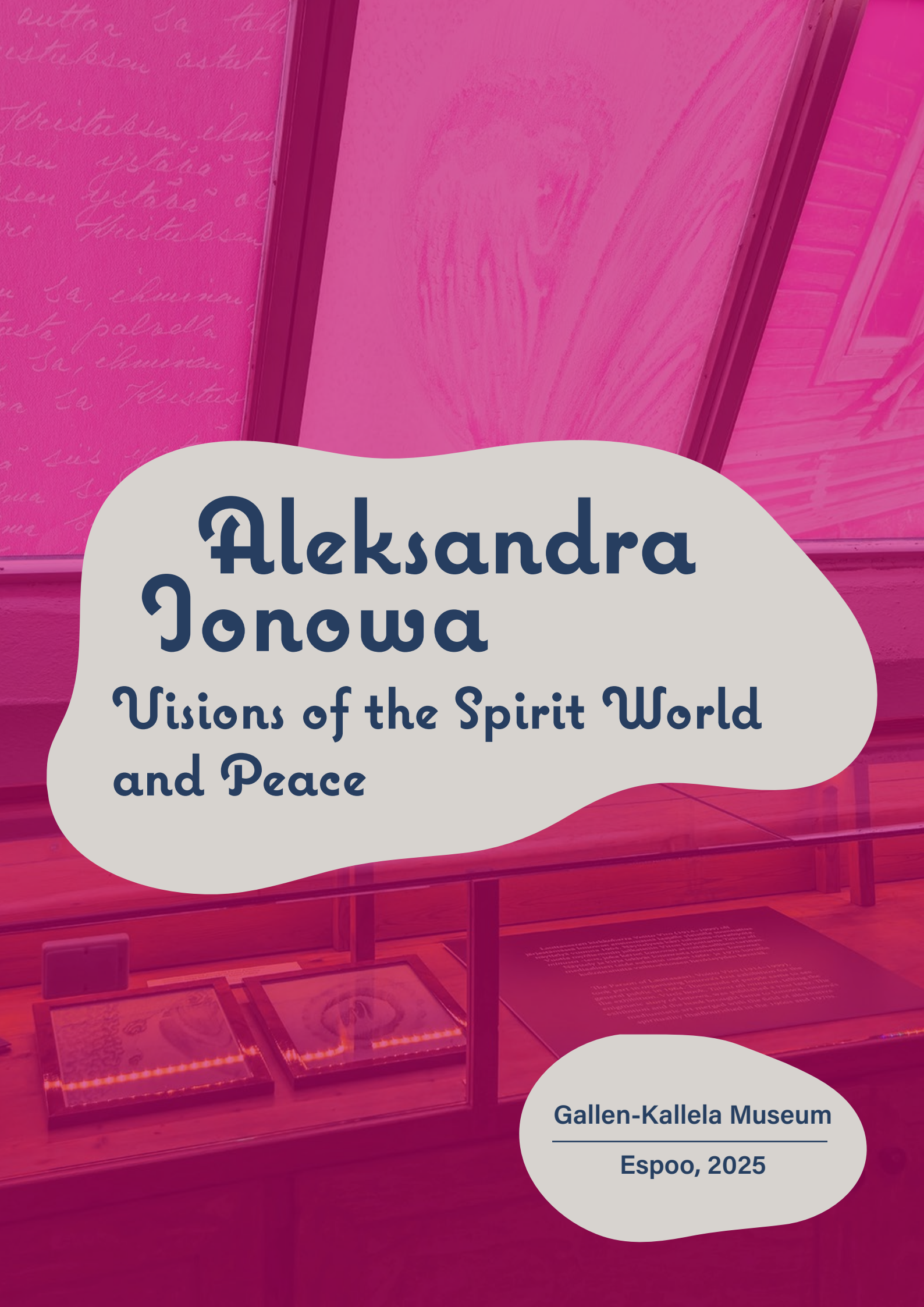




Aleksandra Jonowa

Visions of the Spirit World
and Peace

Gallen-Kallela Museum

Espoo, 2025

Aleksandra Ionowa – Visions of the Spirit World and Peace

Gallen-Kallela Museum, Espoo, 8 February – 1 June 2025

Curated by Nina Kokkinen

mediumistic and visionary art • artist women • history of esotericism and occultism • Theosophy • Freemasonry • research-based exhibition

Aleksandra Ionowa: Visions of the Spirit World and Peace was an exhibition and research project carried out in collaboration with the Gallen-Kallela Museum and the Ionowa Foundation between 2023 and 2025. The project introduced a wider audience to Aleksandra Ionowa (1899–1980), a Finnish mediumistic and visionary artist whose work had previously received only limited public attention. Like the Swedish artist Hilma af Klint, Ionowa considered her artistic practice to be guided by spiritual entities. From the late 1940s onward, she produced an extensive body of work exploring themes such as the spirit world, peace, and humanity's spiritual development.

The exhibition featured more than one hundred works selected from the Ionowa Foundation's collection of approximately 1,200 artworks, assembled by Ionowa together with her life partner, Selma Mäkelä (1892–1975). The art collection can also be understood as a spiritual diary documenting the lives and shared experiences of the two women.





Informational panel for the first set of drawings.

Informational panel for the second set of drawings.

Informational panel for the third set of drawings.

Informational panel with text and a small image.



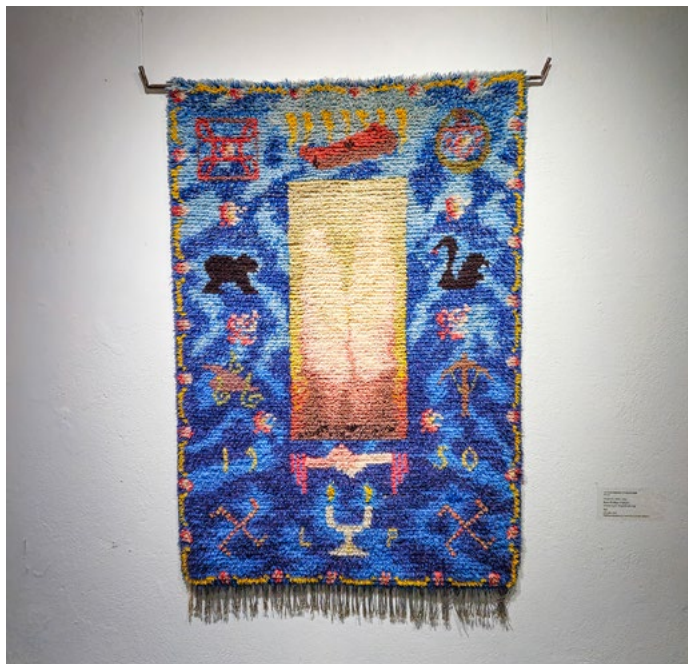
Informational panel for the fourth set of drawings.

Informational panel with text.



Informational panel for the robe.

The exhibition, presented at the Gallen-Kallela Museum from 8 February to 1 June 2025, explored Ionowa's work in relation to the cultural history of esotericism in Finland, women's agency, and the broader international field of mediumistic and visionary art. Challenging the perception of Ionowa as a solitary mystic working alone, it highlighted her active role within esoteric, cultural, and artistic networks. Living in the Lahti region, Ionowa and Mäkelä became involved in Theosophy in the 1920s, and over time Ionowa attracted a diverse circle of followers and supporters representing various spiritual traditions as well as figures from Finland's cultural sphere. In addition to Ionowa's mediumistic art, the exhibition featured archival materials as well as Masonic regalia crafted by Ionowa and Mäkelä for use at gatherings of the theosophical Ruusu-Risti Society.



"In its serene, natural setting, this exhibition invites visitors to absorb Ionowa's message of peace, her encouragement to reflect, to hope and to heal..."

Art historian and curator Vivienne Roberts, *Raw Vision*



The exhibition project resulted in a scholarly publication based on new research and previously unexplored archival materials from the Ionowa Foundation. The Finnish edition (published by the Gallen-Kallela museum) was edited by Nina Kokkinen and Anne Pelin. A modified English-language edition, *Light from the North: Aleksandra Ionowa, Mediumistic and Visionary Artist* (eds. Nina Kokkinen & Vivienne Roberts), will be published by the London-based publisher Strange Attractor in 2026. It is distributed by MIT Press. Contributors include leading scholars of esotericism and mediumistic art: Manon Hedenborg-White, Nuppu Koivisto-Kaasik, Nina Kokkinen, Vivienne Roberts, Tiina Tiilikainen, and Elina Vuorimies. The Finnish edition won the title of Book of the Year on Fringe Knowledge in 2026.

