



Steely: Works by Maritta Nurmi at the exhibition.



Finnish artist fashions playful works in metal

HÀ NỘI — A playful exhibition by Finnish artist Maritta Nurmi entitled *After the End of Art Anything Goes*, has opened at Art Việt Nam Gallery in Hà Nội.

Nurmi, a visual artist born in Finland, has been based in Hà Nội since 1994 and is well-known for her installation art. Nurmi's background both in art and in natural sciences, together with her experience of Asia, lends her work a multi-layered and multicultural feel.

The artist is famed for her richly detailed work in silver, aluminium and copper leaf on canvas. In this playful exhibition, that combines art and fashion, she has managed to add text to textile to accentuate her works' effervescent surfaces.

Freed from the constraints of making art as it is currently known, Nurmi explores all sorts of media and objects, el-

evating the everyday and mundane into what we may call the zone of the sublime.

Large round aluminium trays used for steaming rice are suddenly transformed into whirlpools of flora and line; small wooden stools, playfully patterned, spring from the floor to the wall, while their corresponding tea tables are transformed into colourful, functional artworks.

Stainless steel work tables are essays in structure and line; dragons and Buddhas appear faintly in their mirrored surfaces, transporting the object and the viewer into a fanciful world.

Nurmi uses images of roses and repeats them many times in her artworks. "Rose means everything," she explains. "I love roses and I think people do."

In the midst of all the playfulness, Nurmi takes her ideas

into yet another dimension. Inspired by the colourful textiles of the people of Benin, in West Africa, where she was an artist in residence in 2009, she had fabrics of her artworks made in India, which she then transformed into her own eclectic mode of fashion – *Couture Adorable de Maritta*.

Stripes and circles, angles and lines, colour and pattern all collide into a splendid kaleidoscope of fun and frolic, a true testimony to the function of art as art and art as function wherein "anything goes."

"Nurmi's artworks really sur-

prise and attract me," says Phạm Trung, lecturer at the Việt Nam Fine Arts University.

"She is an artist of liberalism. She breaks all old orders to create the art of her own. However, she is influenced by Eastern philosophy and Zen Buddhism. She stands at the border of many cultures."

Nurmi has exhibited her works in many countries including Finland, Germany, the UK, the US, Thailand, and Việt Nam.

The exhibition will run until January 7 at Art Việt Nam Gallery, 7 Nguyễn Khắc Nhu Street, Hà Nội. — VNS