



Minna Canth 1844–1897

Pioneering Finnish female writer and egalitarian

Minna Canth, author, playwright and journalist, was one of the most influential social activists of her time in Finland. Equality was her central idea, and she usually expressed it

from the point of view of women and the underprivileged. Besides a writer Minna Canth was also a successful businesswoman. For this widowed mother of seven, who singlehandedly had to take care of her family, earning money was a necessity.

Minna Canth is regarded as the pioneer of realism in Finnish literature. She wrote short stories, novels and plays; the latter are still performed on stage in Finland. The year 2010 marks the 125th anniversary of the publication of the play *Työmiehen vaimo* (The Worker's Wife), one of Ms Canth's main works.

She regularly held a salon, known as Minna's Salon, at her house in Kuopio, inviting well-known artists

and luminaries. The group discussed topics like new scientific advances, trends in arts, and topical ideological trends.

Minna Canth's radical views on the improvement of the situation of women in particular, also met with much opposition at the time. To demand equal opportunities for women to get an education, and to encourage women to get a profession and gain independence, was quite unheard of.

Minna Canth is the first woman to be honoured with a flag-raising day in Finland; it is 19 March, her birthday. The official name of the flag-raising day is "*Minna Canth's Day, The Day of Equality*". ►



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The reverse shows a half-face of a woman, and hand-writing, symbolizing the literary work of Ms Canth, crossing the face.

The “Minna Canth and Equality” Collector coin

Mint of Finland as authorized by the Ministry of Finance, has minted the official commemorative coin “Minna Canth and Equality” with a nominal value of 10 euro.

Minna Canth (1844–1897), author, playwright and journalist, was one of the most influential social activists of her time in Finland. Ms Canth boldly fought for equality – for improved circumstances for women and the underprivileged in particular – through her writings as well as otherwise in her sphere of influence.

A design competition was arranged for the Minna Canth and Equality collector coin; it attracted 16 entries. The victorious work, “Eye of a needle” by sculptor Reijo Paavilainen, highlights Minna Canth as a writer as well as an influential person and a bold egalitarian. The artist was also inspired by the fact that the collector coin was to be dedicated to a woman.

The reverse shows a half-face of a woman, and handwriting, symbolizing the literary work of Ms Canth, crossing the face. The obverse depicts a needle with a length of thread forming a symbol of equality. ▶



The obverse depicts a needle with a length of thread forming a symbol of equality.

The “Minna Canth and Equality” Collector coin

Face value	10 €	Minting year	2010
Diameter	38,6mm	Mintage	Proof 14,000, BU 6,000
Metal	Ag 925	Designer	Reijo Paavilainen
Weight	25,5g	Issue date	19 March 2010