

Art4Rights

Deputy Mayor Emelie Gustafsson

Passagen, Linköping, 28.3.23

A warm welcome to Linköping. I am happy to see you all here and to have the opportunity to show you our fine art gallery Passagen.

In Linköping we highly value public art, as I am sure you all do. It is a part of social development and promotes cultural life in Linköping.

Public art enriches our society.

Maybe sometimes, we don't think about it or realize for one moment how it would be if it wasn't there. If, for example we didn't have our sculptures that taught us about our history, the murals that reflect on our society or the light works in winter that gives us warmth and wonder. Our town would be a cold, bare and uninviting place.

Public art gives us a sense of belonging. A belonging to – to Linköping, to Sweden, to Europe. Art unites us.

Sometimes we participate in public art, and that engages us even more. It can be something planned like the opportunity to write some words on a tile that now sits on a wall near the water – or, something completely unplanned, and it could be debated whether we should call this example public art, maybe we should just call it participatory art, like making dogs out of wood and putting them in roundabout during the night.

Art gives us a chance to express our own ideas and opinions. Through art we learn about different perspectives and to accept them and understand them.

And we do like to come together and disagree about whether we like something or not.

Differences enrich us. Within the European Union we all have our own cultural heritage but we also have a lot that unites us.

In a troubled world, the importance of international collaboration is more important than ever. This project gives us the opportunity to collaborate at an international level as well as on a local level.

In Linköping, we are very proud to host the conference on public art where you all participate.

Art is free. Art is an important part of freedom of expression. Public art is the cultural heritage of the future. This is what we fight for!

I hope that you will gain experiences here that will be valuable to you in your countries and your hometowns after you return home.