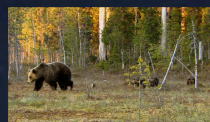




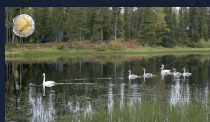
Cabin in Finnish forest



Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), Finland's national animal



Map of Finland



Whooper swan (*Cygnus Cygnus*) Finland's national bird, depicted on Finnish coin

INTRODUCTION

Finnish culture arose from the dense woods of Finland, a lake-filled land of evergreen and deciduous trees that reaches from the Baltic Sea into the Arctic Circle. The Finns lived from the forest, using the trees for their structures and utensils. They cleared the land by the slash-and-burn rotational shifting cultivation method, enriching the soil with tree ash. They burned trees and basked in the dry heat of their saunas. Their national epic the *Kalevala* speaks of life in the forest. Finns are current leaders in the field of forest bioenergy.

GOAL

To create the Finnish Nationality Classroom at the University of Pittsburgh.

MISSION

The Finnish Room will reflect the culture and customs of Finland and honor the heritage of the Finnish immigrants who came in 1638 to America's New Sweden Colony and those who came later in the early 1900s to work in steel mills and coal mines in Pittsburgh and the surrounding communities of Monessen, New Castle and Steel City.

CLASSROOM DESIGN

A competition for the Finnish Classroom's design sponsored by the Finnish Nationality Room Committee was open to all Finnish students of architecture and design. Mika Gröndahl's winning design *The Big Dipper* combines traditional décor and state-of-the-art audio-visual technology. His proposal is based on a Finnish *Savupirtti* (*Smoke Cottage*), a common dwelling in Finland in the 1700s. The room has a wooden table with two long benches and wall logs blackened by smoke. Small openings in the ceiling for light in the shape of the Big Dipper's constellation and display artifacts are the only decorative elements.



BIG DIPPER

The Big Dipper is a part of the constellation the Great Bear (*Ursa Major*). Polaris (α UMi, commonly North-, Northern-, or Pole Star) is the brightest star in the constellation *Ursa Minor*, very close to celestial pole; it is a proven navigational tool since remains almost "fixed" in the sky in the same location.



Seija Cohen; Mirsada Begovic, MD, PhD; Sally Morton, PhD; Frank W. Eld; E. Maxine Bruhns, MA
Nationality Rooms and Intercultural Exchange Programs, University of Pittsburgh



Classroom seating



Fireplace



Birchwood artifacts



Sauna items display



Woodwork

WORK ON DESIGN AND DISPLAY ARTIFACTS IN PROGRESS

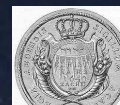


Finnish Composer Jean Sibelius (1865–1957), a significant figure in the history of classical music

In 1939, Frans Eemil Sillanpää was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature "for his deep understanding of his country's peasantry and the exquisite art with which he has portrayed their way of life and their relationship with Nature."



Art, such as this triptych depicting the story of Aino in the Kalevala is promoting the idea of a Finnish nation.



Seal of the Royal Academy of Turku founded in 1640 by Queen Christina of Sweden



Historic Map



Kantele, Finnish musical instrument



Frontpage of *Maamme-Vårt land*, the national anthem of Finland, by J.L. Runeberg



Kielo, Lily-of-the-Valley (*Convallaria majalis*), the National Flower of Finland



University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning is currently home to 29 Nationality Rooms



Mikael Agricola, the father of the Finnish written language



AN ASCETIC SETTING JUXTAPOSED WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY

A cutting-edge Tablet-PC operated projector system will enable the big screen to serve as a blackboard and a Video-PowerPoint display. The middle part of the screen can be made dark and one may write on it with regular chalk as well as with an electronic pen. The professor's and students' tablets will be connected to www via WiFi network. When not in use, the screen will display the historical themes and vibrant seasonal images of Finland.

