



# Sharing letters and art as digital cultural heritage, co-operation and basic research Albert Edelfelts brev



### edelfelt.fi

In 2017 letter collections of the Finnish artist Albert Edelfelt (1854–1905) were adopted as a Cultural Heritage in the National Register of Unesco's Memory of the World. Albert Edelfelts brev is a web publication developed at the Society of Swedish Literature in

Finland (SLS). In co-operation with the Finnish National Gallery, we publish letters of Albert Edelfelt combined with pictures of his artworks. The co-operation between institutions and basic research of the material has enabled a unique reconstruction of Edelfelt's artistry and his time, freely available to researchers and other users.

### Artworks

On an artworkpage users find a picture and earlier sketches of the artwork. All the events from the letter abstracts, tagged to the specific artwork, are listed in chronological order.

### örekomster i brev

en och vy från Luxembourgträdgården med bonner och letta för att Standertskjöld skulle få välja, men han beställde båda: dan nbourgträdgården för 6000. "Au Bois de Boulogne" är nästar ourg-trädgården" kommer att vara intressant att måla. "I den" blir lika stor som "Lördagskväll vid Hammars". Edelf

elfelt har arbetat mycket, ska bli skönt att "slå dank" i södern; reser om lörd

### ag d. 14 april 1886 14 april 188

atius och Lydia" går inte bra; Edelfelt ska gå ut i Luxembourg-trädgården så t det blir sol, det moderna intresserar mer än romerska ateljéfigurer. Edelfel

rädgården", har gjort en studie i Mac ux trädgård. Edelfelt har litet Salongsfeber; blir glad om han har framgång h om "I Luxembourg-trädgården" blir bra. Börjar måla "I Luxembour idgården" den 3 eller 4 maj.

### s d. 28 april 86 28 april 188 Dsäker koppling Målandet har inte löpt de senaste dagarna

delfelt har lånat amma och bébé av Pincharts bror, måste gå ner till trädgård





• The website Albert Edelfelts brev launched in September 2014.

- Our intention is to publish all the letters Albert Edelfelt wrote to his mother Alexandra (1833–1901). The collection consists of 1.310 letters, in the care of SLS.
- To our disposal we also have close to 7.000 pictures of Edelfelts paintings and sketches in the care of the Finnish National Gallery.

# **Searchability**

The editors do basic research in identifying artworks, persons, locations and subjects. This makes it easier for the user to navigate the material. Each letter, artwork and person has a page of its own. Even locations and subjects are listed and searchable.

### Letters

Each letter has a permanent web resource identifier (URN:NBN). Brev Permanent id URN:NBN:fi:sls-3308-1403107529700 subjects using reference words from We tag ALLÄRS (common thesaurus in Swedish).



Three challenges for the web publication Albert Edelfelts brev: How to combine 1) a tradition of scholarly text-based digital humanity, 2) with digital representation of a cultural heritage, and 3) make it a relevant source for users. Here is how we have done it, and how we further plan to develop the website.

# Persons

On a person-page, users find basic facts and links to other webpages with information about the person. Any events from the letter abstracts mentioning the person are listed as well. Tagging persons to events, makes it possible to build graphs of a person's social network, based on how many times other persons are tagged to the same events.





The letters are available as facsimile pictures of the handwritten page. We write abstracts of the content, divide them into seperate "events" and tag all



# **Open science and copyright**

Apart from researchers, we want to open up the cultural heritage to a broader public and group of users. Each month the editorial staff writes a blog post on SLS-bloggen. Albert Edelfelts brev also have a profile on Facebook.

The web publication is open access. The mix of different sources and the co-operation between heritage institutions has led to a mix of licenses for how users can copy and redistribute the published material. The pictures of the artworks are copyrighted, while the letters, texts and data have Creative Commons-licenses. Data with Creative Commonslicenses is freely available as open data through a REST API.

### PRESENT

The current system had the initial challenge of how to make a handwritten text searchable. This results in abstracts, divided into "events", to which we tag metadata. The tagged events make it possible to collect all the relevant information the letters contain about a person, artwork or a location into one place. They also make it possible to demonstrate a person's social network with a graph. By giving each artwork a separate page, we can combine all relevant information from the letters with pictures of the artwork and its earlier sketches.

### **FUTURE**

The development of transcription programs for handwritten texts, makes it probable that we include fulltext searchable transcriptions of the letters.

We would like to find a common practice for user rights; if possible, that all the material would have the same license. We intend to invite other institutions with artworks of Edelfelt to cooperate, and thus make a complete as possible site with the artworks of Edelfelt.

We plan to offer the metadata and some of the source material in Finnish and, hopefully, English translations.