

ARCTIC *ART* NEWSPAPER



This publication is part of the larger, umbrella project initiated in 2019 that gathers organizations and curators in the northern regions of Norway, Russia, Sweden, Finland and Greenland. The Pigeon-Gram Collective and Arctic Art Book Fair also spring from this collaboration.

The aim of the project is to support artists in the Arctic region, strengthen the collaboration between art organizations and encourage the development and production of artist books and independent printed matter.

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BarentsKult

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INTERVIEW *with* THE EDITORIAL *team:* MARION BOUVIER, PAAVO *Heinonen* AND *Anastasia* PATSEY

CONDUCTED BY OLIVIA EVANS

Olivia Evans: Hello! Today we are meeting with the editorial team of the *Arctic Art Newspaper*. We will ask Marion Bouvier, Paavo Heinonen, and Anastasia Patsey some questions about the publication and how it was put together. Let's start with the selection process. What factors did you consider important when selecting submissions?

Anastasia Patsey: First, we started with an open call. The applications were reviewed by a larger group of representatives from the partner organizations. After that we worked more closely with the pre-selected materials. On one hand, there were some formal factors that we considered, on the other, we tried to create a shared vision of what we'd like to see in the publication.

Marion Bouvier: I think the main criteria was regional diversity of the artists. We also took into consideration diversity on many levels, to include not just what we liked or the partner institutions liked, but what would make the diversity of art practices in the Arctic more visible.

AP: Something we all agreed on was to show contemporary art from the Arctic region from a new perspective, a perspective of diversity, as Marion said. This meant not only highlighting regional diversity, cultural diversity, and gender diversity, but also breaking stereotypes of what Arctic art is. Very often, outside of the Nordic area the image of Arctic art is very much influenced by the geography and the nature of this region. Frankly, we wanted to have less snow and mountains, which for many are the first association when they hear "art from the Arctic region" and more people, individual visions, life stories, some experimental approaches.

OE: This is the first edition of this newspaper. Was there a specific goal in terms of creating a cohesive publication? What were you hoping the publication would show as a whole?

Paavo Heinonen: Of course the most important part in any publication is the start and the end. I think that's what we discussed the most. There are about 30 artists, lots of different themes, and a few textual essays and journalistic articles, so it is a lot like a magazine. I do rely much on intuition when it comes to contributions. *Kaltio* comes out about six times a year, so I've made about 65 issues of *Kaltio* so far. While selecting contributions, we try to have a few different categories. If there are specific themes, such as 'people' or 'landscapes,' then that also plays a role. We don't necessarily look at the images, but consider textual clues when figuring out which pieces might work in progression.

MB: I think the key decision that we made was not to have something like an exhibition, because that's what you might think of first when you make a collection of Arctic art. That's also why the term "newspaper" is important; we're building a narrative, telling a story. Otherwise, we as editors would be almost unnecessary. This is about making a story; the beginning and end are important, but so is the progression and the associations between stories. Again, diversity is important to manage. We didn't want to create huge contrasts or dramatic tensions, but a harmonious, dynamic narrative. One that would make the reader wonder what comes next, maybe find parallels between different art practices.

AP: We very much relied on Paavo's experience in setting up the storyline and placing contributions. When I work with publications that offer so much freedom as this one, I often work similarly to exhibition-making. This means searching for images that work well with each other and trying to create connections and dialogues. I imagine myself turning the pages and I think of the future reader's experience.

OE: When reading the contributions, one notices the diversity of art forms, media and themes. Also there is an emphasis on Indigenous artists. Could you explain why this was so important for you when working on the newspaper?

MB: I am a French person living in northern Norway, and one thing I felt very early on when I came here is the discrepancy between the reality of living here and the narratives that are created about northern Norway – especially coming from the South, which are still often rooted in colonization and the neocolonialism linked to tourism. If I talk specifically about Tromsø, in the media abroad and in southern Norway, there's a lot of emphasis on the northern Lights, husky tours, Sámi people as a kind of costumed people. These are neocolonialist visions of going to the North: that it is an unpopulated region, and that there is no need to invest too much in it. Today, we still have this narrative. But when you live here, you see how many different stories there are, how many different people and diverse cultures.

We are three editors from different places, with different backgrounds and genders and expressions, and I think that's the wealth of humanity, so it's quite natural to try and highlight this.

PH: In the northern part of the Nordic region, Sámi issues are quite hot, and still at the moment there's a lot of discussion about how we are treating these areas, with mining and industries and building roads and railroads. It's important to try and ensure that we

wouldn't completely lose or miss out on those voices for a suggestion of what 'Arctic art' looks like. We actually got very few submissions in the open call from Sámi artists. It's not easy to reach all the people and all the artists in different places of the North.

MB: Of course we're doing our best to represent diversity, but we didn't necessarily reach everyone who should have been reached, and every voice that should have been included. For example, I don't think we really had artists that worked specifically with queer art. Personally, I miss that, but that's how it is when you collect submissions based on an open call.

AP: This belongs to the specifics of an open call as a format and tool. You are never quite sure what kind of applications you will receive. And you can't influence that directly either.

PH: Yes. We aren't trying to create a definitive statement of what Arctic art is, but present a slice, show what Arctic art can look like.

AP: That's an important point. We didn't have an ambition to create an encyclopedia of contemporary art from the Arctic region. That was not the idea of the publication. This means that it might be subjective in some parts, but that is okay, because we are working with real people and their stories.

MB: I guess that's why I like the term "newspaper," because when you hear newspaper, you think of one issue, potentially more. We don't know yet if there will be more, but maybe someone could take it up and develop the idea in the future.

PH: Yes, we still don't really know how widely this will be circulated. The motivation behind the project is trying to have more people in the North be aware of all the great art that is being created in the same area. In the Nordic countries, the art scene is still centered around the capital cities, where the major institutions are. Farther away, people can be more aware of what's happening in the capital than in their own area, so that's the issue that the organizers of this project hoped to address: to have people in the North be more aware of what's going on in the North.

OE: Do you think there are unique challenges that artists in the Arctic have, in terms of distributing their art or getting the word out?

MB: Yes, for sure. There's first the question of infrastructure: less galleries, less institutions. Artists typically receive less money than in the South. It's a different type of life you get here: less visibility and fewer opportunities on an institutional level. The great thing I've witnessed here though is how much

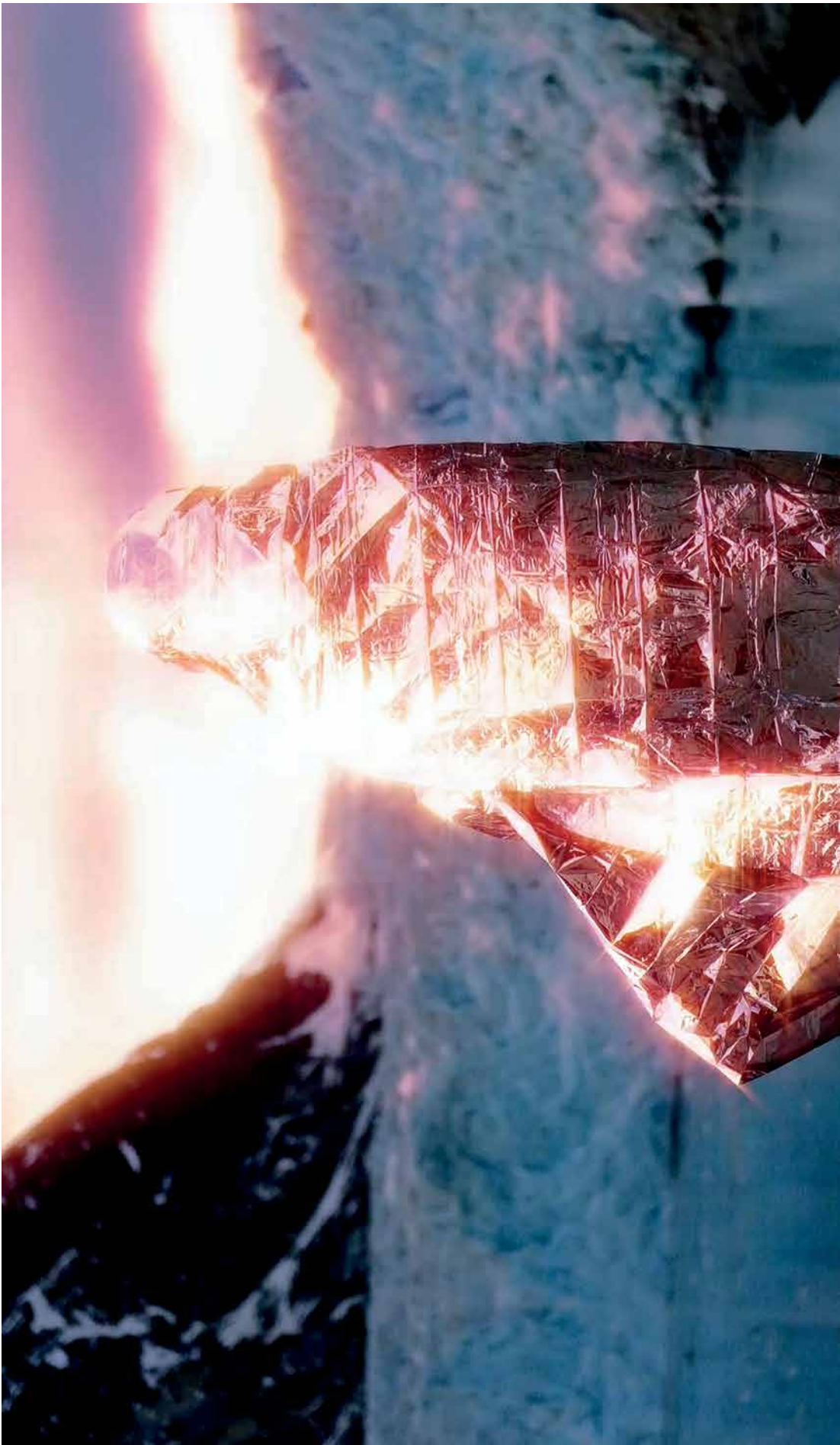
collaboration and cooperation there is between artists. We have many initiatives coming from the grass-roots level. You don't have all this institutional weight, so you're free to create something.

PH: Yes, there are no big institutions and there is less funding, but at the same time there is less hierarchy and fewer power structures. Any student artist in Tromsø can just walk up to and talk to the director of the Tromsø Art Museum, but, for example, it would take many secretaries and a lot of time to reach the director of the MOMA in New York, or even in a big institution in Helsinki or Oslo. It's a very different pace of life—and it's not necessarily a challenge, but a difference in comparison to people who live their daily life in a more hectic environment.

AP: I completely agree. I feel that there is a very strong professional community. Everyone knows each other, more or less. There's a great degree of self-organization, a community feeling, that I enjoy a lot.

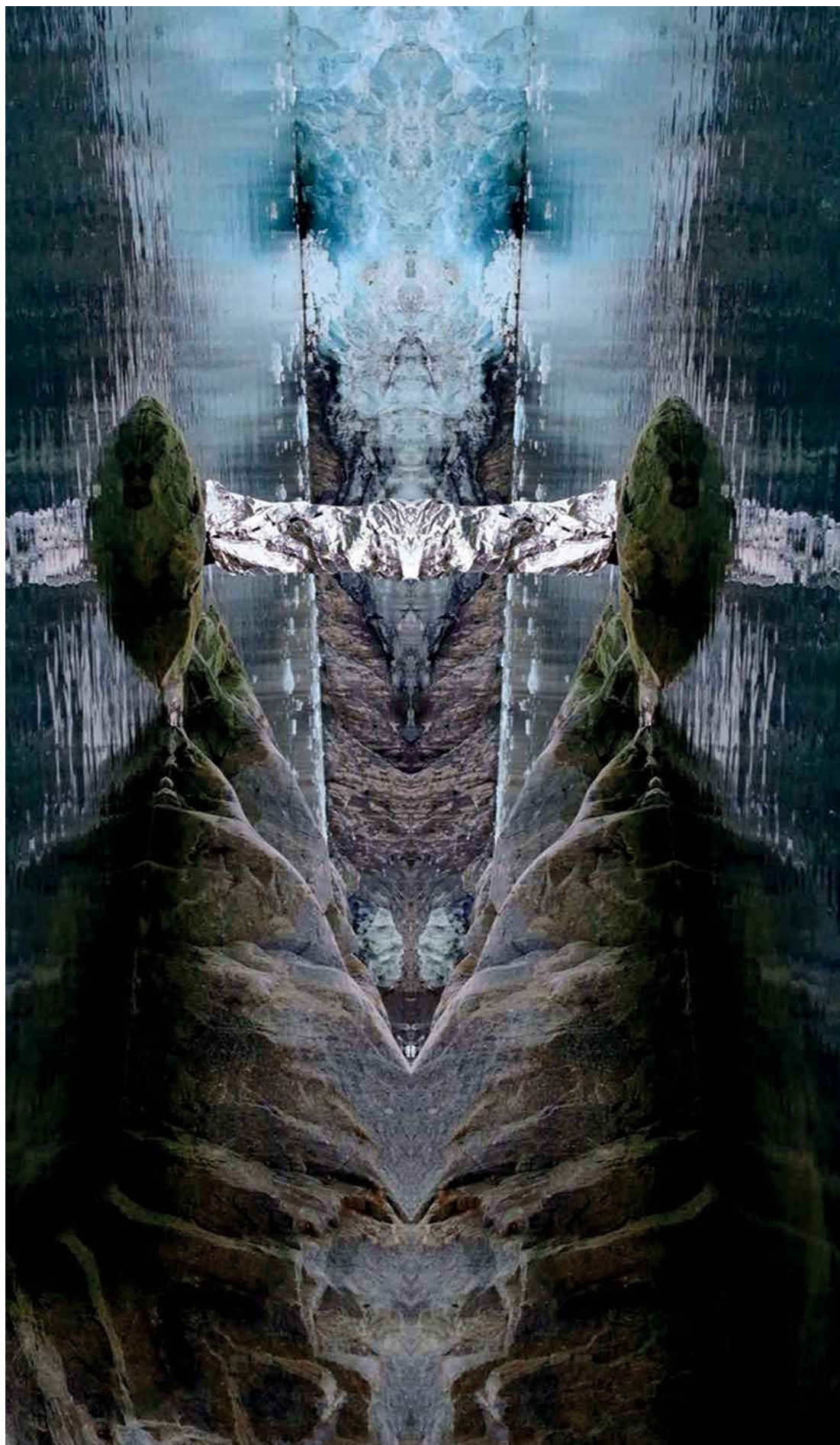


Still from: I know you are here, but
I can't see you, 2020, Stereo sound
5.21min



Still from: I know you are here, but
I can't see you, 2020, Stereo sound
5.21min

I K N O W Y O U A R E H E R E , B U T I C A N ' T S E E Y O U



Still from, The Last human desire —
a meditation of the present, 2019-



Still from, The Last human desire —
a meditation of the present, 2019-

T H E L A S T H U M A N D E S I R E

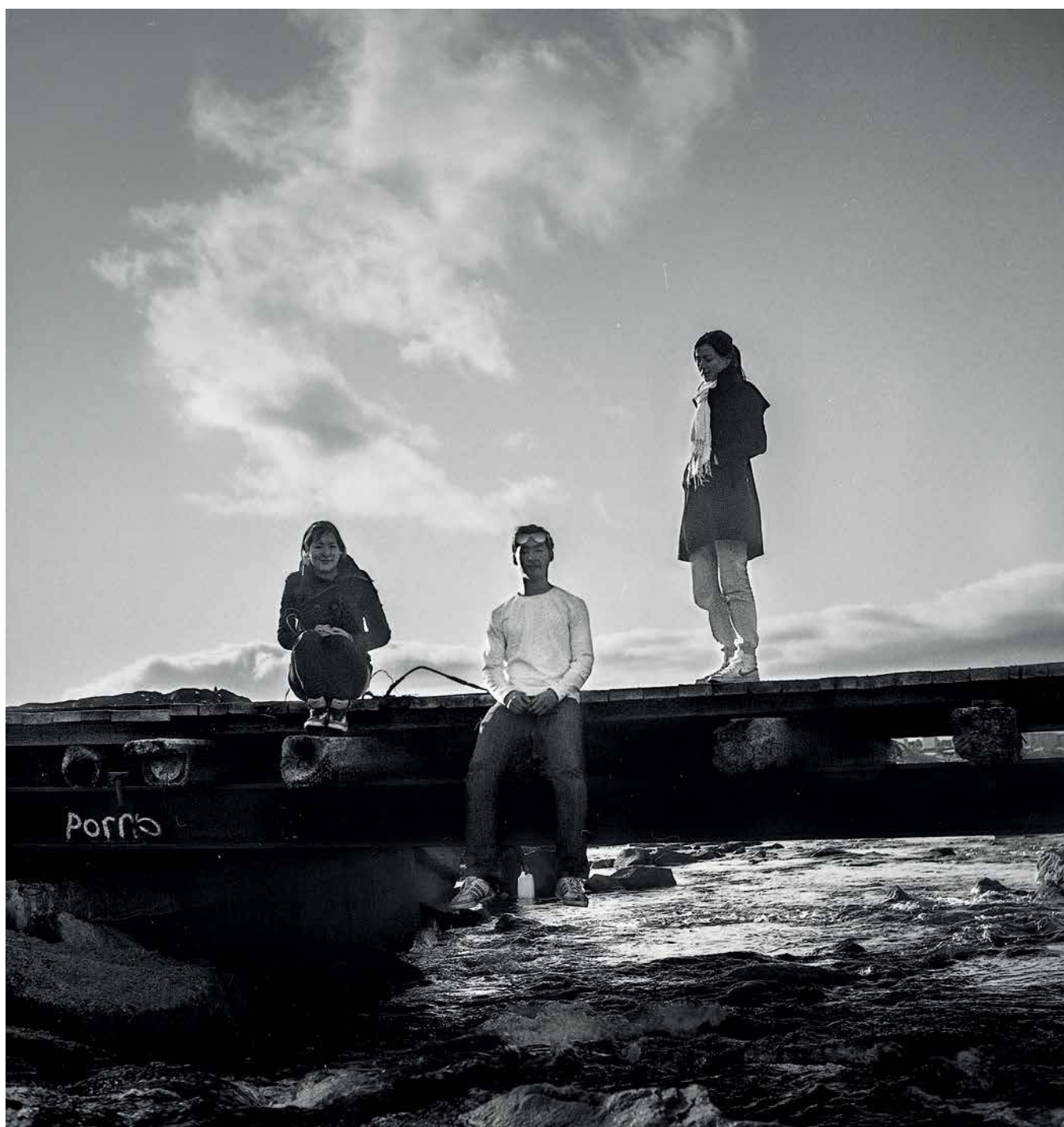
Inuuteq *Storch* GREENLAND

AT HOME *we* BELONG

At Home We Belong is an expression on needing to be accepted in different levels, as a person, as an artist, and as a society.

I come from a small society, my home town is the second biggest town in Greenland and we are about 5000 people. The whole country has around 55.000 people. Even though our nature gives us a lot, the import is very high. Wood for the houses, music, art, cars, clothing, in fact, almost everything is imported.

Because of the high level of import, we have a very open view for the rest of the world and because of the little amount of export, the world has a narrow knowledge about us. That leads to prioritising of foreign acceptance.



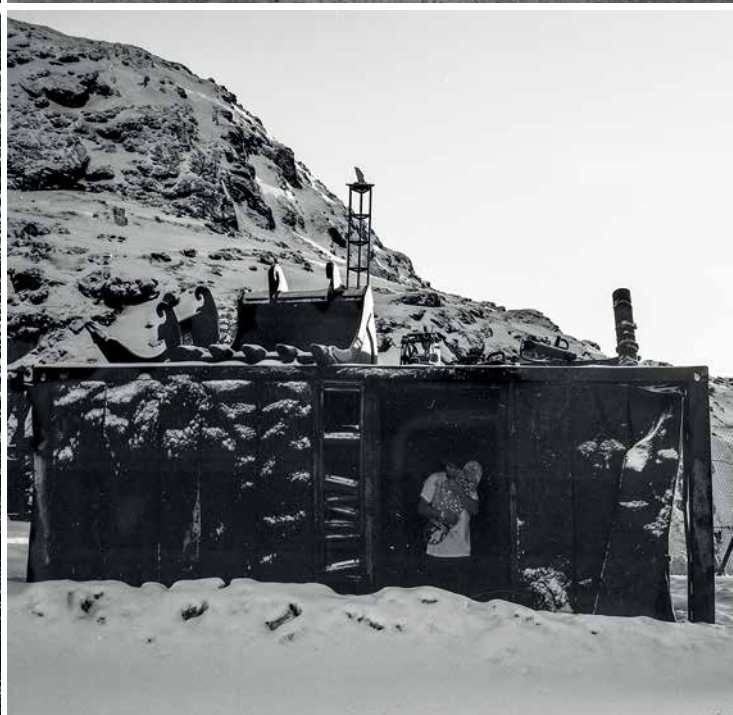
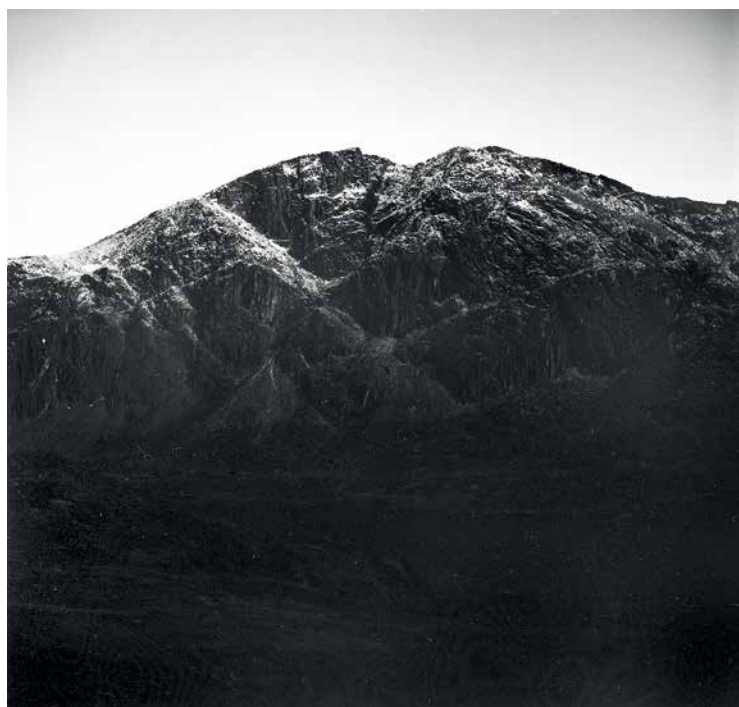
As an artist, I need to be accepted in other countries to get the acceptance of my people. On top of that we are still fighting against the stereotypes that were created when we were a colony.

This is part of the fight, the fight to remain and to know who we are, the fight to keep our identity.

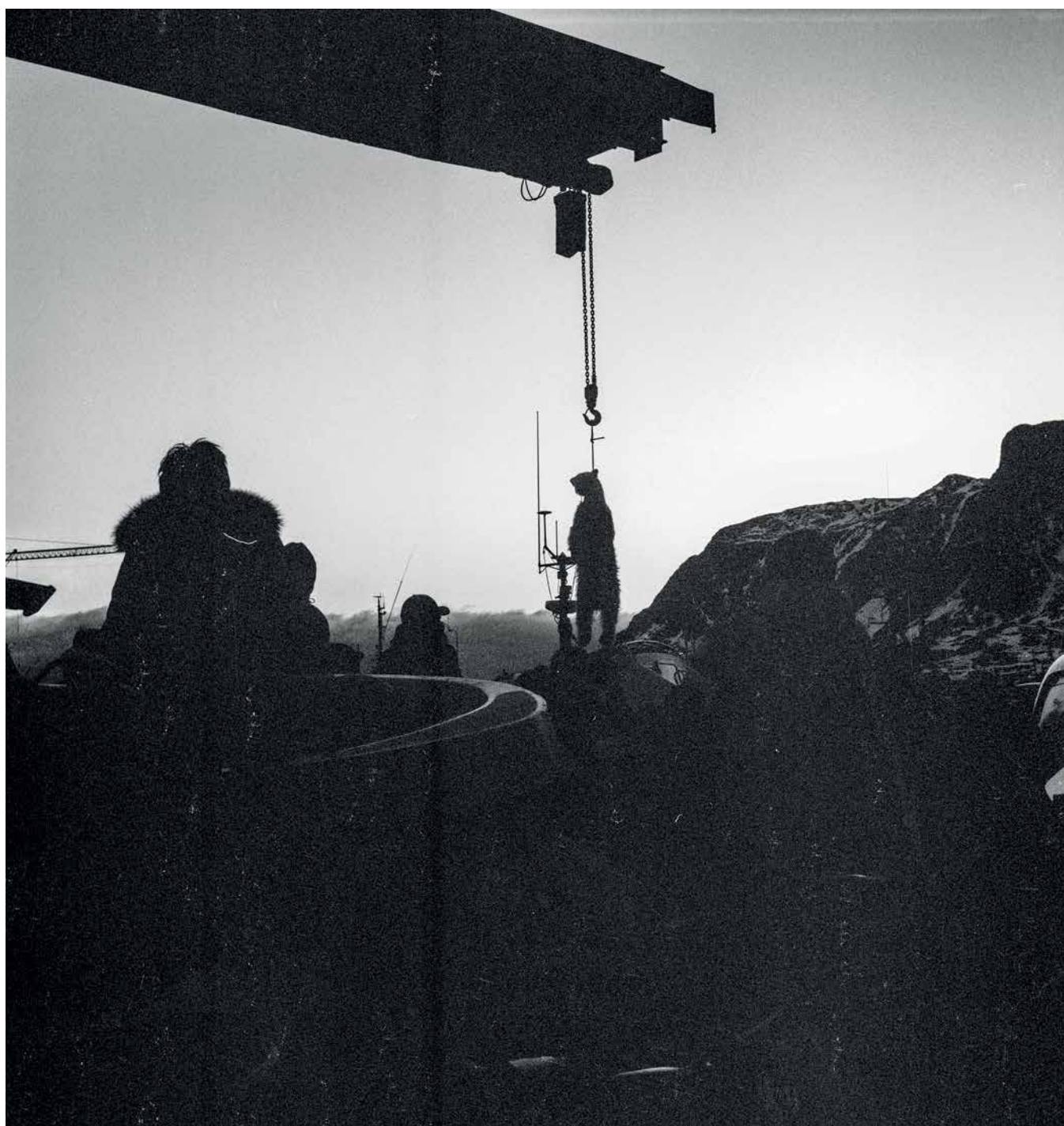
Photographs from the series
At Home We Belong,
2007-2015



Photographs from the series
At Home We Belong,
2007-2015



Photographs from the series
At Home We Belong,
2007-2015



A T H O M E W E B E L O N G

Stephanie von Spreter NORWAY

FLOWERS *from* SVALBARD

ARTWORKS BY ULLA SCHILDT
TEXT BY STEPHANIE VON SPRETER

NU LYSER GLÆDEN I HVER NORDMANS ØINE,
HANS HJERTE FYLDES AV EN EGEN FRYD,
TI SVALBARDS KOLDE KYST I NORD SIG HØINE,
MEN SLUTTER SIG DOG SKJØNT TIL VOR I SYD.
KUN BØLGEN, NORGES ELSKTE, DÆKKER OVER
DEN SKJULTE STRAND I HAVETS DUNKLE BO;
MEN SKIBET SOM EN FUGL PAA SALTE VOVER
ER NETOP FOR VORT LAND DEN RETTE BRO.
excerpt from Hanna Resvoll-Holmsen's
poem "Svalbard" (1924)①

When botanist and environmentalist *Hanna Resvoll-Holmsen* wrote her poem "Svalbard", she had already visited the Arctic Archipelago twice—in 1907, when she was part of the research expedition on board the ship *Princesse Alice* sponsored by *Prince Albert I of Monaco*, and again in 1908 when she independently conducted research to further investigate Svalbard's flora but also temporarily joined an expedition led by *Adolf Hoel*, this time supported by the University of Kristiania and Norwegian industrialists. By the time the poem was published, in 1930, Svalbard was no longer a "No Man's Land" but had become, through the Svalbard Treaty signed in 1920, part of the Kingdom of Norway. Administered by the Governor of Svalbard (acquiring a special status in contrast to the Norwegian mainland territory which was divided into counties), the legislation took effect on 14 August 1925. Thus, at the time *Resvoll-Holmsen* wrote her poem, it was already a fact that Svalbard (and the Jan Mayen islands) would come under Norwegian administration. Norwegian scientists and explorers made a crucial contribution to this historical change, not only through direct support and lobbying efforts to negotiate the treaty, but also through the scientific mapping of the territory itself.②

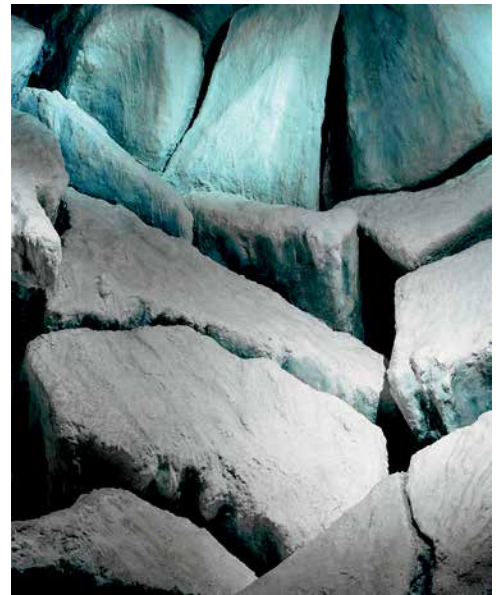
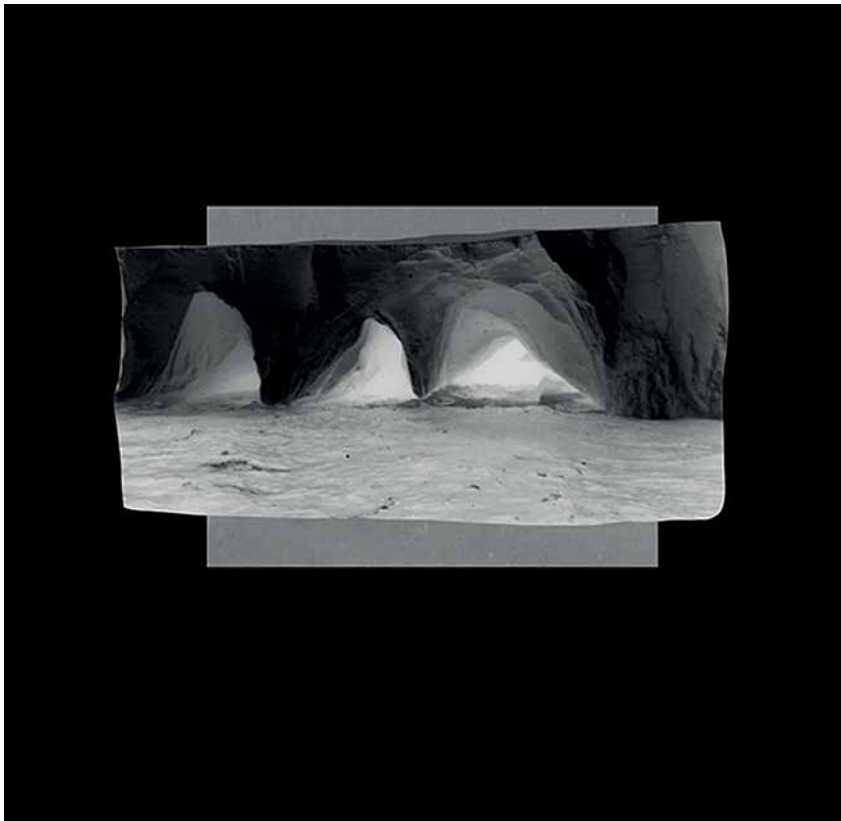
Although Svalbard had been subject to exploration and resource exploitation for centuries, which *Robert McGhee* termed "The Rape of Spitsbergen", 19th and early 20th centuries marked a heightened scientific interest and activity in and around Svalbard.③ The topographic mapping of the territory and corresponding place-naming were an integral part of such activity, which also *Adolf Hoel* and his colleague *Gunnar Isachsen* practiced during their 1906 and 1907 expeditions (the latter being the very same expedition Hanna Resvoll-Holmsen was part of):

"Hoel's first sighting of land became a reminder that this was not Norwegian territory. Vogelhoek, the northern tip of the island, Prince Karl's Forland, was named by the *Dutchman Barentsz* in 1596, and Cape Mitra was christened by the *Englishman Scoresby* in 1818. This area of Svalbard hardly bore a place name that suggested Norwegians had ever set foot there. However, when the French-Norwegian ex-

pedition in which Hoel participated completed its map-making, which had been conducted during two short summer months in 1906 and 1907, the area between Forland Sound in the south, Magdalene Fjord in the north and Liefde Fjord in the northeast had acquired 86 new place names. Famous scientists, expeditionists, and members of their families had gotten places named after them. Of the 86 persons, 49 were Norwegian. Adolf Hoel's name was given to both a peninsula and a mountain, while the leader of the Norwegians on the expeditions, *Gunnar Isachsen* generously provided his own family name to designate the region generally. The Norwegianization of Spitsbergen had definitely begun."④

Thus, one could say that Hoel's mapping activity (and that of other scientists) was fundamental in securing (Norwegian) ownership over this territory, if not even a method to secure national sovereignty. As mentioned, *Hanna Resvoll-Holmsen* participated in the expeditions that entailed these mapping processes. Thus, one should ask: what role did she play in this context? Did she possibly take a different perspective? According to Bredo Berntsen, Hanna Resvoll-Holmsen was also cartographically immortalized on Svalbard, though not by her own initiative but by that of her colleague Gunnar Isachsen.⑤ Place-naming and territorial mapping thus does not appear to have been of interest to her. Why then does she poetically express that joy shines in every Norwegian's eyes ("Nu lyser glæden i hver nordmans øine") now that Svalbard is at last connected to the Norwegian mainland?

In order to get closer to answering this, it is necessary to zoom in and note that, as a botanist, *Resvoll-Holmsen* (literally) worked on the ground to coherently map the flora of Svalbard's mid- and north-western territories. The resulting scientific material took the form of pressed plants, preserved plant specimens, living plants and a collection of seeds and photographs which predominantly found their "home" in two places: The Museum of Oceanography in Monaco and the botanical collection of the University of Kristiania (today University of Oslo). Most importantly, the material provided the basis for her research and research results disseminated in her thesis (delivered in 1910), lectures, articles and scientific publications over the course of many years. And while Resvoll-Holmsen discovered, registered and analyzed numerous new plant species and their characteristics, she also detected that Svalbard's rich vegetation and biodiversity had been dramatically diminished due to humans' exploitative activities—with many species nearly having become extinct.



↑ Fragments # I, 2015
← Hounts, 2021



↑ All the Happy Endings # II, 2020-2021
← Geology of Bear Island, 2021

F L O W E R S F R O M S V A L B A R D

Herein, I believe, lies the clue for Resvoll-Holmsen's pioneering work and her support for putting an end to Svalbard's status as "no man's land". For Svalbard's earlier status as terra nullius meant that anyone had a "right" to the territory, and anyone could exploit it to their own ends without having to adhere to any legislation or jurisdiction. This also meant that neither flora nor fauna were protected by any legislative body. *Resvoll-Holmsen* must have firmly believed that this would change with the Svalbard Treaty and Norwegian sovereignty over the territory. For we know that *Resvoll-Holmsen* was, together with other scientists like her teacher *Nordal Wille*, an avid environmentalist who realized that the protection of nature was only possible through legislation. *Wille* in fact, together with *Robert Collett* and *Ingvar Nielsen*, managed to establish a committee to draft a legislation for nature preservation in Norway, resulting in its ratification in July 1910.^⑥

Besides, *Resvoll-Holmsen* was actively lobbying for the protection of nature and the specific environments she conducted her research in. For example, she successfully lobbied to protect the areas of and around the river *Sjøa* and lake *Gjende* at *Jotunheimen* in the early 1920s.^⑦ Her scientific and environmentalist endeavours were therefore not contradictory, but inextricably intertwined. In order to preserve the flora and fauna of Svalbard, Norwegian territorialization policies were a welcome means to secure protection. Thus, Resvoll-Holmsen's attempt to protect endangered species—including her own subjects of investigation—meant that they needed to be contextualized within a larger given environment. Only then could the survival of the species be guaranteed, and only then would documentation, registration, categorization and analysis make sense.

Ulla Schildt's contextualization process, however, works somewhat differently: "By switching positions in documenting, appropriating and framing her subject matter, we suddenly see the blind spots."^⑧ *Schildt* is not photographically documenting Resvoll-Holmsen's pioneering work. Hers is an active work of re-contextualization that engages with the here and now: the ongoing project *Flowers from Svalbard*^⑨ looks at the life and work of Hanna Resvoll-Holmsen as a starting point for investigating the geopolitical and climatic changes, especially in the Arctic/on Svalbard, today.

By coupling old illustrations, photographs and maps with her own photographs, *Schildt* makes visible the changes in the environment and its flora and fauna—including the disappearance of "Resvoll-Holmsen's flowers". When "collaging" a photograph of an empty storage space with photographs of snow-covered mountains ("All the Happy Endings #II") or sequencing them with an image of pressed flowers collected by *Hanna Resvoll-Holmsen* ("Untitled (from the series *Flowers from Svalbard*)")^⑩, our associations are immediately drawn to human attempts to preserve the building blocks of nature—whether these are specimens, seeds, fossils or cells.

When relating it to the Arctic, Svalbard's Global Seed Vault project also comes to mind. Because the vault is not publicly accessible, like most depositories containing valuable material, imagination comes into play. What might a storage space look like that is capable of holding four and a half million seeds? And what happens once the vault no longer is a safe storage space due to the accelerated process of ice melting in the Arctic—as is happening with the vault on Svalbard? What type of function will such depositories, as well as archives, libraries and other depots then have? Will these still be "sites of memory, knowledge and technology serving as spaces for secure conservation" as *Lars Willumeit* has called them?^⑪ Or will there only exist artificial replacements, taxonomized fossils and specimens such as the ones visible in *Schildt's* photographs "Fragments # I" and "Geology of Bear Island"? Or will it be us humans that eventually turn into specimens as nature witnesses our disappearance? Such thoughts at least are not unthinkable, and indeed essential in post-humanist debates and anthropocentric discourses.

Ulla Schildt's *Flowers from Svalbard*, through the historical work of a largely forgotten botanist and environmentalist, thus makes us see the Arctic in a different light: no longer as a place representing the sublime, the untouched, the mythical, even exotic. No longer as a place that we can exploit to our own ends, extracting resources as we please, but rather as a place that is exceedingly impacted and governed by the fierce reality of climate change and the resulting disappearance of habitats for Arctic animals, peoples and other species.

In this context the photographs themselves, both *Schildt's* and *Resvoll-Holmsen's*, become precarious objects that speak of lifespans, both human and non-human. With a melancholic undertone, the photographs remind us that that if we don't act now, this is possibly all that will remain.

① Published in Hanna Resvoll-Holmsen, *I tidens løp* (Oslo: Some & Co.s Forlag, 1930), 56. https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digibok_2014111708072.

② The geologist Adolf Hoel (1879–1964) was an important figure in these negotiations (later also in regards to Antarctic territory) and in fact participated in numerous expeditions to the Arctic. He was part of the expedition in 1907, sponsored by Prince Albert of Monaco. Hoel was also the founder of the Norwegian Polar Institute. ③ Robert McGhee: *The Last Imaginary Place: A Human History of the Arctic World*, 2007 ed. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 173–189 ④ Einar-Arne Drivenes, Harald Dag Jølle, and Ketil Zachariassen: *Into the Ice: The History of Norway and the Polar Regions*, Norsk polarhistorie, (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2006), 281. ⑤ Bredo Berntsen: *Grønnstrømpe og hennes samtid* (Oslo: Ossiania vitenskapsforlag, 2006), 56. https://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digibok_2007050302002.

⑥ Ibid., 112. ⑦ Ibid., 118–121. ⑧ Stephanie von Spreter: *Flowers from Svalbard* (Bærum Kunsthall: 2019). ⑨ Elements from the project *Flowers from Svalbard* were shown at Bærum Kunsthall, Bærum in 2020 and under the title *Beyond the Circle* at Gallery Hippolyte, Helsinki, in 2019. A forthcoming publication *Field Notes* will include *Schildt's* project *Flowers from Svalbard* ⑩ Polemoni-um humile herbarium sheet from Hanna Resvoll-Holmsen's herbarium collection, photographed at the Natural History Museum / Arctic Herbarium, Oslo ⑪ Lars Willumeit: "Glossary", in *Deposit: Yann Mingard*, ed. Daniela Janser, Thomas Seelig, and Florian Ebner (Göttingen: Steidl, Fotomuseum Winterthur / Museum Folkwang Essen / FotoMuseum Antwerp, 2014), 39.

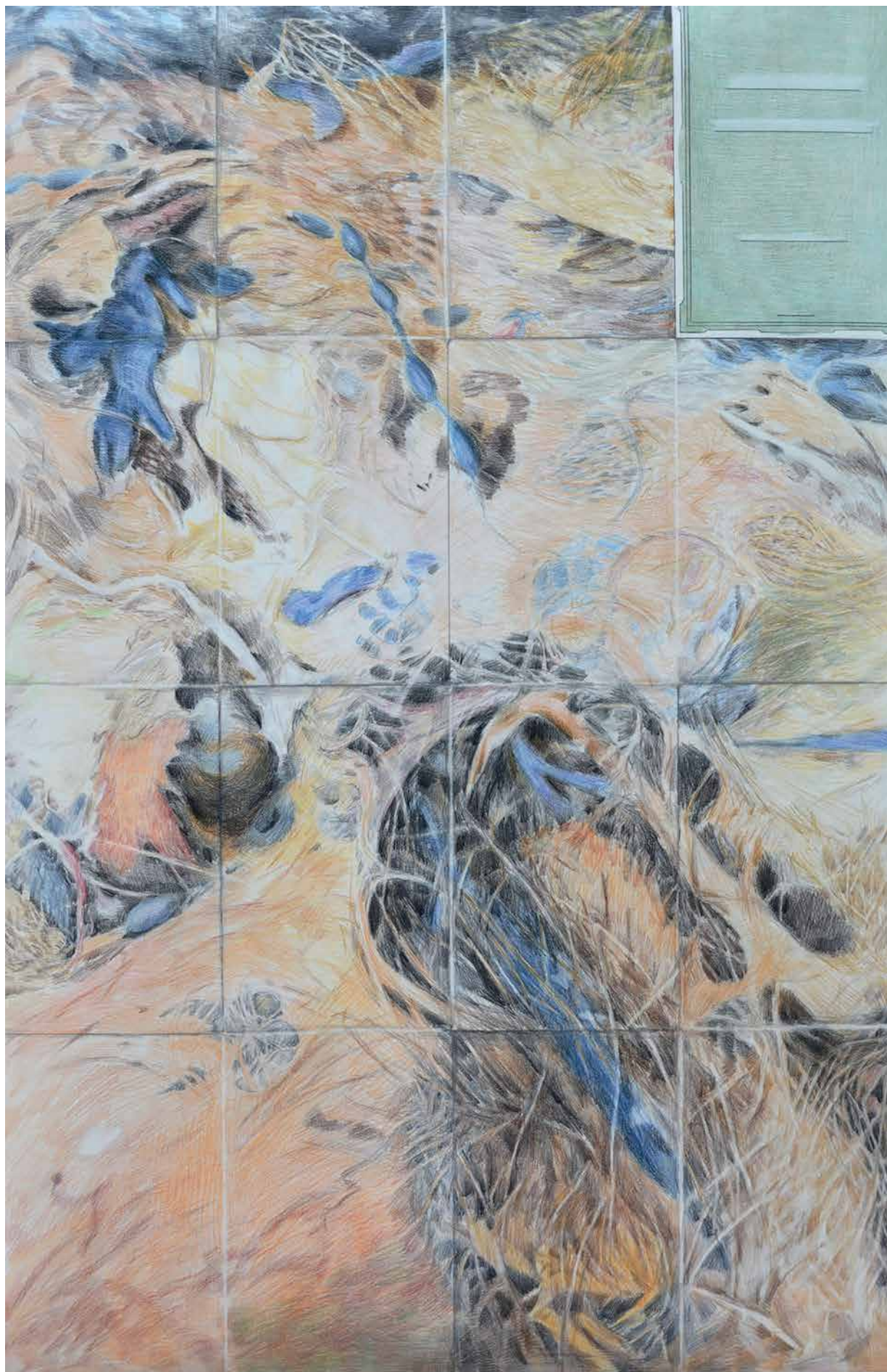


Untitled (from the series Flowers from Svalbard). Original image photographed at Natural History Museum, Oslo, 2020

Sissel *Fredriksen* NORWAY
PAPERS



Paper 1, colour pencils on paper, 114×76 cm



P A P E R S

Paper 2, colour pencils on paper, 114×76 cm

Four years ago I moved to live within the Arctic Circle.

I was born and raised in one of the largest, most beautiful and up-and-coming cities in Russia, St. Petersburg. Once upon a time, on a winter day, I went to the North, to a small town in the mountains—Kirovsk—and fell in love: with snow, with the snowy city, with mountains and with people. When I returned home, I gathered my belongings, my daughter and my cats, and left to live in the North.

Here I found inspiration in everything, especially in nature and in the people living in the mountains. I was pleased to present this at several of my personal exhibitions in Russia and abroad.

Arctic Walk. linocut, 2019

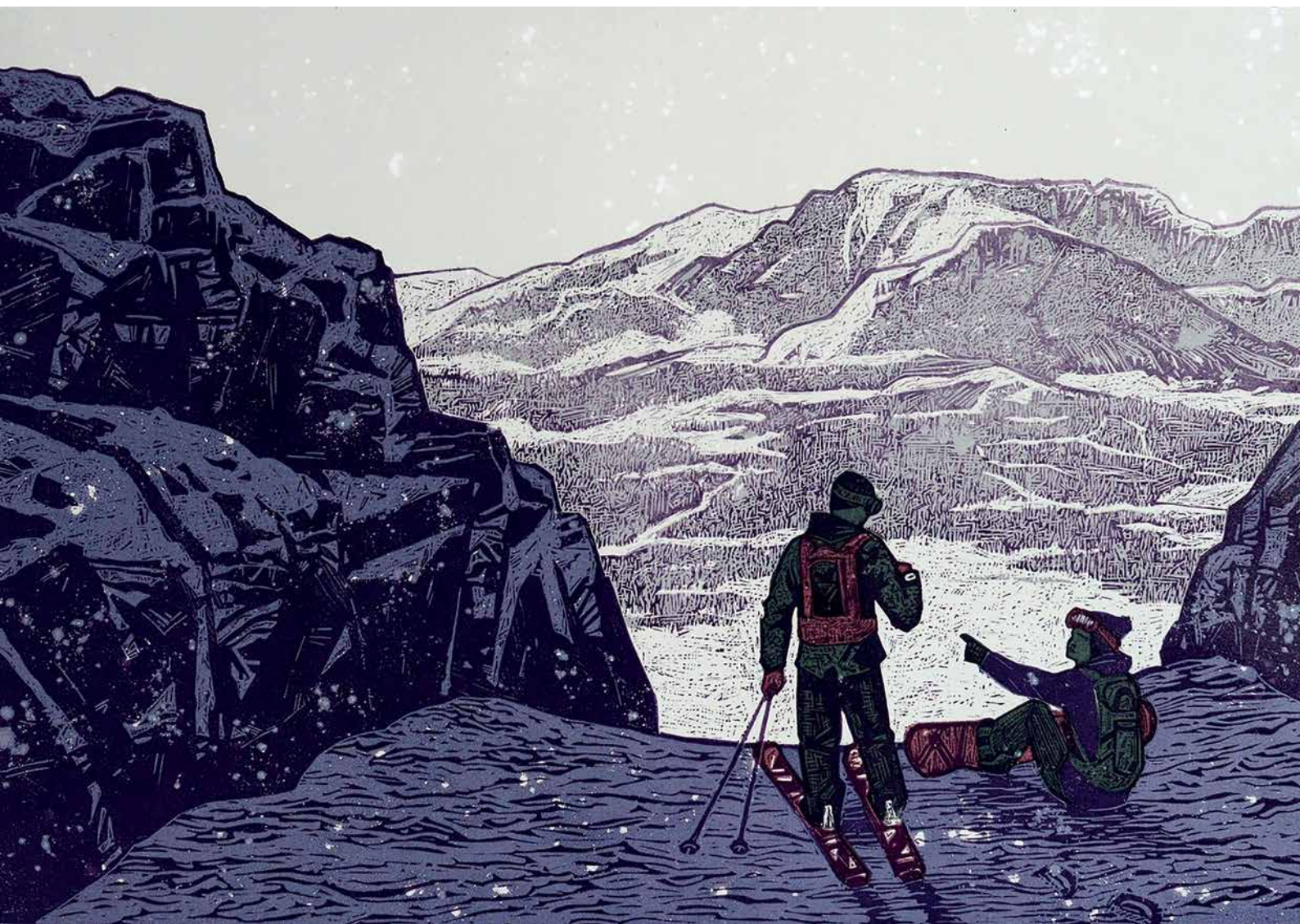


Snow and the minimalism of the North make us see more than superficially, and, most importantly, make us think about the role of Man in this world: they make us focus more on how we feel rather than how we live. The lonely figure in the snow is so piercing that you will certainly want to know: "Who is this person? How do they feel? Why are they here? Whom do they live with? How do they perceive the world around them?"

In the bustle of cities, we begin to forget what a person is. Faces merge into a crowd. We don't know our neighbours, we rarely communicate with our loved ones, we're often in a hurry. In the North, everything is different; each meeting is not accidental, each person becomes a character whom you want to stop and talk to, and who you then want to portray in a picture.

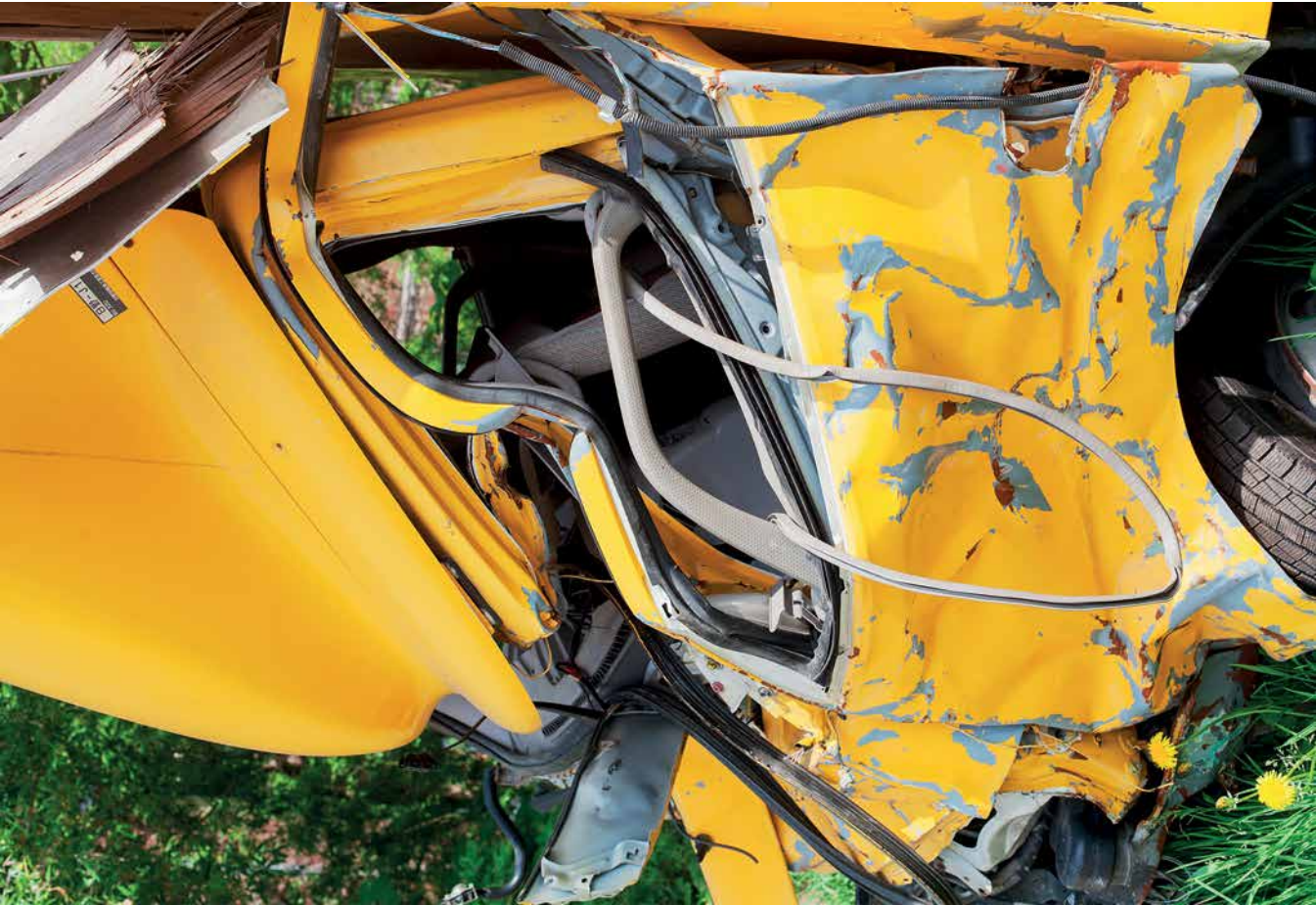
With my paintings, I want to tell my audience about a life that is more real than the one we find in glossy magazines or in the standards of happiness which are imposed upon us.

Freeriders. linocut, 2018



Leha. linocut, 2017





The presented series of portraits is establishing the relationships between the space of everyday life, which still retains the features of the past, and the agents of the modern time, whose agency was formed after the end of the USSR. By using a camera, I'm interested in constructing a gaze that captures the signs of change and the sudden gap between the two eras.





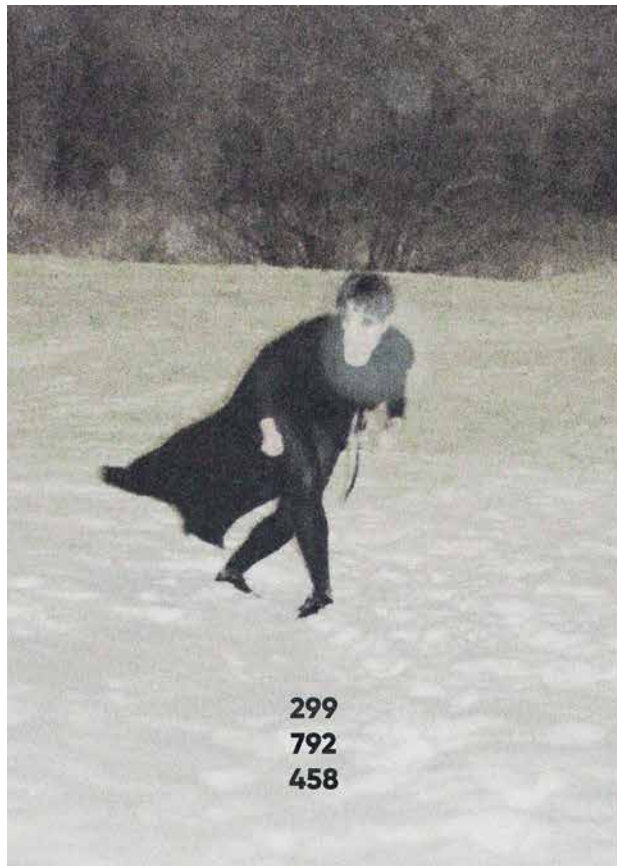


Vanya Mishin RUSSIA
ZINE "299 792 458 M/S"

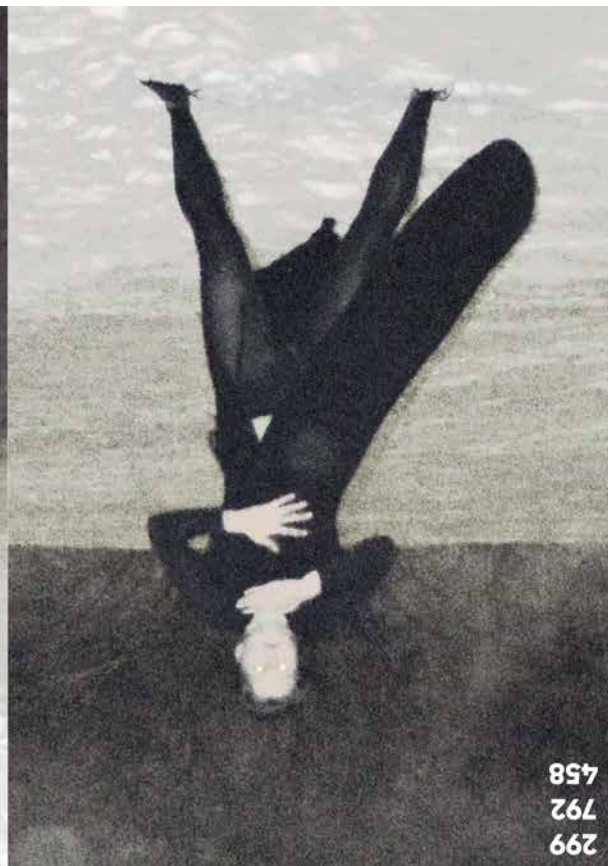
IDEA, PHOTO, VIDEO: IVAN MISHIN

DANCER: VIKTORIA KAPUSTINA

MUSIC: AUDIENCE, STRINGS AND MANY OTHER THINGS



topic: "slow culture" and the mentality of "slow people" of the north, as well as the "extra man", referring to the tradition of Russian literature. temperature at which the zine was created: -27 degrees. The main concept of the choreography and photo: confrontation with frost and cold on the street, a conflict of speeds, degrees, statics and dynamics, naked and protected. the "extra man" in our zine is one who moves at the speed of light in the head, not the body, compared with other people who are used to circumstances that move slowly in the head, but very quickly in the body.



Kaija *Hinkula* FINLAND

BUILDER

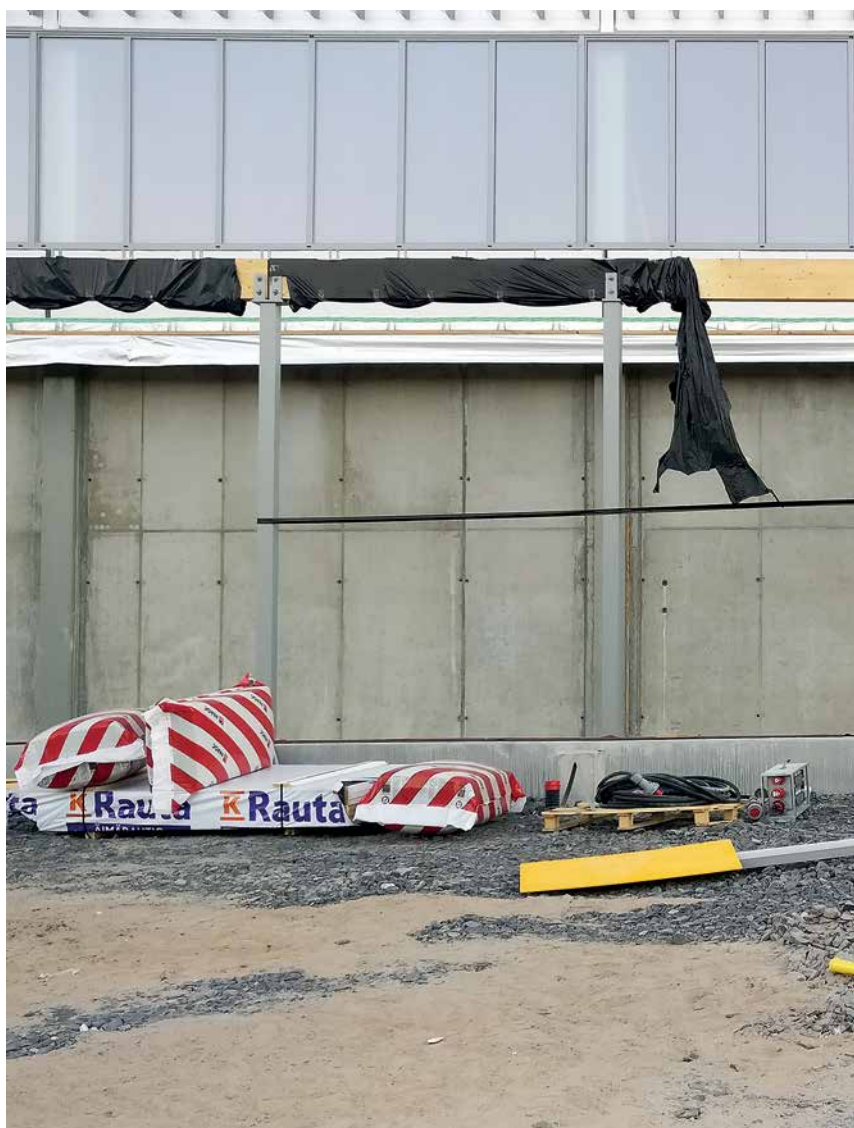
In her project "Builder", Finnish visual artist Kaija Hinkula (b.1984) combines ready-made elements and geometric shapes to form performance-like installations in different settings: beaches, urban construction sites, gallery spaces. Hinkula's works stretch the limits of painting and sculpture, expanding modernistic traditions to expanded fields of contemporary painting.

Colorful installations and sculptural paintings create vistas where reality, fantasy, play, logic and irrationality come together in surreal, post-minimalistic tableaux. The works construct the world as a mutable and ever-changing space, and contemplate the future of humanity during the Anthropocene: Is the world-building project of the human race ultimately aimed at chaos or balance? And the reality under construction—is that a constructive utopia, playful escapism or a beautiful dystopia built out of garbage?

↓ Builder-Hiukkavaara,
installation,
found object, 2020



↓ Builder-Raksila,
installation,
found objects, 2019



→
Builder-Nallikari,
installation, found objects, 2020



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Desiree Bergström SWEDEN
PLAYING *the* HUG





P L A Y I N G T H E H U G



THINKING *Tide, Sensing* SCALE

TUNING INTO THE TIDE FORMS

AN ATTUNEMENT OF BODIES AND TIDE,
AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO THINK ABOUT
RHYTHMICITY AND TIME, AND ABOUT SCALE
AND VARIOUS ENTANGLEMENTS.

The work of *Signe Lidén*, and in particular *The Tidal Sense* ①—initially a 28-metre-long "sounding canvas" stretched throughout the intertidal zone in Ramberg—inspires us to reflect on certain human and more-than-human connections and entanglements. By paying attention to sensations, the human being is not in a privileged position compared to other living beings.

① Signe Lidén's *The Tidal Sense*, a 28 metre long "sounding canvas" stretched through the intertidal zone in Ramberg in Lofoten over six weeks. Equipped with audio recording and transmissive technologies, it was an instrument for both auditive and visual research and served as a sculptural space for conversation and interaction. In September 2019 it was shown in an exhibition along with a textwork, photographs and a podcast. Part of Lofoten International Art Festival—LIAF 2019.

SENSING SCALE

Our senses are transducers from the physical world to the realm of the mind, where we interpret the information and create our perception of the world around us. Sensation is physical: when light waves hit the retina, or when the pressure of molecules hits receptors in our skin or ears. Cells, which are the smallest and most basic form of life in organisms of every kind, have membranes, a selective barrier that allows certain things to pass through. These barriers are also coordinated somehow, through inbuilt mechanisms or cycles, or through responses to environmental conditions.

These processes can be scaled up, and they relate to examples of "emergent behaviour" in how bodies tend to cluster. Think about bryozoan communities on kelp blades, where they spread out as colonies by cloning individual zooids. Or think about the coordinated movements of shoaling fish, flocks of starlings, or crowds of people: how they move and "are being moved". Interdependent co-entities participate in multiplicities through external and internal forces in multiple layers.

"All movements are dependent on rhythmicity", says neuroscientist and musician *Geir Olve Skeie* in *The Tidal Sense* ② podcast. He elaborates on how bodies automatically tend to synchronize into common rhythms: "Humans tend to adapt to each other's movements—his is what makes us co-operate." Or, as the artist Signe Lidén responds, "The sense of rhythm is a kind of community sense."

THE TIDAL RHYTHMS

How can we participate in the tidal rhythm, in the cyclic oscillations between high tide and low tide? In the intertidal zone, the heliocentric rhythm between light and darkness, which is the primary organizational parameter for humans, gives space to the underlying lunisolar rhythm that acknowledges also the influence of the Moon's gravitational pull on the planet and its oceans. A lunar day operates in cycles of roughly 25 hours, while the solar day is about 24 hours.

When your body is lying on the surface of the sea and is being slowly pulled down by the tidal water,

② In the podcast, in which these comments appear, the artist is in conversation with four individuals on the relationship between tide, sensing and long-term thinking.



it is "joined in the shared time-frame of the ocean". It rests on "a titanic marine rib cage". When the tidal wave presses the ocean towards the edge of the land, you are "part of this breath" and "its rhythm penetrates you as your presence penetrates it", the artist *Robin Everett* writes.^③

Another form for participation in the tidal time could be to think about the tide as something inside the body. We know that a body consists mainly of liquid. Through cyclic rhythms, our body is also affected by the astronomical movements that have the greatest impact on the tide. We are all "bodies of water, of different kinds", philosopher *Astrida Neimanis* says. The gravitational pull of the full moon and the new moon gives the spring tide. Water circulates across bodies and through the body. In Neimanis's liquid phenomenology, we are all different bodies of water "arisen from the same primordial soup".^④

SCALING: THE TIDAL PULL TO THE TIDAL POOL

During the time that *The Tidal Sense* was installed in the Ramberg bay, the difference between low and high tides was at its greatest on Thursday, June 8th. The high tide was 215 cm at 3.20 AM, and the low tide was 28 cm at 9.41 AM.^⑤ As the topography of the place allows for large expanses of shallow water, the intertidal zone can cover several hundred cubic metres.

Many of the beings living in the intertidal zone are among the hardest critters on the planet: those that manage to live both under and over water and on a daily basis have to deal with fluctuations in oxygen levels, salinity, temperature, and must struggle and compete for space each time the tide ebbs away. In the intertidal pool you can see the barnacles in their active state moving rhythmically in a process of filter feeding. On land they can easily be dismissed as rock-like or inanimate, when in fact they are resting or hibernating.

③ Robin Everett, "Ancestrula: Rhythm and Rooted Lungs" in *The Kelp Congress*, NNKS Press 2020.

④ Astrida Neimanis, "Hydro-feminism: Or, On Becoming a Body of Water" in *Undutiful Daughters: Mobilizing Future Concepts, Bodies and Subjectivities in Feminist Thought and Practice*, Palgrave Macmillan 2012.

⑤ www.kartverket.no



⑥ Mohawk JA, Green CB, Takahashi JS: "Central and peripheral circadian clocks in mammals", 14.7.2014.



The primary circadian clock, which amongst other functions regulates our sleep, is located in cell groups in our brains. However, recent research shows that cells in several of our other organs also contain a circadian clock^⑥, and therefore the circadian rhythm does not only belong to mammals. The circadian rhythm is regulated by the light-darkness cycle. It could be speculated whether bodies in polar regions hold a stronger connection to the pulling force of the tide and the moon, as for long periods during summer and winter there is no shift between light and darkness, and as Earth's gravity is more powerful near the poles.

The smell of the seashore is the smell of seaweed and kelp and other living organisms that live, rot and evaporate in it. The Norwegian words for kelp, "tang" or "tang og tare", are linguistically connected, stemming from the same root as English "tangle" and "entanglement". Entanglement is a tangle of threads, tangled troll nets, intricacies of our time, intricate masses.

Tuning into the tide forms an attunement of bodies and tide, and an opportunity to think about sensorial, spatial and semiotic entanglement.

SCALING TIME

Geological as well as cellular events are measured in scales that can hardly exist within thought and language. A word in the Norwegian language that refers to the horizons of distant time is 'ur'. In the text work accompanying *The Tidal Sense*, Signe Lidén writes that "a word for such a distant past in Norwegian is 'urgammel', ur- as a prefix adds a sense of deep time. Ur as a noun is a timepiece, but also means scree, landforms of broken rock. 'Rocks are verbs', says geologist Marcia Bjørnerud to her students, 'a continuum of process'."

A plastic cup is compressed time in solid form. When we drink from a crystal glass we are in contact with deep time. The use of geological material connects artists and viewers to the memory of extremely slow processes of change. The geologist *Øystein Nordgulen* explains that the concept of deep time appeared in the nineteenth century, when people working with rocks and minerals realised that the age of the Earth was many millions of years and that the concept of time was hard to fit within the biblical sense of the word. Deep time was an analogy to illustrate the endlessness of the universe. Time and distance were connected.^⑦

⑦ Cecilia Jonsson: "Prospecting: A Geological Survey of Greys I", the artist in conversation with geologist Øystein Nordgulen in a podcast produced by Peter Meanwell, *Dark Ecology Journey 3* (Sonic Acts & Hilde Methi), 2016.



If there was a bandwidth of the Anthropocene it would be the frequency band of infrasound, the artist *Raviv Gancbrow* suggests in the demonstration of his work *Long Wave Synthesis*.^⑧ The low-frequency infrasounds, which we humans cannot hear but sometimes can feel if we are attentive to the vibrations, connect the collapsing arctic glaciers, volcanic eruptions and auroras to anthropogenic activities such as debris from outer space re-entering the Earth's atmosphere (almost daily), aircraft sonic booms, nuclear testing and much more. Infrasound interacts on the scale of the topography or even the atmosphere itself. Several fish and mammals use infrasound for communication and navigation and seem to be aware of its environmental properties. The human attention to large sound waves and their role in geophysical perception extends far back in time, not least through listening to the running of hooved animals.

Tuning into deep time forms an attunement of bodies and bedrock, and an opportunity to think about colossal soundwaves propagating through matter, water and air.

SLOSHING SCALES

To stretch and pull the canvas into position each time, to spend time listening and talking within the large sculptural space the work provided, packing it and storing it if storms were forecast, re-rolling it out at low tide again to fix it before high tide: *The Tidal Sense* is a work organized in tidal shifts.

The membrane is an instrument equipped with audio recording, transmissive and amplifying technologies custom-made by the artist. The tidal wave becomes sound waves propagating in the ear. At the final stage, the vibrations travel in liquid along the basilar membrane, where they are converted into electrical signals making them audible to us.

We are permeable bodies, absorbents of our surroundings, and we exist and perform as embodied articulations of the aspects of what we are doing, whether we intend these gestures or not. With new insights, we discover new intimate connections between human and more-than-human actors and materials. We live in a time marked by many new discoveries in research and many rediscoveries of ancient knowledge, technology and cosmology. Intimate, tactile, or haptic ways of working and knowing produce a series of lasting enquiries related to places, practices, and ecologies.

^⑧ Lecture and prototype demonstration in the landscape close to Kirkenes Airport, *Dark Ecology Journey* 1 (Sonic Acts & Hilde Methi), 2014.

Artistic productions are low-threshold practical explorations and respondents that can draw attention to various entanglements and encourage response. They can shift scales. As "thinking, emerging things" they intersect different worlds of matter and meaning. As subjective cross-sections of various scales of existence, they ask us to fine-tune our senses and to listen to nuances. In encountering the constituents of the materials and media, we can discover less conspicuous material and semiotic connections in a world consisting of a series of events, processes, scales and movements.

THINKING TIDE, SENSING SCALE, NEXT ACT

"What the tidal surge thinks are the algae and animals that live there on the coast", write Signe Lidén and the biologist *Arjen Mulder*. "The rhythms of the tide make them in a play of external forces and internal counterforces." In their text, the two authors suggest making a "course in rhythmorphology"—a study of rhythm, form, and form finding in the intertidal zone. The course will start with a close study of the typology and design of the "filamentous green alga *Enteromorpha flexuosa*. These algae make carpets consisting of long, simple, branching threads, both incredibly strong and utterly flexible."^⑨

Tuning into the tide forms an attunement of bodies and tide, and an opportunity to follow rhythms and ruptures of rhythms within different entanglements.

^⑨ Signe Lidén and Arjen Mulder: "A Course in Rhythmorphology", in *The Kelp Congress*, NNKS Press 2020.

Matvey Korochkin R U S S I A
PRIMAL *INSTINCT*

This project is an attempt to reveal my primal energy, suppressed in a man by civilization. The artist himself acts as the object of the experiment. He awakens his primitive instincts, which become new tools for artistic practice: the desire to leave a mark of one's own, to establish oneself in the world, the desire to protect one's own territory, to be in harmony with

the outside world or to fight against the world. Going through the path of prehistoric formation, the artist uses the very first available materials to paint, such as black coal that came from bonfires and one's own palms as brushes, improvised materials.

Location: Lake Ladoga, Republic of Karelia. Media: performance, installation (space 1000 m²), charcoal, 2019



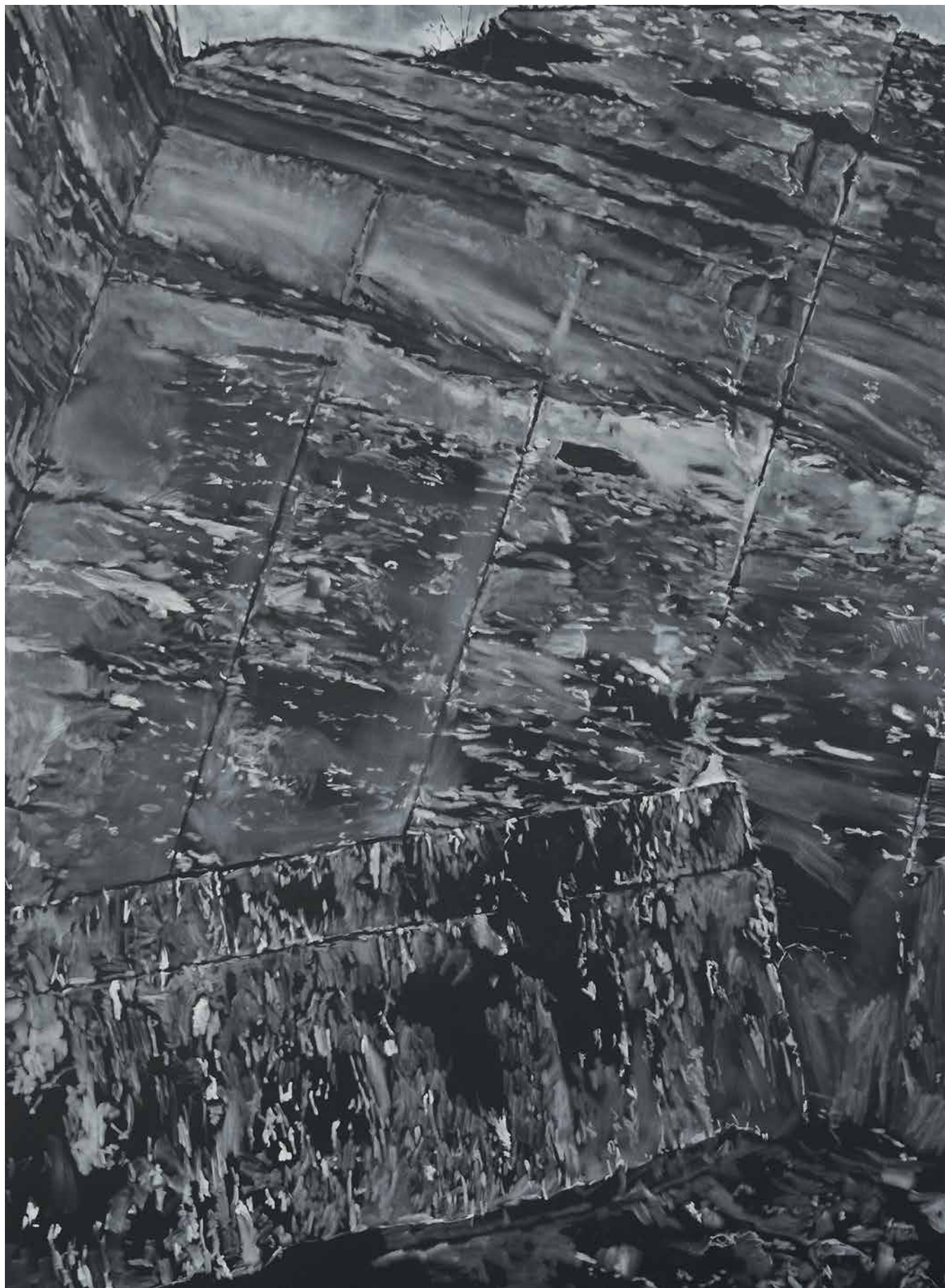


P R I M A L I N S T I N C T

Ingeborg *Annie* Lindahl NORWAY
TRANSCIENCE — *Norwegian* ROSE

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T R A N S I E N C E N O R W E G I A N R O S E





T R A N S I E N C E N O R W E G I A N R O S E

The harsh Yamal region. Living in the North, far from the hustle and bustle of megacities, what could be better?

I remember how I loved to go to the forest as a child. You run up and fall into the soft, springy moss! The air smells of herbs, you can hear your own breath. Or in winter, in a blizzard, you bury yourself in a snowdrift, the blizzard fades into the background, the sky is strewn with a million stars, they flicker, suddenly you feel that space is rushing towards you with great speed. I draw inspiration from all

this for my future paintings. To paint pictures on topics that excite me. In my works, I try to reflect the joyful and sublime mood that arises from the contemplation of dear, familiar landscapes. The world created by the brush is filled with calmness, serenity and happiness. The harsh and snowy winter of Yamal, hiding the texture of the earth, endlessly stretching and melting into the distance, hiding the horizon.

This is a country where permafrost reigns. This is the Motherland, stern and close, the land that I love.

Spring. Canvas, oil, 100×135, 2018





↑ Frosty evening. Canvas, oil, 30×30
 ← Triptych Day of the reindeer breeder. Canvas, oil, 100×100 100×200 100×100, 2018

Sergei *Terentyev* R U S S I A

THE BOOKS *of Odyssey*, 2009–2011

Homer and ancient Greece: What could be further from our time of total informatization? For *Sergei Terentyev*, immersing himself in the era when the foundations of European culture were laid out is a way to comprehend issues affecting our life today. Like *Heinrich Schliemann*, who discovered Troy, Sergei Terentyev conducted his "excavations" of ancient Greek history and mythology over several years, enthusiastically and carefully building a multilayered semantic structure of his project from the acquired "trophy".

This is how the rhapsodes "sewed" songs, passing on tales of bygone days from mouth to mouth. Returning in his project to the initial function of the epic text as an oral form of information transfer, Sergei Terentyev exposes messages coming from ancient times to multiple coding, translating them into the language of new technologies and contemporary art.

The results are the author's collection of works on the Greek theme, embodied in clay, metal, textiles, digital material and sound. The idea is based on an attempt to project Homeric texts on people of today, whose actions and destinies often resonate with the stories about Odysseus, Penelope, Athena, Nausicaa and other mythological images. These eternal archetypal plots become ways of expressing thoughts and emotions, universal codes in the dialogue of the characters in the "Odyssey Books", invented by Sergei Terentyev.

As conceived by the artist, "He" and "She", heroes simultaneously both conditional and real, separated by thousands of kilometers, communicate with the help of Homer's lines: the Traveller sends letters to his homeland in the form of fragments of a poem in which information is encoded, and the Recipient must interpret these, find the true meaning of the sound message. Similarly, in ancient Greece, priests and diviners decoded the present as they predicted the future.

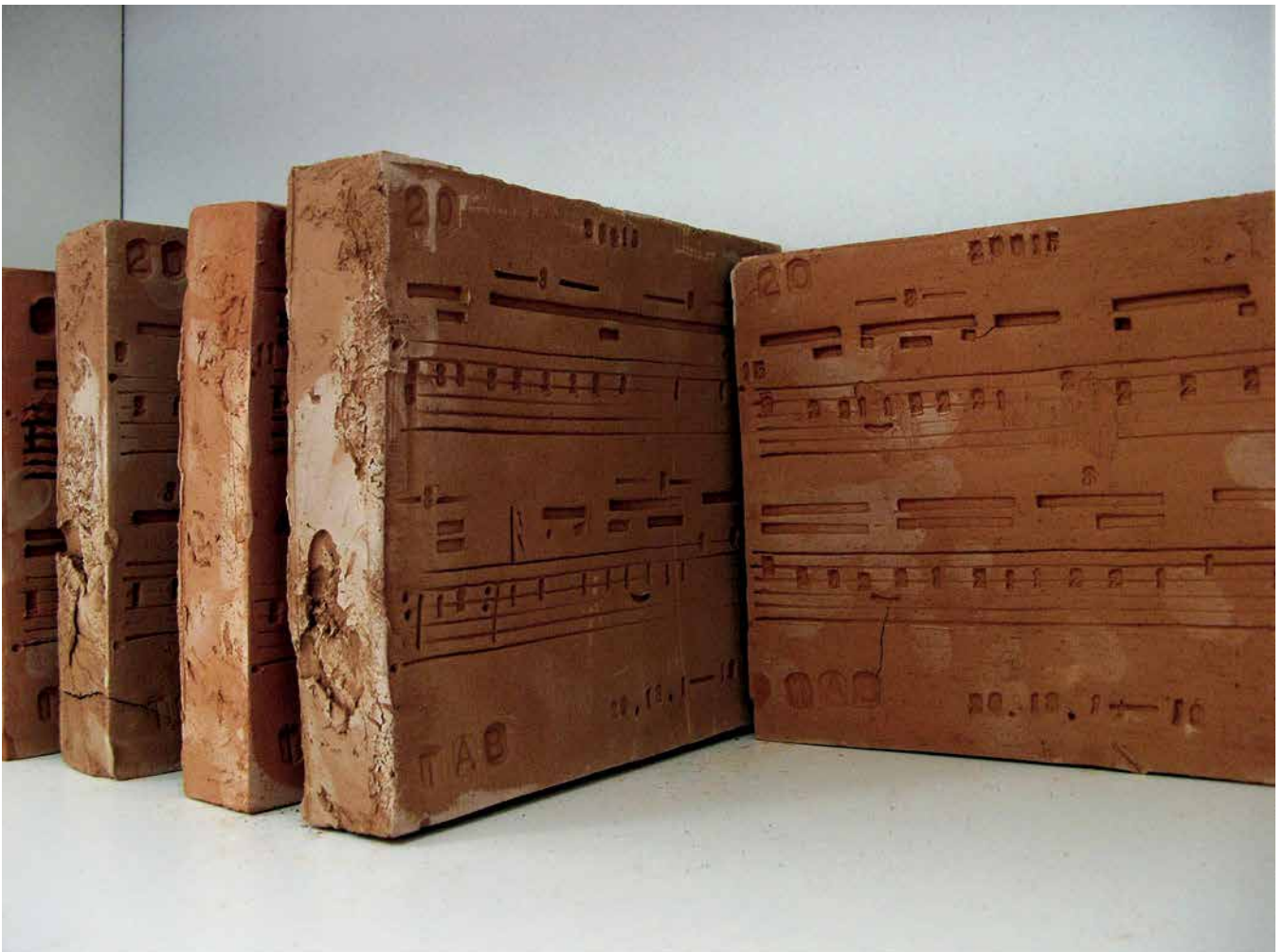
This divination, showing the truth, is also the original function of artists, as Sergei Terentyev reminds us. Unfortunately, this function is now half-forgotten, largely supplanted today by the role of an "attendant of beauty" or a designer.

Recordings of the Heroine and other voices reading Homer in Russian, ancient Greek and German, allow the author to visualize ancient poetry in ways familiar to someone living in the 21st century. Terentyev translates sounds into notes using digital technologies. As a result, "The Odyssey Books" becomes in part a kind of score, which is applied to various surfaces (metal, clay, textile), each of which in turn is metaphorical and carries a deep "ancient Greek trace". This way, volumes of an unusual library

are created: "Book of Clay", "Book of Cloth", "Book of Iron", "Book of Numbers", "Book of Heroes".

The artifacts that form the space of this project have simultaneous qualities of apparently obvious simplicity and indecipherable duality. In this, they have an elusive beauty that is akin to that of the Greek landscape, where the shadow of a goat-footed Pan is sometimes seen among the perfectly tangible olive grove, and the footprints in the sand seem to belong to the nymph Calypso...

Put together, the audio and video installations along with the objects make up the author's statement, in which today's realities, private plots, are woven into the common world history of Greece, Europe, Russia; revealing hidden interferences, connections and cultural traditions of a centuries-old common history, and thus continuing the key line in the work of Sergei Terentyev himself. Following his previous projects dedicated to *Mozart*, *Pushkin*, *Sbostakovich*, *Malevich* and the ancient Slavic holidays, "Odyssey Books" develops the theme of interconnection within different layers of culture, past and present. The universality of the living language of art allows entering into dialogues not only with the great masters of the past, but also with their contemporaries.



T H E B O O K S O F O D Y S S E Y , 2 0 0 9 - 2 0 1 1

TEXT: MARJAANA NISKALA

THE WRITER IS AN ART CRITIC AND RESEARCHER
LIVING IN AUTTI IN ROVANIEMI.

LONE STAR WANDERERS

TOGETHER, JUSSI VALTAKARI AND ANTTI
YLÖNEN ACHIEVE SOMETHING THAT NEITHER
COULD REACH WITHOUT THE OTHER.

Wooden miniature sculptures are the best known part of *Jussi Valtakari's* art. In a motley group of figures, Valtakari observes his fellow humans sometimes gently, sometimes sharply with a sarcastic smile. Those marginalized on the lower rungs of the human power ladder are given center stage; the high and mighty are rarely seen here.

The design language is influenced by folk art wood carving. The rough sculptural imprint brings out the nature of the parochial posse as well as that of Helmi, the old lady dragging home her shopping bags.

Time is the central theme in the sculptures of *Antti Ylönen*. You can measure the time of a tree in its annual growth rings. The sculptor's own time manifests in the slow-processed forms, in the artist's fingerprints left on the wood rind.

Both spirit and matter seem to be present in Ylönen's wood. The tree is alive, even obstinate, compliant, or unyielding. The artist allows his material to breathe; the wood grain, the knots and other marks on the surface are allowed to remain visible. The patterns are combined with a translucent but deep-toned pigment dyeing.

HUMAN - SIZED COSMOS

Antti Ylönen and Jussi Valtakari have worked together periodically and made collective works for years. They have created several exhibitions: Saaristo (Archipelago) at Mänttä Art Festival 2017, Siirtokunta (Colony) at Galleria Harmaja in Oulu in 2019, and most recently in 2020, Cosmos at Aine Art Museum in Tornio.

For these two, space curves on a human scale.

In the sculptures, you can see small people in a vast universe, or at the foot of an enormous watch-tower. You can circle round a meteorite in a quarter of an hour; one celestial body is exactly the right size for two people, a tree, and a dog. In Siirtokunta (Colony), a motley crew of people from planet Earth have ended up somewhere far away, and the bravest and the most curious of them are observing the events at the edge of their new home.

Jussi Valtakari also molds his own space-themed sculptures. Valtakari's planets are born similarly to real ones: matter collects, becomes denser, and there it is—a new planet!



↑ Asteroid, wood and colour, 50×55×42, 2019
→ "Guardian Tower", wood and color, 160×90×70.,
2019. "Colony" in the background.

THIS TEXT HAS BEEN EDITED
AND CONDENSED
FOR THIS PUBLICATION

In the craft of the two sculptors, their collective works bring out things that would not materialize otherwise. Valtakari's small human figurines are merged with Ylönen's robust forms. Antti Ylönen creates the stage, Jussi Valtakari animates it.





†† Archipelago, four pieces of six part sculpture installation, wood and colour, 2017.

† Pearl, wood and colour, 55×90×60, 2020

ON MAKING ART WITH ANOTHER

THIS CENSUS (1930) WAS THE LAST ONE,
WHEREBY THE FINNISH POPULATION,
THE KVENS, WERE OFFICIALLY REGISTERED,
AFTER WHICH THEY HAVE NOT BEEN REPRESENTED
IN OFFICIAL STATISTICS.

Marjut Anttonen: Etnopolitiikka Ruijassa
/ "Ethnopolitics in Finnmark", SKS 1999

AN OLD MAN, SITTING DOWN WITH A SHOVEL
IN HAND, IS FINNISH [...], LOOKING AT HIS
DAUGHTER WHO HOLDS A CHILD IN HER
LAP — THE FUTURE. A BRAVE FISHERMAN
GAZES, WORRIEDLY, AT THE SEA. HE IS NORWEGIAN
AND A HUSBAND TO THE DAUGHTER.
Sculptor Ensio Seppänen about the symbolism
of the Immigrant monument
(innvandrermønumentet, Vadsø 1977),
as related in Vadsø museum

I have reservations about social art, as the end products arising from communal and dialogical premises, as interesting as they might be culturally, do not always fall in the category I would call "art". On the other hand, inclusive and socially engaged art reflects very recognizably the ethos of our time, for which equating art with communication is typical.

So, I was interested but suspicious, as I applied to the project "Kven Connection", targeted at artists from Finnish Lapland and Northern Norway and with the objective to create art among the Fennic minority people living in Finnmark.

The Kven language (also known as "Kainu") was awarded national minority language status in 2005. The project, one assumes, wanted to support the ethnic minority in its recuperation from a period of Norwegianization politics, which aimed, in practice, to annihilate the linguistic and cultural identity of the Kvens.

The outcome of the project was presented in Vadsø at Ruija Kvenmuseum in November 2017, and at The Regional Museum of Lapland in Rovaniemi in May 2018, from where the works returned to Vadsø for the summer exhibition. Later they were exhibited at Gallery Jieris in Muonio: the artist-led exhibition "The Kvens—on Tracks of the Kainu People" included photographs by the working group of *Katariina Angeria*, *Sonja Siltala* and *Merja Brinön*, vocal art by *Meri Nikula*, and drawings and watercolours by myself. Alongside the works, Kven activist *Katriina Pedersen* presented her thoughts and musings about how the Kven Connection project, organised by non-Kven artists, appeared when looked at from a Kven perspective.

The project included a one-month residency period by Varangerfjord in Vadsø. I chose my argument about the double exposure of language and

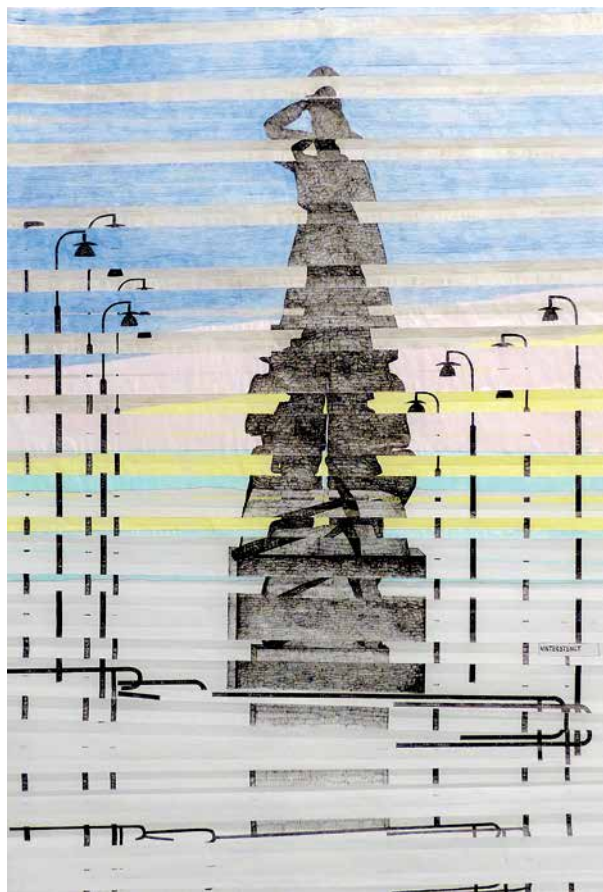
reality—the relation between the orders of authority and individual—as the starting point of my work. I drew attention to how political choices and bureaucracy generate reality, and contemplated how this question could be treated in images.

I began looking at buildings: the Norwegian Public Broadcasting Company NRK has given a voice to the Kvens, too, but the NRK house also symbolizes state power and Norwegianization. How about the Immigration monument (innvandrermønumentet), donated by Finland and erected in Vadsø in 1977? The sculptor *Ensio Seppänen* himself says that the dominant figure in the monument is a Norwegian man. By this man's feet sit a young woman and her father, who is Kven. "Future" is represented by the child of the woman and the Norwegian man. Seppänen does not comment on whether the woman represents being Kven: she seems to be left—as the women often are in this style of narration—with a role of a nameless mediator and supporter.

At the time of the monument's unveiling, this scene of a Finnish past and a Norwegian future seemed quite natural and was in accord with the official politics of Norwegianization. In hindsight, Seppänen's work is easy to criticize; but it might be more fruitful to ask what kind of stage were we ourselves setting in this project? Whose premises were we working from, starting from the open call, via "The Root Camp" and residence period, all the way to the exhibition? Who was controlling the discourse wherein the central questions were formed?

The three words that solidified as the theme of the project, "Language, Borders, Migration", gestured towards an understanding whereby Kven-ness was considered predominantly as material or a platform, from where some wider issues were being treated. This is also how I was working, even though I was slightly apprehensive about the justification of my approach. It would have been easier to justify participating in a project carried out within a Kven community, had I been Kven myself. Our histories are parallel in some ways, but they are not the same.

The struggle of Northern ethnic minorities for their linguistic and cultural rights touches me personally. I have grown up by the Kemijoki river, but I consider the Tornio river valley dialect to be my first language, which is close to both Meänkieli, spoken in Sweden, and Kven of Norway. My relation to this first language is peculiar: I can more or less write it, but its locution does not come very naturally. In teacher training in Finland it has long been stressed that teachers must speak standard language to the pupils, instead of dialect. This has made me wonder whether my spoken Finnish has standardized because of some natural transition over the years, or whether having grown up with parents and grandparents who



Savu E. Korteniemi: "Immigration monument" from series Double lightning, ink pen and coloured pen on folded paper, 2017. Photo: Savu E. Korteniemi.



Savu E. Korteniemi: "NRK -house" from series Double lightning, ink pen and coloured pen on folded paper, 2017. Photo: Savu E. Korteniemi.

were teachers, it is a conscious replacement of a lesser-valued dialect by the carefully articulated standard language. The dialect, quite incongruously, has been present not in speech but in writing: in text messages, in letters, in the books of *Timo K. Mukka*.

Northern identities can sometimes be complicated, as the borders of nation states have splintered the linguistic and cultural regions of both Sámi and Fennic peoples, not to even mention the state-led, deliberate destruction of cultures and languages. The close historical, regional and linguistic proximity of these interlinking identities can create a misconception of being able to use one's voice as an other's voice, especially as they tend to merge, when looked at from afar, into one, exotic "Lappishness".

The intention of this essay is to make myself uncomfortable. It is embarrassing to give an honest answer to the question, whether I, or we, succeeded in approaching our theme and object with ethical rigour and proper purpose—not only in our intentions

but also in practice. The challenge of community art has to do with the apparent ease of the genre, as ethicality and the relevance of our theme is, surely, always already implied in the premises of a project about a minority culture. However, the ethical quality often remains merely on the level of appearances: going to the territory of another culture inevitably bears the burden of colonialism, getting rid of which can be surprisingly difficult.

Participating in this project, which highlighted connection even in its name, was a contradictory experience: the end result was a valid exhibition, but the voice of Kvens themselves had been, annoyingly, left missing. Of course, the discourse coming out of the project did not reveal this dissonance. The power of language can also be used to focus attention into explanations which make the art good and whole, instead of the true content of the works present. This is, of course, understandable in a situation where the discourse and narrative are created by the artists themselves. Even so, what was problematic with



Lifting the Kven flag up during the Kven Connection vernissage in Vadsø, October 21st, 2017. A part of installation and performance by Maija Liisa Björklund. Photo: Monica Milch Gebhardt / Varanger museum.

the result of this project, namely that the connection between the words "Kven" and "Connection" was left very thin, was not only my personal observation. In the panel discussion held at the vernissage, members of Kven communities themselves stated that Kven artists had not applied to the project because they did not feel it belonged to them. For the Kvens, the content and form of the project appeared external and superficial.

How did this happen? Can artists say they tried their best and that should be enough? How do artists defend themselves, when it transpires that their good intentions did not quite hit the puck between the goalposts? I confess I was embarrassed at the vernissage, listening to Kven activist Katriina Pedersen expand on her perspective to the project. Did we really end up only repeating the same historical power structure that we meant to be dismantling?

As I was contemplating this incongruity between the intention and realisation that threatens community

art projects, I was reading an article about cultural appropriation written by art critic and journalist *Otso Kantokorpi* (1957–2018) in the Yearbook of The Finnish Critics' Association. Kantokorpi's notion on trends in contemporary art hit the mark on the central weakness of our Kven Connection project: "A large portion of contemporary art is socially oriented in multiple ways, but unfortunately it is often a case of well-intentioned but inefficient involvement that could even be categorised to be merely a neo-formalistic gesture. One makes that which it is customary to make, so that it would seem correct and progressive. This gives birth to, among others, community art projects, where participants' commitment can remain quite modest."

Thank you, Otso, we could all take lessons from this.

Katriina Pedersen NORWAY

COMMENTS *by* A KVEN *activist*

2018, AFTER
THE EXHIBITION

Identity is not something we decide on alone. Those who are the "Other" are also involved when lines are drawn between them and us. Us Kvens might have a good idea about who we are, but the outsiders to our community must also have some idea. And since the Kvens are a minority, the others often are a majority.

I am not against others writing or creating art about the Kvens. It is interesting. But we have not had a major art exhibition of our own. We have not been able to show who we are, or what stories we wish to tell.

The Kven Connection exhibition catalogue says: "During this project, we wanted to find new ways to discuss Kven traditions in a contemporary context; whilst at the same time our goal was to promote inter-cultural dialogue."

Between whom was this dialogue, actually? And who was it that needed to discuss our traditions in a new way? Was it the Kvens, or was it the museum?

I remember seeing the phrase "Root Camp" for the first time at the vernissage. That all of you artists had attended a Root Camp in Rovaniemi. Words have power. This exhibition put my roots down in Rovaniemi. But I have never been from Rovaniemi. My roots are in Annijoki, in Vesisaari, Norway. My ancestors came there from what is today Finland, Sweden and Russia, but me and my Kven-ness come from Norway. Why was the Root Camp not in Vesisaari, Pyssyjoki, Rais, Yykeänvuono, Alattio, Teno, Pykeija or Naavuono? Why was the exhibition shown in Rovaniemi and Vesisaari, why not elsewhere in Finnmark?

I suppose it is not a big issue to others, but to me, and to other young Kven language-speakers, this is tiresome. We have received schoolbooks filled with red marker on Finnish lessons, because the teacher is Finnish and does not "understand" Kven, as "Kven is not a real language". We have been told that we come from Finland, even though our families have lived in Norway for several generations. "Kven is not a real identity, is it now." The goal of Kven Connection was to discuss the Kven traditions in new ways, but the whole project was founded on an outdated gaze upon Kven identity. We were again, still, immigrants from Finland, just like during the politics of Norwegianisation.

Luckily the artworks and the exhibition were a positive experience. It was interesting to see how the Kven identity, history and culture had inspired the artists. But I stood there thinking that this project ended too soon. It would be interesting to know what the Kvens thought of the exhibition. How we read these works. And if there is a difference between how the Kvens, the Norwegians and the Finns understand the exhibition. Within that discourse, a real connection might have been born.

2021, KVEN
ISSUES NOW

Kven artists do not pop up out of nothing, they are connected to their community. Their lineage. So, the most important base of a Kven artist is of course the community itself.

Nothing feels more belittling than the notion that Kven people need help to start a fire. If anything, fire is what we have. There is nothing wrong with the inner fire of Kven people. In some it is burning so fiercely that it hurts; in others, quietly, lukewarm. If something must be done it is not starting a fire, but giving it the chance to stay alive.

Professionalization has marked the recent years. Funding for language and cultural projects has moved from grassroots organizations to professional institutions. The funds are not increasing. What does increase is the paradox that you must leave your native language to learn the language of the "project-economy". What parts of the Kven are suitable for projects? Who must we collaborate with? Who must we leave behind? Is Kven becoming one box that institutions can tick off to get ends to meet?

Who is really deciding the fate of our fire?

Ivnguak' Stork Høegh is a contemporary Greenlandic artist. She works with digital photo collages, where a traditional Inuit culture is mixed with the modern globalized world. The expression is raw and street-like while remaining soft and vulnerable. Most photographs used in the collages are by the artist herself, the rest are borrowed with permission. Raw and peeling walls can often be seen as elements or backgrounds in the collages. The artist says she is attracted to the raw expression, and often finds herself taking close-up photographs of peeling and scrambled walls on her way around the city. *Ivnguak'* often plays with political messages or current debates in the Greenlandic society in these works. She is inspired by Greenlandic rap music, which deals with society's taboos: drug or alcohol addiction, care failure, suicide, political irresponsibility. Themes of identity and national identity can also be observed in *Ivnguak'*'s collages.



Nukappiarannguaq. Digital photo collage Sweet little boy in his town Narsaq, Narsaq town is soon to become a uranium mine, 2020

Path by Mother Earth I, Digital photo collage, 2020



Path by Mother Earth II, Digital photo collage, 2020



IN ENGLISH, KWITCHYERBELLYAKIN IS A COLLOQUIALISM FROM THE ENGLISH PHRASE "QUIT YOUR BELLY ACHING". IT IS A CASUAL BUT AUTHORITATIVE DISMISSAL THAT MEANS "STOP COMPLAINING".

I

The expression surfaced in the socio-political landscape of Iceland during WWII. *Daniel V. Gallery*, the commander of a US naval air base in Reykjavík, dubbed the camp Kwitcherbellíakin as a witty boost to his troops, both acknowledging and dismissing their critical complaints of poor living conditions and harsh climate on the island. In good spirit, and as a consoling reminder of the troop home base in the Caribbean, steel palm trees were planted in front of the Fleet Air Club. Those palm trees became an amusing and ironic symbol of the camp setting, evoking tropical paradise and sun, an endless bliss without struggle and worries. Considering the complexity and the accuracy of Commander Gallery's execution, we can read Kwitcherbellíakin as the first art installation in Iceland.

The project Kwitcherbellíakin presents unresolved narratives that speak to the camp — like today's ecological and socio-political realities and the future that is unfolding in the shifting geopolitics in the Arctic. The locus to reflect on and stay with the uncertainty and our disturbed ground of being — our existential "belly aching" — was an abandoned checkpoint for the former NATO-base in Reykjanes. These narratives and future visions are framed by the past and present of this site, which is currently in transformation from a private, fenced-off territory to a public civilian site, its history marking the transition from Iceland's Cold War past to its warming future.

The former NATO base on the Reykjanes peninsula, now Ásbrú Enterprise Park, stood at the front lines of the ideological rivalry between East and West during the Cold War. Now it sits as a reminder of the race between the two grand ideological narratives of modernity and their version of "good life" — both of which, under the flag of progress, have had catastrophic consequences for humans and the environment. While the breakdown of Soviet communism has been evident for over 20 years, it is clear that we are now adrift in the ruins of capitalism.① Aptly named "Ásbrú" after the rainbow bridge between the Earth and the gods in Norse mythology, the site is a link between past and future, marking the transition from the Cold War to the "warm wars" of climate change. While it may be a wild dream that the North is turning into a "sub-tropical zone"—to use the words of the author *J. G. Ballard* in his book *The Drowned World*②—as the ice caps melt and the temperature rises, this irruption of nature is more of a nightmare with catastrophic consequences for the planet.

II

This windy and barren field has played a central role in Iceland's national project and its dreams of independence and modernity. A gateway to the world and foreign influence, the site has always been a subject of great controversy, driven by the colonial, racist, capitalist, and patriarchal values foundational to the making of the Icelandic nation. The WWII and the prolonged presence of US military force fueled economic growth, consumption, employment, and international contact.

"The Beloved War", as WWII was commonly referred to by Icelanders, had a different impact on Iceland than many other nations under foreign rule.③ Being one of the poorest nations in Northern Europe, Iceland became not only one of the richest countries in Europe at the end of the war, but it also gained its full independence from Nazi-occupied Denmark in 1944.④ Thus, Iceland reached its "utopian goal—its own Tausendjähriges Reich — but it had happened through foreign invasion and occupation rather than through Icelandic actions".⑤

The role of the war and foreign powers in the storyline of the Icelandic narrative of independence has, however, been "conspicuously absent".⑥ The official narrative, as *Guðmundur Hálfdanarson* points out, "assumed that the nation had literally pulled itself up from poverty by its own bootstraps, or propelled itself forward solely through its own effort."⑦ Yet another quiet storyline in the Icelandic national narrative is how the NATO base turned into a gigantic plant, channeling funds into the Icelandic national pocket and laying the foundations of local corporate clans and kinship dynasties.

Moreover, Iceland's march towards modernization was sponsored by the West through, among other sources, the Marshall Plan aid, which led Icelanders to bulldoze what was left of their traditional earthen architecture and become fully modern in new, high-tech homes; they constructed dams, laid roads, built factories, and drained wetlands, causing massive carbon dioxide emissions.⑧

The rush to modernity, however, was a selective process. While the flow of funds, technology, and goods from US sources was unhindered, the Icelandic government's agenda fueled racial and social prejudices by requesting that troops of colour not be sent to the island; so-called "situation" girls involved with military personnel were ruthlessly shamed and displaced. The concern was that the "ethnic purity" of the Icelanders should stay intact: its population, culture, and the national moral order were seen as threatened by foreign pollution.⑨ At the same time, Icelanders remained unconcerned about the military's actual contamination of the ground and water.



K W I T C H E R B E L L Í A K I N

And as it turned out, the military departed from the NATO base in 2006 without cleaning up their pollution.

III

The former NATO base and its surroundings, with its half-built aluminium smelter and rising silicon plant and data centers, can be read as a microcosm of Iceland, bearing strong marks of the present state of affairs: privatization, society in debt, high hopes of exploiting the Arctic, and aspirations of turning Iceland into a service station and commercial hub for new geopolitics in the Arctic. The North Atlantic faces complications and challenges like never before in the warming future that will be marked by resource competition, emerging shipping routes, and melting ice caps. It is not a question of if but when pollution from the exploitation of natural resources, transport, and accidental oil spills will devastate the already threatened biodiversity and damaged ecosystems in the Arctic.

Future progress rests on the putative "great opportunities" that lie in this region. The Arctic is the last frontier where natural resources such as oil, gas, and minerals can still be found and drained.® Moreover, the opening of new shipping lanes through the Arctic for part of the year will bring the traffic of global shipping trade to Icelandic waters. Iceland has already deepened its relations with Asia by being the first European country (along with Switzerland) to enter into a free-trade agreement with China in 2014.

"Iceland is one of the eight countries of the future",® stated Icelandic prime minister *Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson* in 2014, referring to "The World in 2050". While climate change has had a catastrophic effect on the world, the Prime Minister spoke instead of the great number of imminent opportunities that the environmental and social crises will open for Iceland: "There's a water shortage, energy is becoming more expensive, land

is in short supply and it is predicted that the cost of food will rise in the foreseeable future [...] So there are great opportunities for Iceland there and we are mapping it out."® Instead of throwing today's entire economic system into question, Gunnlaugsson's opportunistic and progressivist mindset relies on the old gluttonous attitudes that brought us to this point in the first place.

The preservation and protection of a neoliberal ethos continues to reduce species cohabitation to the competitive market values of the here and now — even as societies and vast ecosystems

sink deeper and deeper into precarious conditions. Despite the fact that "morbid symptoms" call for the death of the old system, we seem to be nightmarishly stuck in a repetitive clean-up of the wreckage, sustaining old forms and the status quo.® Iceland seems to be back to bargaining business deals with superpowers and corporations — just as it did in the Cold War — in order to make the most out of current opportunities and its strategic location within renewed geopolitics in the North.

Yet, while negotiating with other stakeholders, the small state has to "remain





agile and flexible, friendly with all major players and open to all possible twists and turns in the development process." ④ The nation has become well versed in playing different identity cards, shifting the representation of Icelanders accordingly, from exotic natives at the border of the Arctic frontier to free-spirited Europeans, and innovative, opportunistic cosmopolitans. ⑤ This ambivalence has become a somewhat intrinsic part of the nation, which left its traditions and past behind in their haste to join the "new world", adopting models and structures from abroad to become a nation among nations, without reflect-

ing on what it was becoming. ⑥ Regardless of how hollow this projected image is, Icelanders—whether "children of nature", innovative entrepreneurs, or peace-loving Europeans to name a few—actively perform and negotiate their identities to accommodate global politics, tourism, and media.

The Arctic race for influence, power, and wealth is underway, heightening former Cold War tensions. Russia, the only non-NATO Arctic state, planted its flag on the Arctic seabed in 2007. While Iceland's Arctic policy, approved by the parliament in 2011, claims that Iceland

is against "any kind of militarization of the Arctic" ⑦, current developments suggest that this is not the case: the renovation of the air base in Keflavik intends to facilitate surveillance in the North Atlantic and to offset increasing Russian military presence. ⑧ In one form or another, the dream of many Icelanders—that Iceland reverts to being a military base again, might not be so wild.

IV

Since the NATO base was closed in 2006, the area has been under development as Ásbrú Enterprise Park, a community of innovation, education and business. The park, a self-consciously transitional and liminal space, portrays itself as "The center of innovation in Iceland" in its calls for potential partners. ⑨

The development of the Enterprise Park is in conjunction with the enterprise culture implemented in Iceland in the late 1990s, when the island was turned into a globalized, neo-liberal nation-state. Grandiose tales of "creativity and innovation" have been repeated in public discourse promoting entrepreneurialism. This "creative turn" in Iceland still permeates the present political and economic zeitgeist. Neoliberal government policies demand that creatives and innovators in art, science and technology "stay alert, awake, and on the move. If they stand still in the context of today's 'mandatory entrepreneurialism', they [...] will be relieved of duty." ⑩

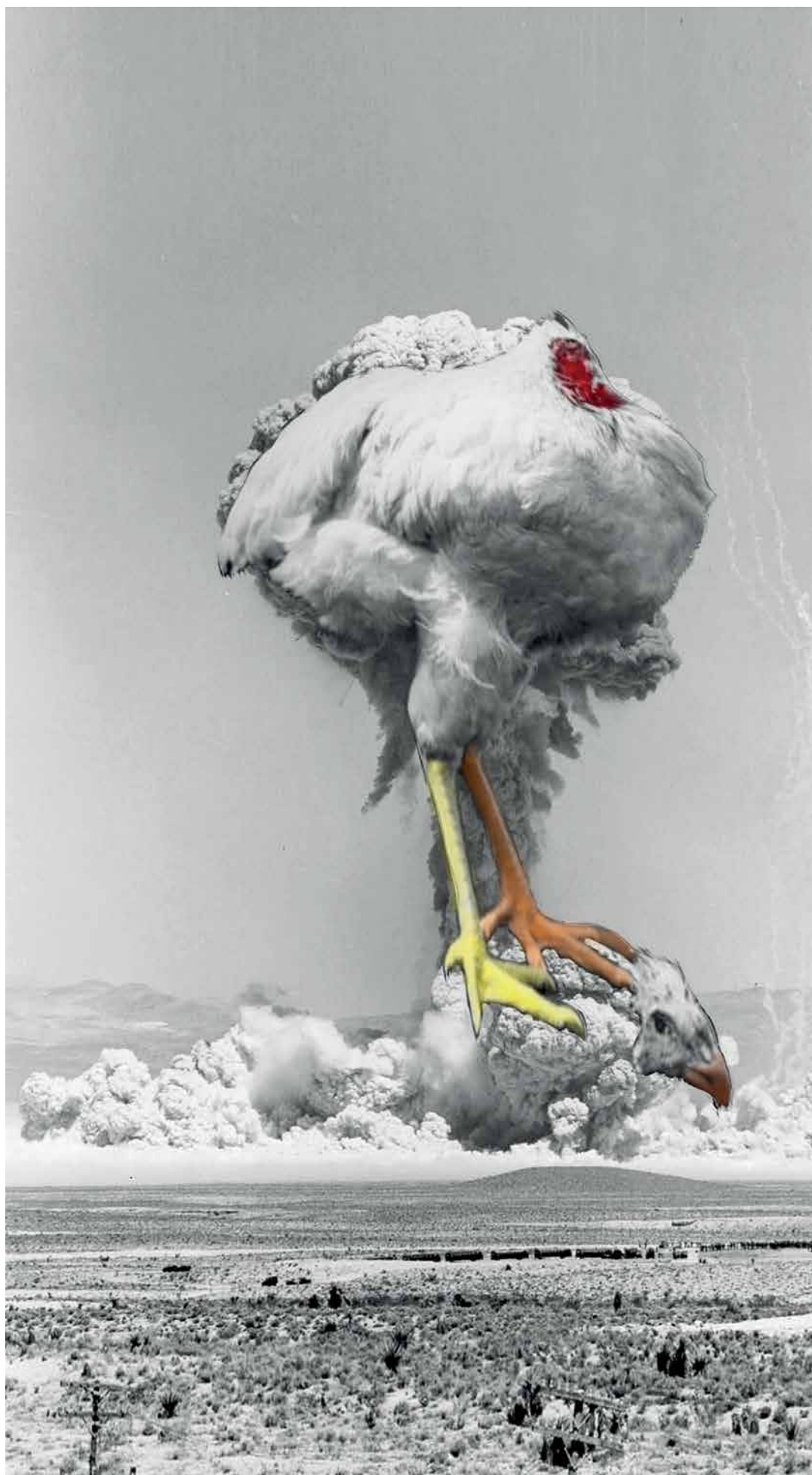
The prevailing neoliberal approach to creativity, with its entrepreneurial drive, relies on anticipated conformity and quantifiable, progress-driven imagination. As *Pascal Gielen* points out, "Utopia and excessive imagination is out of the question in this ideology of realism." ⑪ This development contributes to what Gielen calls the "wet, flat network world", a world where creation as mere differentiation has "neither depth nor height", ⑫ where art institutions

and artists have been subjected to the "creative destruction"²³ of neoliberal reforms, "swim[ming] hastily and blindly from one project to the next".²⁴

There seems to be no shortage of cheap and renewable creative recruits willing to contribute to the needs of neoliberal progress—and to "the lofty national project, right in step with marketing specialists, PR people, cultural managers, tourist agents, cultural economists, cultural advisers [...] and other specialists in 'creative thinking'".²⁵ Cultural creatives have, or so it seems, accepted the national and supra-national policies of the creative industries designed to regulate, in collaboration with the market and the state, innovation and creativity. Cultural policies and the attendant public discourse make no distinction between not-for-profit visual art spaces, manufacturers of souvenirs and other commercial products, video game developers, etc., despite the significant differences between the groups and the nature of their work, methodology, and goals.²⁶ Spaces that traditionally provided a "spine to those who wish to stand up straight and undertake some daring creative act"²⁷ have been eliminated, with dire consequences for the authoritative position of art and the artists' ability to maintain control over their own field.

Like every other industry, the creative industries have been successfully co-opted by neoliberal government policies and are now "subject to performance-oriented, statistically measurable, pragmatic results—results that render [their] successes indisputably valid."²⁸

Calling for a critical discussion of "the creative turn" is tricky in Iceland. Those who critique or question this development are seen as attacking the hard-working laborers of the creative class and run the risk of becoming disloyal to the high-minded belief that the creative industries constitute a genuine alternative to the more traditional production line of



aluminium smelters, hydropower plants and fishing fleets. Moreover, unlike the more traditional industrial plants on the island, the powerhouse of ideas absorbs labor, affection, and goods at bargain basement prices.

V

Notions of "encampment" reflect upon developments of the present socio-political and ecological realities.^② We live in a system that generates short-term thinking, "one big carousel of responsibilities that are continuously passed on"^③, while the foundations of the welfare state are liquefied, the environment degraded, and species destroyed. Distinctions between private and public space are blurred, and lifelong insecurity, stress, fear, and burnout are normalized.^④ Dominance, violence, profitability and linear progress — values central to the idea of modernity and its logic — have hit their limit. It is time to recognize that the unsustainable fantasies of the "good life" act as barriers to the well-being of humans, nonhuman others, and the planet.^⑤ While the project Kwitchebellákin does not provide answers to the question of "how to inherit this history"^⑥, along with its violence and exploitation, it stresses the importance of finding ways to "address the imaginative challenges of living without those handrails, which once made people think they knew, collectively, where people were going."^⑦

While cultural critique is disappearing along with ecosystems and species, Kwitchebellákin attempts to address unresolved narratives of the present and make them visible. It calls for greater awareness, more attuned listening, and the imagining of ways of life "after economic growth"^⑧ and outside of "instantaneous time."^⑨ The challenge to (re)tell one's self and one's place in the world requires new relations and imaginative thinking, feeling, and acting that do not endorse the prevalent exchange system or subscribe to individual self-valorizations of the neoliberal regime.

It is time "to look around rather than ahead."^⑩ Something is growing and crawling out from behind the illusionary curtains of modernity; interrupting forces challenge people to engage in new modes of thinking about human and nonhuman entanglements in our ecological coexistence.^⑪ As *Donna Haraway* states, "We become-with each other or not at all."^⑫ The troubled landscape of the Anthropocene, an epoch marked by the profound change humans have made to the planet, calls for our recognition that the time of "fixes" has passed. Haraway advises that at this point we must "stay [...] with the trouble"; we need to rethink and contest borders of the nature and culture divide (including object and subject, science and art, facts and values) — the key mantra of modernity.^⑬ Challenging established boundaries, in order to cast light on "the possibility of life in capitalist ruins",^⑭ is to keep close attention to the present precarity, suspense, disorientation, and the bellyache.

- ① Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, 2015: *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press). See also Wark McKenzie, 2015: *Molecular Red. Theory for the Anthropocene* (London: Verso). ② J. G. Ballard, 1962: *The Drowned World* (Berkeley: Berkeley Medallion), 35. ③ Guðmundur Hálfðanarsson, 2011: "The Beloved War": The Second World War and the Icelandic National Narrative," in *Nordic Narratives of the Second World War: National Histories Revisited*, ed. H. Stenius et al. (Lund: Nordic Academic Press). ④ Guðni. Th. Jóhannesson, 2004: "To the Edge of Nowhere? U.S. Icelandic Defence Relations during and after the Cold War", *Naval War College Review* 57 (2004), 114–137. ⑤ Hálfðanarsson 2011, 85. ⑥ Ibid., 92. ⑦ Ibid., 93. ⑧ Sigrún Elíasdóttir, 2012: *Marshall áætlun og tæknivæðing Íslands. Óbirt MA-ritgerð* (Háskóli Íslands). ⑨ Hálfðanarsson 2011. ⑩ See Eykon Energy's website www.eykonenergy.com. ⑪ Nanna Árnadóttir, 2014: "PM: Climate Change Might Work in Our Favor", *The Reykjavik Grapevine* 2.4.2014, grapevine.is/news/2014/04/02/pm-climate-change-might-work-in-our-favour, accessed 2.10.2016. ⑫ Árnadóttir 2014. ⑬ Antonio Gramsci, 1971: *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (London: Lawrence & Wishart), 276; Maria Hlavajova and Ranjit Hoskote, 2015: "In Place of an Introduction: Future Publics, or the Rest Can and Should Be Done by the People" in *Future Publics (The Rest Can and Should Be Done by the People)*. A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art, ed. Maria Hlavajova and Ranjit Hoskote (Amsterdam: Valiz), 8. ⑭ Alyson Bailes, Margrét Cela, Katla Kjartansdóttir and Kristinn Schram, 2014: "Iceland: Small but Central", in *Perceptions and Strategies of Arcticeity in Sub-Arctic Europe*, ed. Andris Spruds and Toms Rostoks (Riga: Latvian Institute of International Affairs), 96. ⑮ Anna Sofie Gremaud, 2012: "Ísland sem rými annarleikans. Myndir frá bókasýningunni í Frankfurt árið 2011 í ljósi kenninga um dullendur og heterótýpur" ["Iceland as a Place of Otherness. Crypto-Colonial and Heterotypical Perspective in Imagery from the 2011 Frankfurt Book Fair"], *Ritid 12* (2012), 7–29; Bailes et al 2014; Ásmundur Ásmundsson, Hannes Lárússon and Tinna Grétarsdóttir, 2011: *Koddu* (Reykjavik: Félagið Koddu). ⑯ Hildigunnur Sverrisdóttir, nd.: *Hin kakófóníska staðarmótun lýðræðisbarnsins — eða hvað er arkitektúr?* Unpublished manuscript (Reykjavik, 2016). ⑰ "A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy (Approved by Althingi at the 139th legislative session March 28 2011)", www.mfa.is/media/nordurlandaskrifstofa/A-Parliamentary-Resolution-on-ICE-Arctic-Policy-approved-by-Althingi.pdf, accessed 2.10.2016. ⑱ Gregory Winger and Gustav Petursson, 2016: "Return to Keflavik Station: Iceland's Cold War Legacy Reappraised", *Foreign Affairs* 24.2.2016, www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2016-02-24/return-keflavik-station, accessed 23.9.2016. ⑲ See "Ásbrú: The Center of Innovation in Iceland", www.asbru.is/english, and "Ásbrú Enterprise Park: Innovation Powered by Green Energy", www.freetrade-park.com/download/Asbru_brochure_en.pdf, both accessed 23.9.2016. ⑳ Tinna Grétarsdóttir and Bryndís Björnsdóttir, 2014: "Run for your Life", in *Scarcity in Excess: The Built Environment and the Economic Crisis in Iceland*, ed. A. Mathiesen, et al. (Barcelona: Actar Publishing). ㉑ Pascal Gielen, 2013a: "Institutional Imagination: Instituting Contemporary Art Minus the 'Contemporary'", in *Institutional Attitudes: Instituting Art in a Flat World*, ed. Pascal Gielen (Amsterdam: Valiz), 25. ㉒ Pascal Gielen, 2013b: *Creativity and Other: Fundamentalisms* (Heijningen: Japan Books), 41. ㉓ Joseph A. Schumpeter, 2010: *Capitalism, Socialism and Demos* (London: Routledge). ㉔ Gielen 2013a, 41. ㉕ Ásmundsson et al. 2011, 25. ㉖ David Hesmondhalgh, 2012: "Defining the Future EU Culture and Media Programmes", public hearing, European Parliament, Brussels, 26.4.2012, www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201205/20120507ATT44555/20120507, accessed 16.8.2016. ㉗ Pascal Gielen 2013a, 19. ㉘ Tinna Grétarsdóttir, Ásmundsson, Ásmundur, Hannes Lárússon, 2015: "Creativity and Crisis", in *Icelandic Meltdown: Causes, Implications, and Consequences of the Collapse of the Icelandic Economy*, ed. Gísli Pálsson, and Paul Durrenberger (Boulder: University Press of Colorado), 103. ㉙ Pascal Gielen, 2014: "Situational Ethics", in *The Ethics of Art: Ecological Turns in the Performing Arts*, ed. Guy Coolsand Pascal Gielen (Amsterdam: Valiz). See also Giorgio Agamben 1998: *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. D. Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press). ㉚ Gielen 2014, 22. ㉛ Gielen 2014, 22; Tinna Grétarsdóttir and Bryndís Björnsdóttir 2014. ㉜ Lauren Berlant, 2011: *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press). ㉝ Isabelle Stengers, 2015: *In Catastrophic Times: Resisting the Coming Barbarism* (Lüneburg: Open Humanities Press), 23. ㉞ Tsing 2015, 2. ㉟ Stengers 2015, 24. ㊱ Gielen 2014, 27. ㊲ Tsing 2015, 22. ㊳ Timothy Morton, 2013: *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press). ㊴ Donna Haraway, 2016: *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press), 4. ㊵ Haraway 2016, 4. ㊶ Tsing 2015.

Ruth Montgomery *Andersen* GREENLAND

HIDE *and* SNEAK

Greenland, as an emerging nation, is working towards creating a space for cultural expression both within the country and on the global map as an independent entity.

The creation of inter-cultural/Pan-Inuit theater productions, not only protects the cultural expressions that are uniquely Greenlandic, but also creates and re-creates the Greenlandic reality and self-understanding. This self-understanding is integrally connected to the other Inuk peoples and in some ways, is also a connection to other Indigenous communities and countries.

Greenland is aware that it is the combination of cultural uniqueness and embracing its global space

that will be a deciding factor in its development as an independent nation. In this sphere we find that the definition of nation-building is fluid. The Greenlandic government's interest in supporting cultural institutions that promote cultural self-image both within and outside Greenland, is directly connected to this process, the process of nation-building.

Within many Indigenous communities, independence is not only connected to autonomy, but also to the ability to see oneself, one's uniqueness, within the global arena. In the production, "Hide and Sneak", with the acting students at the National Greenlandic Acting School, the goal was to create a bridge from east to west, within the Indigenous context, within an Inuk context. The actors created a piece





that incorporated traditional elements of Greenlandic Mask Dance, Drum Dance and Storytelling. The process was not only a professional but cultural process: asking permission to use the author's words and acknowledging the cultural ownership of the story.

The goal was to have the story travel: first the story travelled west to east, as did our ancestors from the Bering Strait to Greenland. But this time it was planned that the story was to travel back across the strait and be presented in the Arctic Winter Games 2020, in the Yukon Territories, Canada. COVID-19 stopped the travel, but not the collaboration and the creation, and the re-creation of the Inuit bond across the Arctic.

By creating a piece based on the Inuit folktale "Hide and Sneak", the story itself travelled.

Michael Arvaarluk Kusugak's retelling of the folktale was the inspiration for the Greenlandic presentation for Arctic Winter Games 2020. The folktale tells of a little girl who outwits the mythic creature, an Ijiraq. The Ijiraq is said to hide children on the tundra so that they can never be found again. Through

the eyes of the girl Allashua, the tundra comes alive and we are carried away on a tale of the nuksugaq and the Ijiraq.

The National Acting School of Greenland (Nunatta Isiginnaartitsinermik Ilinniarfia) is a two-year actor training program, under the auspices of the Nunatta Isiginnaartitsisarfia—The National Theatre of Greenland. The school has admission every second year with a maximum of five students. The school is a workshop-based educational program in acting, that seeks to give students the means to explore themes and phenomena within acting.

Actors educated through the program are not only strong cultural heritage advocates for Greenland, but also world citizens capable of navigating as actors in different cultures and environments. Therefore, the Program in Acting promotes internationalization by means of international courses. This includes teachers, as well as international co-operation within the Arctic, the Nordics, and with other Indigenous areas of the globe. The objective is that each student discovers, develops, and creates their own style and creates a basis for making theater.

"YOIK MEETS DANCE" WAS LIV AIRA'S MASTER'S THESIS AND PERFORMANCE FOR HER 2018 DEGREE IN DANCE AT THE INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS BARCELONA. AIRA IS A SÁMI ARTIST FROM JOKKMOKK. THIS IS AN EDITED AND ABRIDGED VERSION OF AIRA'S THESIS.

In "Yoik meets dance", the artistic languages of Sámi traditional singing and contemporary dance are combined to create a performed communication about Sápmi. The dance and movement vocabulary is created similarly to the development of a yoik. Two yoik artists, male and female, were given nine words connected to Sápmi to improvise yoik on. Dance scores were choreographed based on an analysis of the artists' movements and voices, and these scores in turn were embodied by a Sámi dancer. The resulting performance—an improvised perfor-

mance with the yoik artist *Elin Teilus* and the dancer *Liv Aira*—creates an organic grounded landscape through the two languages, dance and yoik.

The aim of the project was to create a dance that will lift Sápmi and will be supported by Sápmi, while at the same time educating a larger audience. It also wanted to form an artistic method for the performers to find a part of the lost Sámi history: it is not too late to create a new one. Additional material was collected by interviewing other artists. Choreographers *Ola Stinnerbom* and *Elle Sofe* have worked with dance in relation to the Sámi culture. While Stinnerbom's research has caused controversy, it is the only/earliest research about the Sámi and contemporary dance. In order to understand movement in connection to the research of Sápmi, and to create a vocabulary, the methodologies of *Wayne McGregor* and *Rudolf Laban* were helpful.



Y O I K

The yoik is the Sámi way of singing. It holds a role as a mediator of culture, history and traditional values in Sápmi. Without the yoik, the Sámi community would have lost a big part of its history and values. It is an important part of the tithing meetings.

Yoik is the oldest form of music in Europe. Some parts in the yoik go back 5000 years. The yoik creates a spiritual bond between the yoiker and the thing, person or place that is being yoiked. You become the object you yoik, but the yoiker adds to the yoik a personal understanding of the thing being yoiked. From a legal perspective, you do not own the yoik you create, it is owned by the person or place you yoik about. The constant in a yoik that goes from yoiker to yoiker is the melody of the yoik, while the personal parts are the sounds and words used: the text can change from one instant of yoiking to the next.

In the 16th century, the Danish-Norwegian King *Christian IV* decreed that everyone who pursued "Sami witchcraft" would be sentenced to death. The yoik has been considered witchcraft up until even today, as some people still consider that yoik is not appropriate in church. Many Sámi have not learned how to yoik because it has been considered a sin.

Through the yoik, an emotional connection is created between humans, animals and nature, which is historically connected to the Sámi natural religion and Shamanism. "You do not yoik about something as we do when we sing, we yoik something, then we become a part of the thing we yoik."

In the essence of yoik there is freedom in configuration, personal approach creating change in the yoik each time it is performed. Listening to the wordless syllables of a yoiker, it is up to the listener to see, hear or fill in their personal approach and emotions to the yoik.

The yoik does not have an end. It is like a ring circulating in the air. Its structure can be compared with water moving in the same tone as the landscape, or with a wing that touches the surface of a mountain. A yoik thus only opens up fully to people with similar background and experiences. This may create problems when this art is performed outside Sápmi and the Sámi society, as it demands experience and knowledge.

The project also drew on the Sámi shaman figure, *the nâjd*. The nâjd was the person who communicated between all the different worlds, the world of the living and the world of the dead. An important

tool for the Nâjd was the drum. To reach the gods, the Nâjd could do the specific yoik of the god they wanted to reach, but the drum could also be used. Historical notes for Nâjd rituals include a description of "the bear ritual". It has movements which could be considered as dance. The circular ritual includes different jumps and rolling on the ground around a fire.

W O M E N
I N T H E S Á M I
S O C I E T Y

The gender policy in Sweden strives to create a society where men and women have equal power over their own lives. The Sámi Council or Sametinget has also been working towards these goals. In 1993, Sametinget was composed of eight women and 23 men. In 2009, the numbers had evened up with 15 women and 16 men, with the first chairwoman in the Council history. Even though there are some specific laws for Sápmi, generally the national law and Swedish government take precedence.

Even so, Sametinget documents and implements different rights and laws for women and men, even today. Gender equality has improved, but the Sámi council still has some steps to take. This was actually one of the first projects where *Elin Teilus* worked with other female artists from Sápmi. After the performances, two Swedish girls told us that this was the first time they ever heard a female yoiker.

P E R F O R M A N C E

At the Sámi week in Umeå in March 2018, we collaborated with the yoik artist *Johan Sara Jr* to create a performance where movement creates a landscape together with Sara's yoik. The concert also had an underlying political message.

In the two-day preparation period, the main focus was for artists to talk with each other. They talked about their backgrounds as humans, about growing up in Sápmi, about how their pasts both led to art. They have a shared origin in common. On the second day, discussions focused on the vision of the performance. Johan Sara Jr is a lake Sámi, sjösame, and he has collected sea sounds for six years. These sounds formed the soundscape base, which was combined with poems, yoik and live drumming.

A vocabulary for a dance score was created following nine different steps:

1. Film the dance improvisation to all the recorded words / yoiks.
2. Self-analyze the movements from the video recordings.
3. Analyze the sounds and yoiks by Raymond and Liv.



4. Do a character analysis on each yoik through an "animal studies" module.
5. Film the dance improvisation by Liv, in silence for all the nine words.
6. Analyze the dance and movements from the video recordings.
7. Draw possible patterns (Drawings) that match the word, motivate.
8. Put all the data together and note the most common words.
9. Use the words as improvisation scores and embody them.

All the words became dance and improvisation scores. These were applied to nine different "game cards", where each card has on it all the applied scores. The cards were used as memory aids for the rules that applied to each word. It was also important not to over-rehearse the piece: doing it "too many times" would have created a sense of things being set.

Rehearsals for the final performance took place in Sitges, Spain. Elin Teilus arrived in the end of April, and the creative process started on the train back from the airport, where the background of both artists was clarified. Both artists are Sámi women, having spent large part of their lives in Southern Sweden. Their families are from the same area, in the woods and mountains. They share similar spirituality and a need for an artistic expression. Aira and Teilus are Lule Sámi and thus share a language, although neither speaks Sámi fluently. Both Teilus and Aira have experienced the strong political struggle of the Sámi society.

The process, in all, had an organic approach and structure. After collecting all the data—yoik recordings, dance movement, analysis of sound and dance and movement based on the nine words, a vocabulary was created. The vocabulary was separated into 10 themes for each card: space, level, breath, body part, size, shape, focus, quality and "other things".

The show itself was an improvised world with set scores that did not have to be necessarily followed. It began with an invitation to those who don't have a beating heart anymore, welcoming those who "have been taking the steps before us, the steps that are about to be taken and the present steps now, there and then". This reflects the Sámi belief that a person is never dead if someone is thinking about them: at that moment the person is alive.

Besides, places were brought alive from memories through yoik, and through dance. The actual space wasn't as important as the bond between two artists. During rehearsal, the room was given meaning by connecting it to real, natural spaces from Teilus's and Aira's personal histories. As the yoik has historically been a form of meeting with other Sámi, the performance brought back old elements of communication.

Teilus, the yoiker, communicated not only through her voice but also her body. Like the Nâjd, Teilus put the yoik in her body. It has been argued that the movements and dances of the Nâjd rituals have been lost in history due to a lack of vocabulary defining dance. Teilus reflected that during the performance she yoiked to the word Nâjd, which she had not done before in an improvised yoik – perhaps affected by the shamanistic Sámi history or genetic memory of her ancestral traditions. "Putting the yoik in her body", Teilus perhaps went through a Nâjd's ritual process to reach the gods.

Even though Aira did not necessarily understand the words about sanctity of earth, sky and life that Teilus was improvising, she could feel their meaning. In their communication, arguments or disagreement were not present. They both were representing and carrying the voice of Sápmi. In preparation before the show, Teilus and Aira meditated, inviting life from those ancestors who were present with them during the performance, using the same technique Sámi people have done for centuries.

When two people with similar background come together, strength appears. Words are not necessary to express the bond of the shared history. This performance was based on life, a life story of a whole people. The connection and the fight are present and strong after what the Sámi people have been put through in the past. What is important is that even though authorities may try to burn down Sápmi and all that is inside the culture — it has

even been made illegal to believe in life itself, according to Sámi religion—no one can ever burn down the power and the voices of a group of people. If they could, Aira and Teilus would not have been in Sitges performing "Yoik meets dance" in May 2018.

The varied audience experienced and connected with the sharing of this message of Sámi people's natural connection in different ways. As all humans create their own world, some audience members could relate it to personal happenings and their own cultures, while others experienced it as an observation of two humans using the space with artistic tools, dance and yoik. And some found no way to connect, thus not being able to appreciate it as much. The project allowed Sápmi to enter the room and come present to the audience, like the old Sámi religion says. Just by thinking of someone or something you will make them or that come alive again, be present in the room.

This project has created a dance style and a relevant and organic way to combine dance and yoik. "Yoik meets dance" could grow from here by collaborating with more yoik and dance artists. Mixing this style of art with more instruments, light design and visual effects, it is possible to form an educational and political performance without limits.



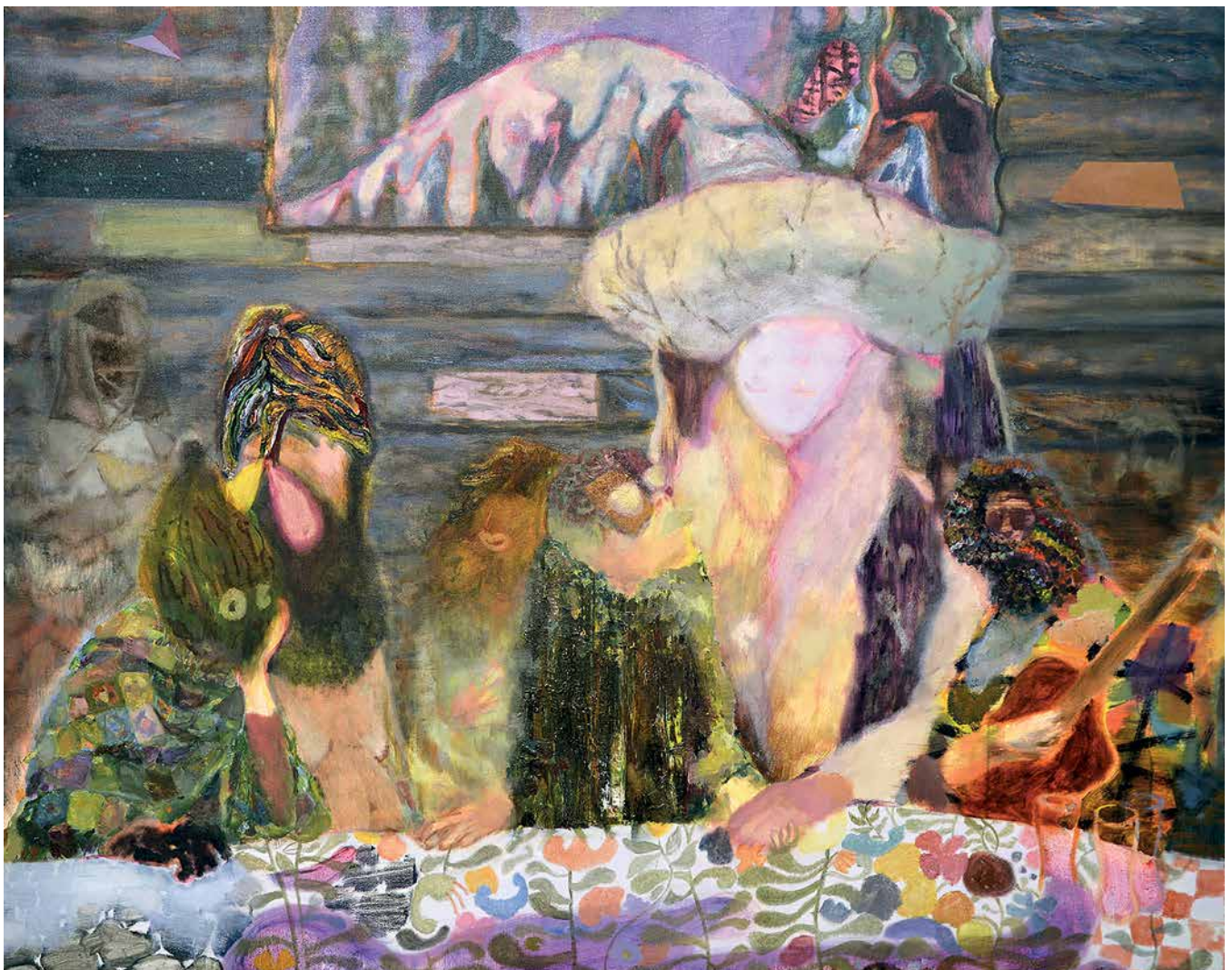
UNNAMED
(A SELF-PORTRAIT)

It was during an evening Raisa and I felt particularly buoyant and spirited, despite the snow being stacked outside in colossal piles, far too large for that time of the year, and the world still gnashing its teeth with the new virus, that we decided to put some props on us and take pictures of each other. We dressed up with scarves, blankets, fancy hats, pillows, and other paraphernalia we found at hand in the house. Conscious that sometimes fancy dresses may reveal more than what they hide, the next day we created quick sketches on paper of eight uncanny characters using those pictures: four of them based on images of Raisa and four on images of me. These pictures eventually crystallized into the painting shown here.

A troubadour in a balaclava; a tall, soft, mushy, silky lady; a shy receding figure; a ghostly face

floating about; a distracted, oblivious, rather vulgar, sort of high priest. These and some others, each with its own distinctive painterly spirit, density, character and caliber, make up the odd company, who inexplicably sit together around the same table. A figure lying on the table has been concealed by an undergrowth of designy patterns (the ones you find in those chic boutiques all over Finland). The troupe seems enclosed in some kind of *kelomökki*, where random geometric forms tamper with a reliable, bona fide representation of the space.

Behind the eight figures Raisa and I intended to paint a window to a scenery we know well, that we feel close to, and is so dear to us. However, as usual, our intentions proved to be in vain against the irremediable will of painting. The snowy vista through a window we aimed at rather wished to become a painting within the painting.





↑ Raisa Raekallio and Misha del Val working on "Taksikuskin avautuva sydän" (The Unfolding Heart of a Taxi Driver) in their Aitta-Studio in Sirkka, Kittilä, April 2020

← Untitled (Self portrait), oil on linen, 115 × 135 cm, 2020



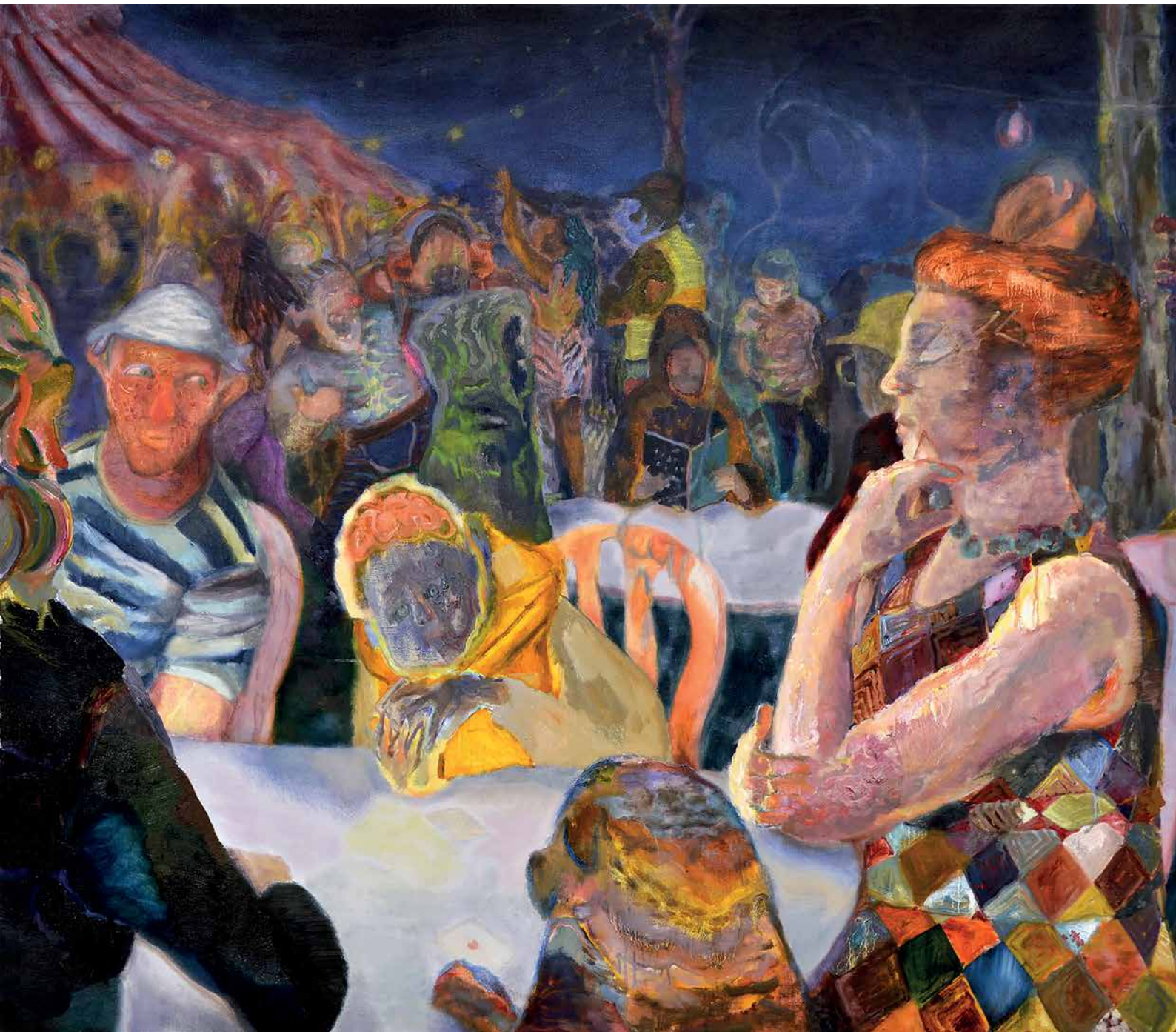
NEW NORMAL

I crossed the arcade that separated my friend's house from the normality of the world, pushed the hefty wooden door and I let myself into the warm ambience of the room. Inside, I found a heterogeneous and unruly bunch of characters of different constitutions, backgrounds, temperaments and species, sitting inexplicably around the same table. I stood for a moment at the doorway. No one seemed to pay any special attention to me. As I approached tentatively the table, I observed how everyone sitting around it looked comfortable in their own skin. This also helped me to soften up and relax, and so I allowed myself to be just what I was. I sat gently at the end of the table. Little by little my spirits lifted up, as the atmosphere of merry-making, fancy and mischief of my fellow diners sucked me in.

At the table I encountered ghastly lion tamers dressed up with military insignia, an old lady handing out playing cards to a dog, a Buddha, who had grown Nietzsche's moustaches and was toying with Picasso's bread rolls, fervent lovers hiding behind fancy Venetian masks, a taxi driver whose heart had been opened to love, toddlers lost in the light of a hand

device, enlightened beings, spectres, spirits of all sorts: of anger, of laughter, of confusion, of awe, dungeon wardens out of a Monty Python movie, the Supreme God in a drunken state. I saw Hermann Hesse, walls and dresses made of diamonds, mouldy men, a person from a black and white film wearing a surgical mask, a galactic refugee, saintly people who argued, kissed each other, fell asleep on the table, drooled and snorted lines. I also found fragments of the same forests I carry within me.

Serene and quiet, with my elbows leaning on the edge of the table, I understood the table as a living organism, and somehow as part of what I was. I grew fond of the other guests; I conversed and meddled with most of them and learned how everyone came from different families, quarters, countries, different walks of life, different planets, and how each of them had a different story to tell. I felt at ease amongst that miscellaneous mob. They were—we were—unique individuals, yet at that moment sitting at the same table we were all strangely alike. Touched by this observation, I looked back through the large glass window at the world of noises and smoke, words and minutes, credos and opinions waiting for me outside.



↑ Tivoli / La feria, oil
on linen, 145×172 cm,
2020

← Taksikuskin avantuva
sydän / The Unfolding
Heart of a Taxi Driver,
oil on linen, 150×220 cm,
2020

Sasha *Zs* RUSSIA
DIPTYCH





This diptych shows a Russian view on cultural heritage. In the first picture we see how a big group of communal workers clean the Soviet monument of Gagarin, meantime all the city is covered in snow. In the second picture again the group of communal workers destroy the wooden heritage of Arkhangelsk. This juxtaposition made me think about our priorities. These works were shot on iPhone, then printed and scanned.

Natalia Egorova RUSSIA
DON'T BE SILENT! *Speak!*

VIDEO PERFORMANCE, 2014–2015

In an inviting move a stick rolls out a red carpet and welcomes the tongue to take the stage.

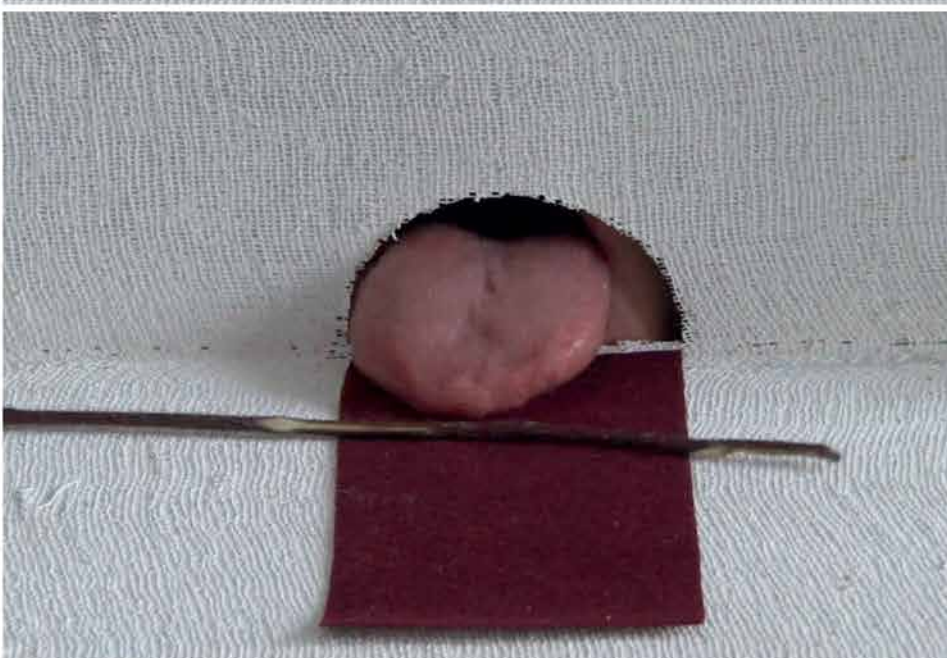
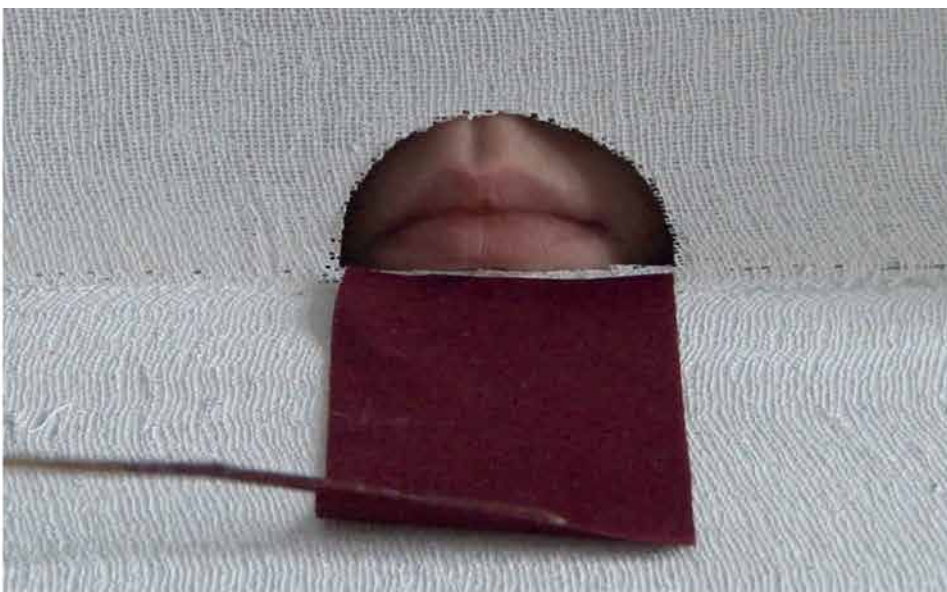
Natalia Egorova's video work *Don't be silent! Speak!* consists in the wordless confrontation between a stick and a tongue.

The stick is a symbol for education, correction, strict upbringing, pain, censorship, repression. The tongue, while forming sounds, is a symbol for freedom, expression as well as frivolity. The stick's elasticity increases the pain, the elasticity of the tongue helps to create sound. How much correction can each of these subjects bear?

While artists working in the tradition of body performance like *Caroline Schneeman* (USA), *Yves Klein* (France), *Jessie Kleemann* (Greenland), *Ana Mendieta* (Cuba) or *Marina Abramović* (former Serbia) focus on the presence of their entire body, Egorova often chooses a specific, deeply symbolic body part. In *Don't be silent! Speak!* the nudity of the tongue can, while exposed, easily be compared with the nudity of the body. The tongue is home to a sensory system that, like all other sensory organs, informs the human about its surroundings. Therefore the tongue is, like the skin, able to receive information and to express a statement, an immediate and almost instinctual reaction to perception.

In her earlier work *The Body in Question*, Egorova focuses on the skin's non-verbal reaction in form of goosebumps. In *Don't be silent! Speak!* the reaction is not visible, it happens behind a wall. Instead, the tongue





is not giving up, exposing itself in an unsolicited way to the stick. Does the stick involve pure pain or does it leave a taste? While *The Body in Question* shows the skin as a sensor, as the outer surface of the body and hereby as a metaphor for the border dividing the human's inner world from the outer one, *Don't be silent! Speak!* presents the tongue as the only muscular hydrostat, which is able to move in- and outside the human body. It is crossing a border, which other organs aren't able to cross. Yet, in most of the European societies, it is not polite to stick out the tongue.

Egorova exposes the tongue in an exhibitionistic way on a red carpet, declares the tongue to be an exhibit, issues a summon on an human organ, exposes it in a white box, where she negates and hides the context of the body; besides this, she separates the tongue from the lips as well as from the mouth, which can only be guessed about behind the wall, nothing more than a scenographic backdrop. The tongue is not only a sensitive organ which gives us the ability to sense, phonate, insult and articulate. Beyond that, though non-verbal, the tongue takes part in the discussion about body and gender. To correct and limit these two topics means to punish mankind for its fundamental rights.

TEXT: ANDREAS HOFFMANN, PHD

CURATOR, WRITER, RESEARCHER, LECTURER,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR FOR ARCTIC CULTURE LAB
GREENLAND. ARCTICCULTURELAB.GL

Taibola *Assemble* RUSSIA

DRAKKAR-LEVIATHAN

PLACE: NORWAY, FINNMARK COUNTY,
VARDØTIME: CREATED IN JULY 2016
SIZE: LENGTH — 28.5 M; HEIGHT — 6.5 M;
WIDTH — 6 M.

MATERIALS: WE USED TIMBER, FOUND IN ABANDONED HOUSES OF VARDØ, AND LOGS LEFT FROM THE TOWN PIER. WE USED SOME METALWARE TO FIX THE CONSTRUCTION. THE SCULPTURE IS COVERED BY TRANSPARENT VARNISH FOR ADDITIONAL HUMIDITY RESISTANCE.

AUTHORS: TAIBOLA ASSEMBLE CREATIVE TEAM (RUSSIA), ART-DIRECTOR AND MAIN ARTIST — ALEXANDER MENUKHOV.

In the summer of 2016 during the Pomor festival, we constructed a land-art object, *Drakkar-Leviathan*, on a desolate rock a short way off from Vardø.

Vardø is an island with an indented coastline lying in the Barents Sea and connected to the mainland by a subsea tunnel. The strait, which separates the island from the mainland, is called Bussesundet, meaning “Big Viking ship” in Old Norwegian. Just 100 years ago, this town was a heart of Russian-Norwegian trade, an important sea port, fishing and whale hunting base, and in the early Middle ages it was an outpost for the Normans.

Sea raiders crossed the seas onboard drakkars (Viking ships) to reach North America, Mediterranean littoral, and the White and Black seas; they sailed down the rivers to the Caspian Sea and invaded medieval Rus’ principalities. Vikings left their homes due to hunger and overcrowding, seeking their fortune in other lands. They crossed borders and mixed with other ethnic groups, imposing their rule where they landed. For the conquered territories, the Vikings were like the Biblical sea monster Leviathan.

It’s interesting to note that all the buildings on Vardø Island (before destruction during WWII) were built of timber brought by sea from Russian Pomorje (Arkhangelsk). Due to seasonal ice flow in the Arctic Ocean, sea winds, and currents, driftwood has been brought to Vardø shores for centuries. These trees grew in Siberia and Pomorje a long time ago, and then possibly became a house or a boat in Norway.

Nowadays, driftwood also violates the borders, like pirates or contemporary migrants crossing them by water. All members of Taibola Assemble were born and grew up in Arkhangelsk, sister-city of Vardø. To build the sculpture we crossed the border line and used boards left from old ruined town buildings as a construction material.

Drakkar-Leviathan is a story about the sea, about people, migration, myths, ships, historical events, wood, and whales. It is an anthem to the Arctic, both nature and human.



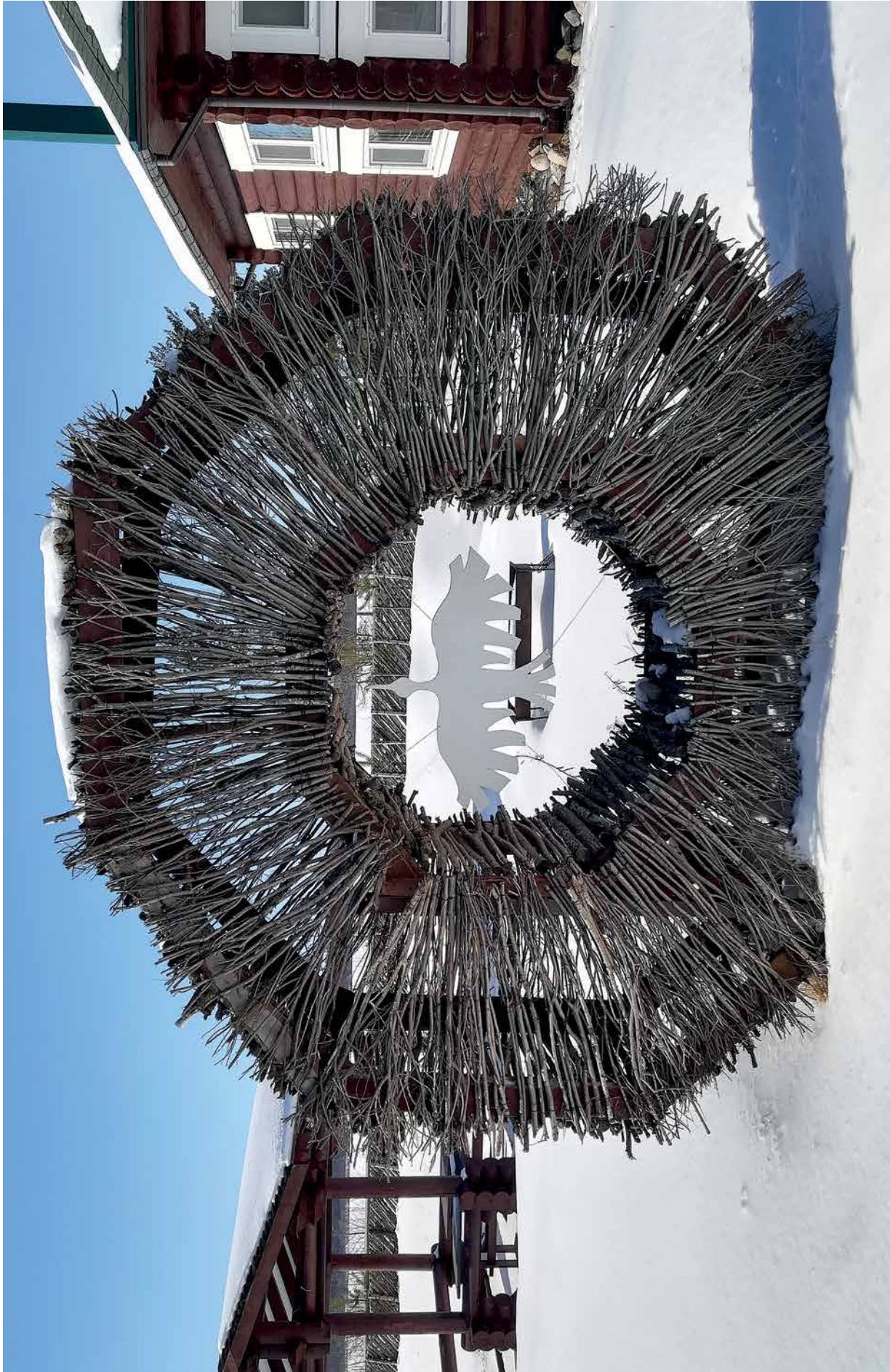


D R A K K A R - L E V I A T H A N





"Singing tetrapods" w/ Glafira Severianova for High North AIR Network residence, Air Barents, Berlevågøstelletene, Kvitbrakka, Norway, 2015



"Solstice", w/ Veronika Vologzhannikova, Maria Michailenco, Regional festival of wooden sculptures and installations "Vytegoria" Vologda region, Russian Federation, 2014

Inghild *Karlsen* NORWAY

KRISTIAN'S HOUSE

TEXT: SVEIN INGVOLL PEDERSEN

TRANSLATION: MARION BOUVIER

Inghild Karlsen saw Kristian's house for the first time in June 2000, while driving from Tromsø to Nordkapp. The house was built by *Kristian Andersen*, a Sámi fisherman from Repparfjord in Finnmark. It was located near Rotsund farm, a farm for psychiatric patients in Nordreisa, north of Tromsø. Andersen was diagnosed with schizophrenia and lived on the farm for a large part of his life. When Inghild Karlsen's eyes fell upon the unusual construction by the sea, Andersen had been dead for several years.

Kristian's house was a kind of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, where all parts are characterized by the same unconventional artistic will. It was built of leftover materials and driftwood, decorated and furnished with framed clippings from magazines and printed matter, cans, cardboard boxes, candy boxes and much more. Everything seemed to have been made with care.

We can imagine that the work gave Andersen satisfaction, perhaps it was also driven by necessity. But it was not done with the intention that someone else should experience it, not so that it would give visitors a certain mood or feeling, not so that someone would experience it as art.

But Inghild Karlsen saw that Kristian's house could open a door from our world to a completely different one, so maybe that's exactly what it was.





KARLSSTADT, S H O O S E





K R I S T I A N ' S H O U S E

galaxies and quasars
magnetic fields
jets and clouds of matter

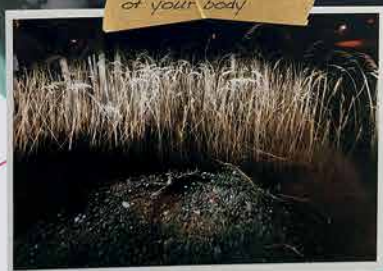
THE NEED OF
MEANING
COVERS US WITH
A DENSE FOG OF
ILLUSION

— I'm afraid we are here for no reason.

my private mouth
goes over



the dark memory
of your body



there is
no end

collisions of stars
matter
antimatter
stardust

your eyes are bigger than
cosmos, you said



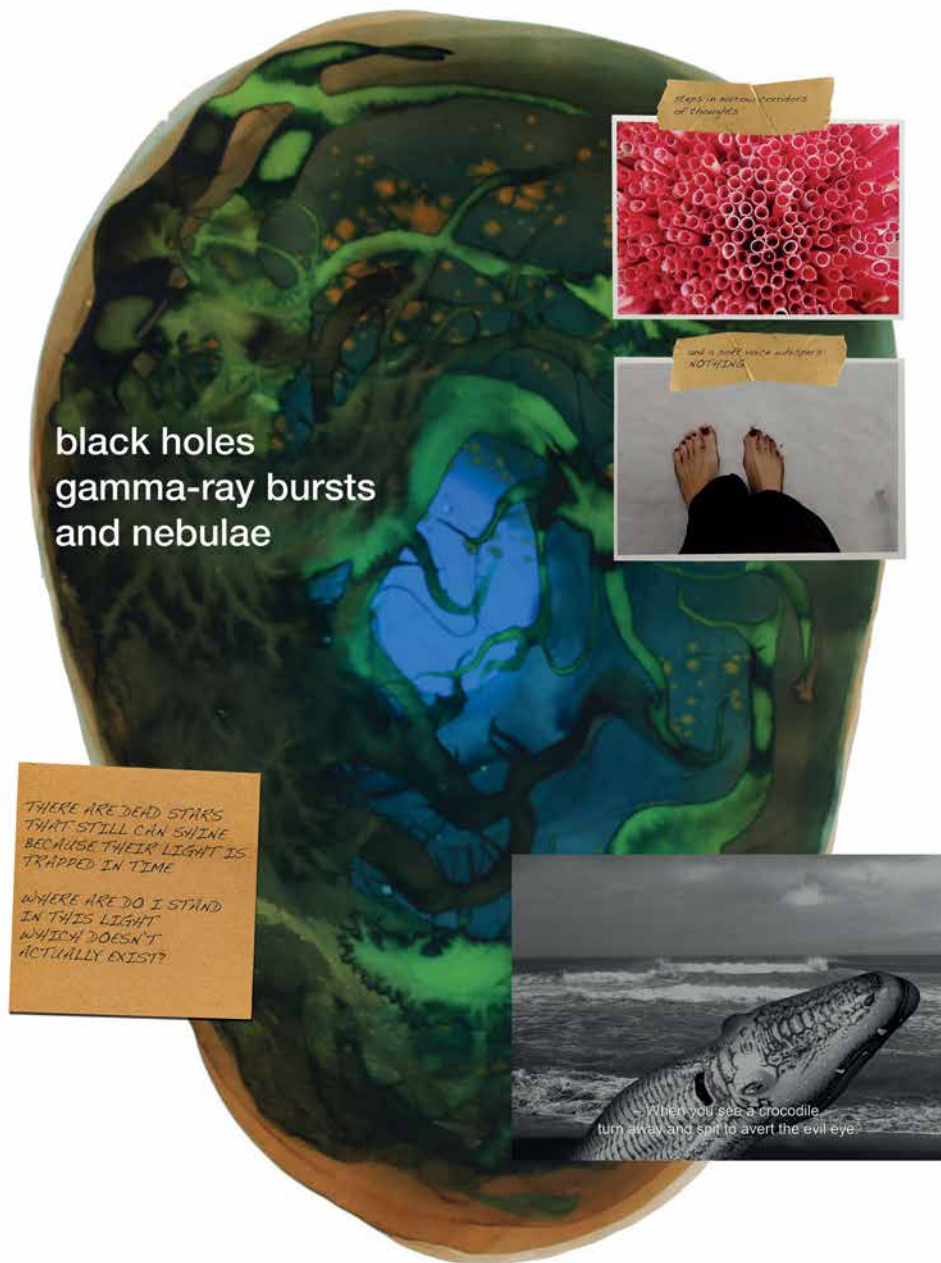
now you ask me
if i've seen your glasses



we speed through
the unknown
190 000 km/h
and we still meet
every morning by the
coffee machine



– The train is late. Coffee? Or let's play bibliomancy.
– "Nothing is as exciting as your fantasy."



THE MOST RENEWABLE ENERGY THAT
WILL TAKE US INTO THE FUTURE
IS A SOCIAL ENERGY: THE LOVE-FORCE,
THE STRUGGLE-FORCE, THE HOPE-
FORCE. THE ONE THAT OUR INTERAC-
TIONS ONLY WILL REPRODUCE.
Claire Fontaine: "Magical Materialism",
A Planetary Conversation
with Giovanbattista Tusa

Arctic Art Forum has been a long-term process of identity reconstruction through artistic and educational, collaborative processes. It has been a part of the unlearning and relearning, challenging both the Western and the Soviet canons, where place-based educational methods and relationality have been central. However, what exactly should be unlearned is still not clear for many international colleagues, and stories from Euro-Arctic Russia are rarely covered by the international media. How to make these stories visible and the voices heard?

2017 marked the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia. It is unlikely that our ancestors could imagine where we are today. The artistic ecosystems from the USSR were in decay, symbolising ideas of the outdated past. Walking in the center of Arkhangelsk, you could not help registering changes in the urban materiality: the shabby modernity of the Soviet block housing and Socialist Realist public art was gradually being replaced by the visual language of international corporate advertising. Electric public transport was replaced by private cars, leaving no space to pedestrians—all of this contrasting with the ongoing sustainability turn happening in Europe. Playgrounds were replaced by military cannons, reflecting the increasing militarization of the country. Giant shopping malls grew in city centers, and historical wooden buildings were burnt to free space for real estate businesses.

"Arkhangelsk is a town where the Lenin statue is looking in the direction of McDonald's", an exchange student from the USA said, summarizing the existing economic, cultural and political contradictions. This eclecticism of architecture, public art, and urban visual culture reflected the ideological chaos of the 2010s.

Sociologist *Maurice Halbwachs* claimed that history is never individual, and "the story of the groups we are part of is never really remembered by us". The country's monuments and artworks represent the national past and are

administered by the state, its museums and educational institutions; "located in public squares, lining the streets and giving prominence to train stations and airports, they are tokens of collective pasts materialized as external memories" (Røed 2019). Being born in this Northern town when the USSR still existed, we had to reinvent ourselves through art—to unlearn and to redesign our own identity through creating new art.

WHO PRODUCES THE CURRICULUM?

Generations of Soviet schoolchildren in the North had many subjects in their school program—except their local history. They did not learn to connect the micro-stories of their families or their hometown to the large-scale narratives of the past. The Post-Soviet historical curricula included the Decembrist Revolt, the October Revolution and the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945. However, there was no information about the role of Arkhangelsk in the international trade history of the country, essential for the culture and the identity of its inhabitants.

Arkhangelsk was the first international seaport for trade between Russia and England, established by *Ivan the Terrible* after an initiative by the Muscovy Company and the English merchants, who were initially looking for a Northeast passage to China. So, this Northern Russian town appeared on the map at the same time as the colonization of the Americas and India was taking place. Thus, it is important to look at its history in the broader context of global colonization and the Age of Discovery.

Another wave of colonization happened in the 19th century with the construction of the Northern Railway, a large-scale industrial project led by *Savva Mamontov*, a key person for Russian art at the time. He invited the most innovative artists of his time, *Konstantin Korovin* and *Valentin Serov*, to join him in the North and create artworks for the High North Pavilion at the All-Russia industrial and art exhibition of 1896 in Nizhny Novgorod. These paintings are now at the State Tretyakov gallery, and they were shown at the Munch Museum in Oslo at the exhibition "The Swan Princess Russian Art 1880–1910". These works have never been exhibited in the North. The youth growing up in northern towns in the 1990s and 2000s got used to thinking: "This is a depressive area, and the best people have left". As we found out, this is common for all Arctic areas, and to learn anew is our own responsibility.

LEARNING WITH
THE BODY

The walking, sensing body registers the details of the Soviet and post-Soviet urban planning, the Soviet public art around the town, and other aesthetic artefacts which were not paid attention to before. Everyday sensations can be a source of important knowledge. But how to implement this into a curatorial concept?

The curatorial statement for the very first Arctic Art Forum with the theme "Embodied Knowledge" was the following:

[1] The way we learn is the way we think of ourselves, the way we have an image of ourselves.

[2] Knowledge is not just an amount of information we remember by heart. It is not only dates, numbers or names. It is about feeling interconnected with others through a melody, a visual image, a plot. In the lines of Mezen design from Arkhangelsk region one can read signs known internationally. Folk tales around the world have the same repeating plots.

[3] The knowledge is in our fingers, our feet, our throat, it is in the language. This knowledge is given to us by our family and nature. The forum is about rediscovery of the common heritage, it is about the local memory and our own roots which can empower us in the challenging today.

FOLK ART IS BEING
CREATED EVERY DAY

"The forum is made for people, by people and is about the people. It is about the creative presence of the human in Arctic Russia. It is also about mutual responsibility, dialogue and peace."

This text is written by me after ten years living abroad, speaking another language and having obtained two university degrees. It was clear then that these knowledge systems were not enough, and we had to invent new knowledge.

THE UNLEARNING
LABORATORY

Arctic Art Forum gathered progressive Euro-Arctic cultural workers of the younger generation for quality discussions and rediscovery of our own heritage. Digitization of archives was another important unlearning source. In 2016, photos by *Nikolay Shabunin* from the archives of the Kunstkamera in Saint Petersburg were available for a broader audience. Shabunin was born in a Pomor village called Yuroma (Mezen district) and went to study art in Saint Petersburg. His travels to his native North in the beginning of the 1900s with a quality camera resulted in a thorough visual documentation of the region: the North we have never seen before.

The Forum asked the Kunstkamera museum in St. Petersburg for permission to use the photos. Digital archives have made photography more available, including photos from the pre-Soviet civilization in the North, previously unfamiliar to Northerners. Shabunin's photos were also used for the design of the poster and the webpage of the first Arctic Art Forum.

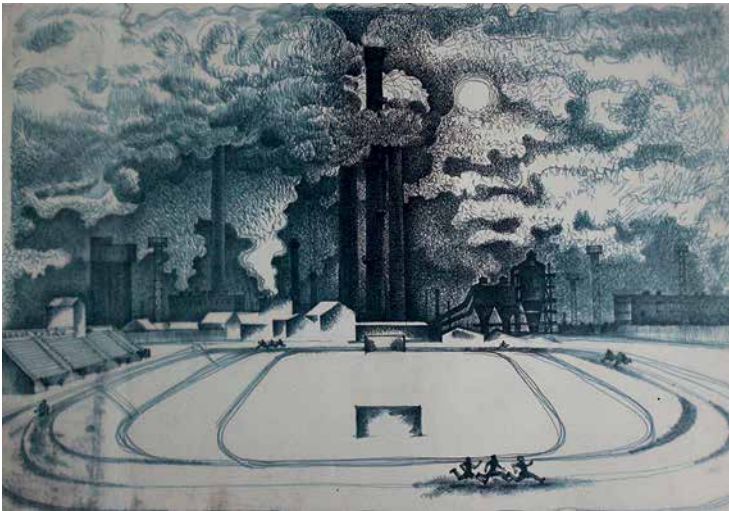
WHAT LANGUAGE
TO USE?

The central curatorial question was whether the language of the international contemporary art scene was relevant for Euro-Arctic Russia. Could "the Euro-modern epistemic habit" (Tlostanova, 2021) provide the necessary vocabulary for this place-related research? Is the knowledge really universal? Could we apply aesthetic theories to a context whose stories and cultural background differ from any European or American towns? Is it possible to create a new language?

It was evident that conceptual or text-based art would not work here. The Northern artistic ecosystem developed around socialist realist painting as well as crafts. International cultural collaboration developed from the 1900s onwards, but there was a lot of confusion in terminology: современное искусство vs. актуальное искусство (Contemporary art vs "actual art").

At the Arctic Art Forum, crafts were a central tool for developing a common language. Northern Russia has rich traditions of crafts, and this was a possible direction for this interdisciplinary experiment. Projects bringing together contemporary artists and crafts professionals from Northern Russia were especially successful in this context.

← Nikolay Shabunin. Mezen i 1906.
AAF 2016



↑ Vladimir Chernyshev. Derelict Village.
AAF 2016

← Ivan Arkhipov. AAF 2016

REPAIRING THE ECOSYSTEM

In the 20th century, the cultural ecosystem of Euro-Arctic Russia was destroyed and re-created twice: after the 1917 October Revolution, and after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. The traumatic consequences are still being processed through relearning family histories. You can hardly find a family in Northern Russia not touched by Gulag.

Many cultural leaders, including the former main architect of the town, the well-known folklore singer, the Soviet artist who created most of the public art in town, and museum directors, have relatives who went through that experience. However, this would be learnt in private conversations rather than in a museum. Despite all this, some conservative groups attempted to raise a monument to Stalin in the middle of Arkhangelsk (without any success, though). In this context, art could provide a place for a critical conversation.

The Northern ecosystem was rich with its exquisite embroideries, at least 13th folk-painting styles, furniture and house decoration. A hundred years later, material objects could be found in museums, while everyday life was designed in a Soviet and a Post-Soviet time. To imagine the new, sustainable future, we developed workshops and art projects around the local culture, in which new design could be created for this very context and which can interact with the environment.

INVISIBLE THREADS

Our sustainable approach involved inclusion of local youth in the production. The Forum is a grassroots initiative, produced by women and young cultural workers. At the time of the Forum, there were no freelance producers available, so young students joined the production team. For them, it was a school. They now utilize the networks born from this international experience for project management at various cultural institutions in the North.

It has been essential to invite local, talented young people to this process of co-creation. Some of them have stayed in the area and started studying contemporary art, some of them left looking for more opportunities.

Social processes of connecting artists from Moscow with the local arts scene, which previously was unfamiliar with contemporary art, were essential for creating a dialogue. We invited artists with roots in the North, giving some their first opportunity/chance to return, like architectural historian *Sergey Kulikov*, artists *Igor Samolet* and *Ustina Yakovleva*, designer *Svetlana Salnikova* (fyr clothes), alongside those not from here but inspired by the North: *Alexander Ermolaev* and *Masterskaya TAF*, *Ulyana Podkorytova*, *Vladimir Chernyshev*. These meetings were important both for the artists and for the local audience: the artists created the new North, the new imaginary.

THE POWER OF ART?

The organic creative processes contrasted with the context of militarization. Young relatives choose to become FSB (the successor of the KGB) officers after school graduation since it is a prestigious and well-paid job. Street artists invited to your project do not show up—they were invited to make a military propaganda mural. How to talk about art in public space when cannons are used instead of playgrounds? In Northern Russia, arts and creativity meet guns every day. This is a part of a daily routine.

What have we learnt from these several years of the art-and-life experiment? We have learnt that cultural workers have less power than the military. But they do have power.

Literature:

- Røed, K. (2019): Working through the past. Nordic conceptual art as a tool for re-thinking history. Skira.
 Tlostanova, M. (2020): "Unlearning and relearning design", in *Design in Crisis: New World, Philosophies and Practices*, Routledge, 163–180.
 Jokela, T. & Coutts, G. (2018): *Relate North. Practising place, heritage, art and design for creative communities*. Lapland University Press.
 Atroshchenko, O. (2013): "The North in the art of Russian painters", in *The Tretyakov Gallery magazine, special issue Norway–Russia, on the crossroads of cultures*.

Kjellaug Hatlen Lunde NORWAY

TRYKK I SANNTID PRINT IN REAL TIME

OUR LIVING PROCESS
THROUGH BREATHING,
WITH THE HELP OF GREEN
PLANTS, POWERED BY THE
SUN AND TRANSFORMED
THROUGH PHOTOSYNTHESIS,
STARTS WITH CONVERTING
CARBON DIOXIDE INTO OXYGEN.
LET US BREATHE. LET US LIVE ON
EARTH. LET US CARE.

At Kunstkvarteret Lofoten, close to Leknes in Norway, an art project is going on at the new printmaking workshop KK-trykk. This project, which will last for five years, had its first printing session in June 2020. Every year on the summer solstice, the longest and lightest day of the year, groups of people connected to KK-trykk will make their prints at local places, simultaneously. The project also includes producing a publication or artbook every year.

The project is called Trykk i Sanntid—Print in Real Time. At the exact same moment (in 2020, 20 June at 23:43), 17 printmakers performed a happening at the same time, but at different spaces: at KK-trykk and Kvalnes in Lofoten, in Bergen, in Stavanger at Tou Trykk and in Lysefjorden, close to Prekestolen.

In 2020, the subject was carbon prints (karbonavtrykk), as the participants wanted to highlight the question of our environmental footprint, but also to reflect on the huge impact that C—carbon itself—has on all kind of life on Earth and in the Universe. Carbon was in fact the beginning of printmaking itself, as it is the primary component of lamp black, a printing ink pigment prepared by the incomplete combustion of tar, vegetable oils, petroleum, or asphaltic materials.

Trykk i Sanntid was initiated by *Kjellaug Hatlen Lunde* at Kunstkvarteret Lofoten. Her close companions are *Rita Marhaug* and *Åse Anda*. Anda, who

lives and works in Stavanger, was an Artist in Residence at KK-trykk Lofoten in 2018. Marhaug, based in Bergen, lives and works in Lofoten in the summers, and works every year at KK-trykk.

The printmaking art book of 2020 includes content from 17 printmakers and two authors. The art book has been handmade by Rita Marhaug at Trykkeriet Bergen and published at PAB OS (Performance Art Bergen). The book will be part of the exhibition Trykk i Sanntid 01: KARBONAVTRYKK, held in Leknes in Lofoten in September 2021.

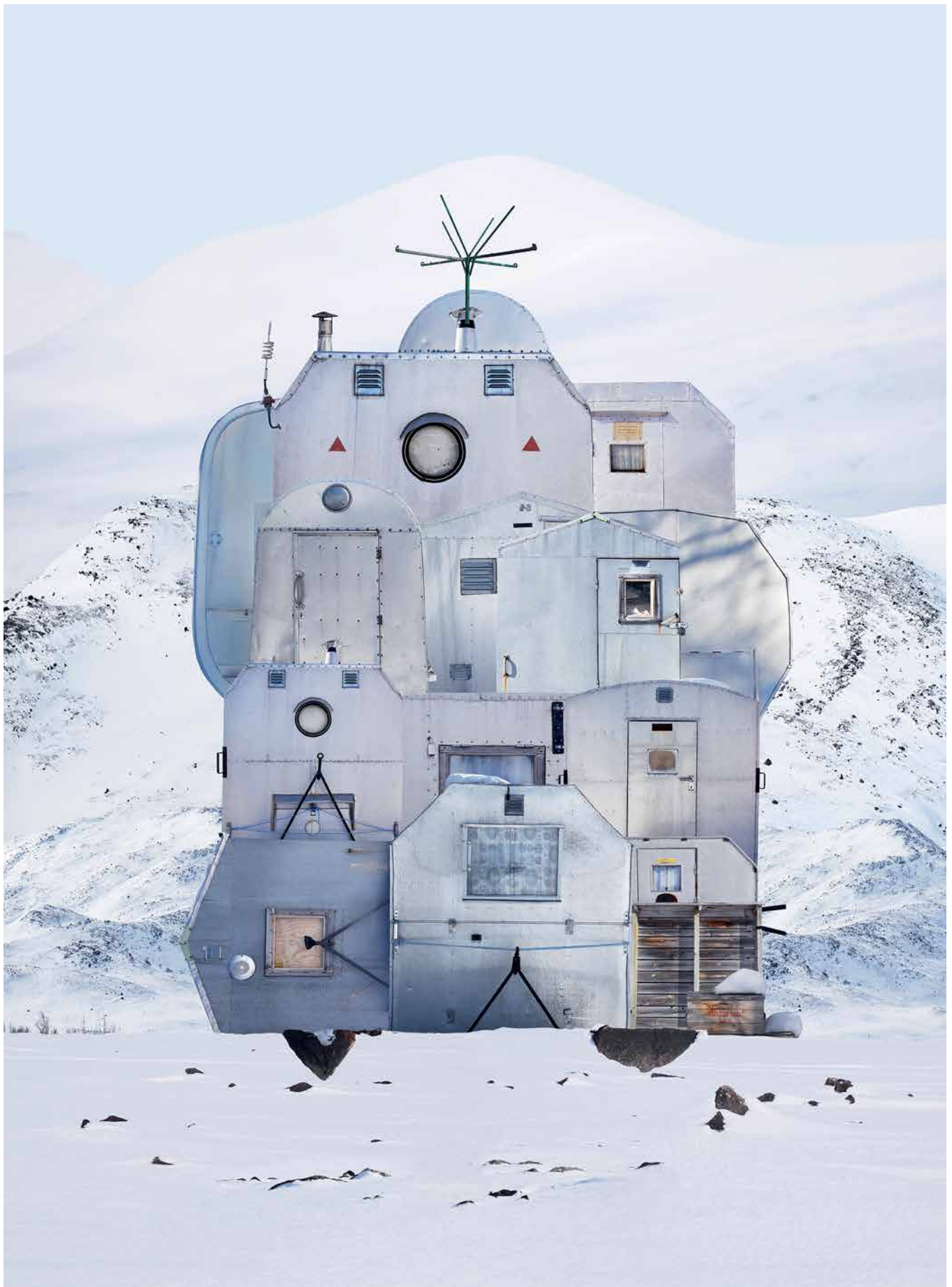
The printing session was going on both outdoors and indoors, at Kunstkvarteret Lofoten, and at Tou Trykk in Stavanger, but several participants also worked outdoors in other places. At Kvalnes in Lofoten, *Kjetil Berge*, who runs The Midnight Sun Bar, came directly from London. He made his prints in quarantine, printing the tires of his ice-cream van, from his project in Russia. Tires consist of coal in a large proportion.

Participants this particular night of 2020 at Kunstkvarteret Lofoten: *Kjellaug Hatlen Lunde, Agnete Tangrand, Lise Anita Stenberg, Malin Nyheim Overholt, Rita Marhaug.*





Anastasia Savinova RUSSIA
GENIUS *Loci* NORR

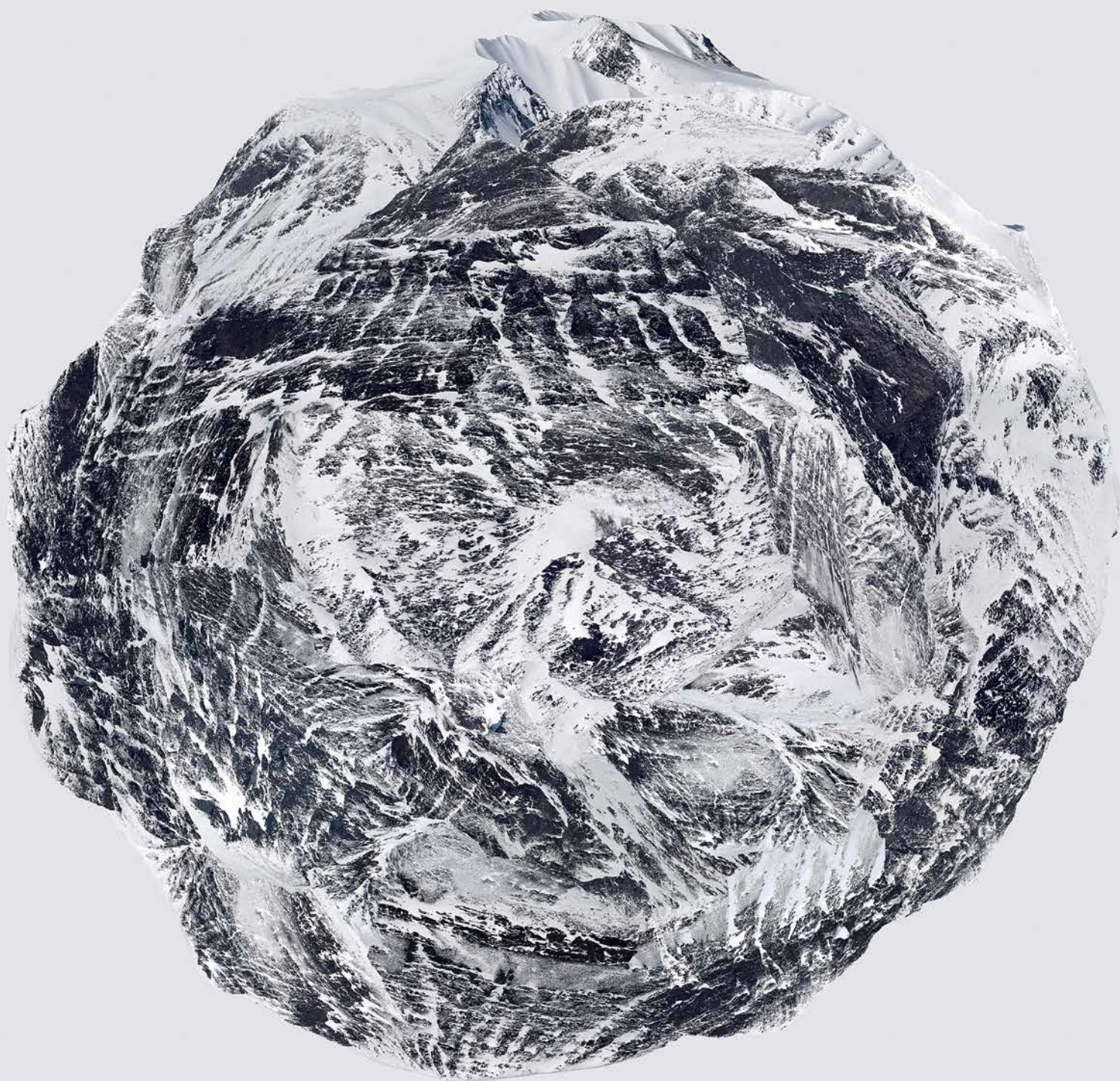


Genius Loci Norr. Somewhere
in the Swedish North, where fishing
huts invite for a cosmic walk



Genius Loci Norr. Sideways Encounters. Somewhere in Iceland, a constant need to see the Ocean

The Call of the Mountain Star / Tarra



Getting shit done shows the togetherness of the North.

The Association of North Norwegian Visual Artists (NNBK) is a regional organization for professional visual artists in Northern Norway under the national organization Norske Billedkunstnere (NBK). NNBK's long-term commitment is to promote and secure the professional, social, economic and non-profit interests of the visual artists from Norway's two northernmost counties: Nordland and Troms & Finnmark.

NNBK was founded in 1971 and the issues concerning the artists today are much of the same challenges that artists faced 50 years ago.

The establishment of good and improved exhibition spaces and Artist in Residence programs in the north are vital both for showing art and to reach a bigger audience.

The Troms and Finnmark County Council's working grants for artists are currently under evaluation due to the merging of the two counties, and working grants from Nordland are long gone after a short pilot period many years ago. Artists have limited project support one can apply for and a yearly travel grant from Nordland. There are more funding possibilities nationally.

The physical landscape and the distance between artists make it hard to create an allied artistic environment. Add to that the north-south battle for funds to activities, artists and exhibition spaces, and it takes some serious stamina to thrive as an art association and as an artist in the north.

There have been several victories though, where NNBK as an organization played a vital part, such as establishing the Nordnorsk kunstnersenter (North Norwegian Art Center), the Nordnorsk kunstmuseum (North Norwegian Art Museum), the Academy of Arts in Tromsø, and the Nordland School of Arts and Film (Nordland kunst- og filmhøgskole) in Kabelvåg, Nordland.

In 2021, NNBK organized seven exhibitions aimed at creating meeting points and arenas to celebrate our 50 years of existence, presenting our artists and the manifold of expressions. Covid-19 added another set of challenges for us, due to the restrictions on travel and on the number of people allowed to gather in the same space. But NNBK has shown the same fortitude as all artists in the north before us, by nonetheless carrying out all seven exhibitions across the region and presenting the art online, together with a video and sound program.

It is of great importance to create opportunities to present and mediate new art in the north, to find the collaborators and supporters to make living from art possible, to exhibit, and for art to be sold.

Art brings challenging and vital discussions about topics concerning the people in the north into the public sphere. This is a democratic necessity. As the commercial interests increase due to tourism and natural resources, it is also crucial for artists and people who are part of the living culture of the North to raise their voices and be an active part in shaping the future of the region. Luckily, our regions attract a lot of artists as well, and they indeed contribute to creating a vibrant cultural scene.

After all—getting shit done is togetherness. Look north.

LIST *of* CONTRIBUTORS

Liv Aira (Sápmi, SE)

is a professional dancer, choreographer and dance teacher at several schools all over Europe. livaira.se

Desiree Bergström (SE)

works in graphics, mixed media and installations in Luleå, Norrbotten. desireebergstrom.se

Olga Danilova (RU)

is based in St. Petersburg and has graduated from the Faculty of Graphic Art in I.E. Repin State Academic Institute. She specializes in linocut printmaking and also works with watercolour and oil pastels. danilovaolga.com

Natalia Egorova (RU)

from Petrozavodsk works mainly with video, multimedia installations, science art, and graphics. instagram@marsyas_outer_life

Sissel Fredriksen (NO)

is a visual artist living and working in Tromsø. sisselfredriksen.com

Kaija Hinkula (FI)

lives and works in Oulu. Her art stretches the limits of painting, sculpture and installation. kaijahinkula.com

Icelandic Collective (IS)

are Oslo-based writer and artist Ásmundur Ásmundsson, performance artist and writer Hannes Lárusson from Austur-Meðalholt and visual anthropologist Tinna Grétasdóttir from Reykjavik. this.is/ausgot, turfiction.org

Joanna John (PL/NOR)

is an audio-visual artist, designer and performer living in Tromsø. joannajohn.com

Gayle Kabloona (CA)

is an Inuit printmaker, ceramicist and textile artist residing in Ottawa. instagram@uyagaqi

Inghild Karlsen (NO)

lives and works as an artist, set designer, curator and organizer in Oslo and Tromsø, where she was born. inghildkarlsen.net

Tatiana Kipko (RU)

is a painter from Salekhard in Yamalo-Nenets, mostly working with genre paintings and themes related to life in the North.

Matvey Korochkin (RU)

is a visual and performance artist from Mstyora in Vladimir Oblast, working in St. Petersburg, where he graduated from the Stieglitz State Academy of Art and Design and the PRO ARTE School of Young Artists. instagram@matveykorochkin

Savu Korteniemi (FI)

is a visual artist, writer and curator working in Finnish Lapland. korteniemi.eu

Ingeborg Annie Lindahl (NO)

is one of the pioneering students from Tromsø Academy of Contemporary Art, now lives in Harstad. She works mainly site-specific in several mediums. ingeborgannie.com

Kjellaug Hatlen Lunde (NO)

has a studio and printmaking workshop KK Trykk Lofoten at Kunstkvarteret Lofoten close to Leknes and Stamsund. kjellaughatlenlunde.com

Hilde Methi (NO)

is an independent curator based in Kirkenes, investigating the relationship of her own locale to a larger geopolitical setting.

Vanya Mishin (RU)

is a multidisciplinary artist, curator, and educator based in Arkhangelsk. vanyamishin.tilda.ws

Ruth Montgomery Andersen (GL)

is the principal at Nunatta Isiginnaartitsinermik Ilinniarfia (The National Acting School of Greenland), a two-year actor training program under the auspices of the National Theatre of Greenland. nuis.gl

Dmitrii Novitckii (RU)

from Naryan-Mar in Nenets works in Murmansk with paintings, graphics, murals and ice and snow sculpture. He is a board member of the Murmansk branch of the Artists Union of Russia.

Katriina Pedersen (NO)

is a Kven activist who has worked as the Kven language consultant for The Language Council of Norway.

Anastasia Savinova (RU/SE)

has worked in Umeå since 2013 and has a background in architecture and design. She experiments with shapes and materials in various media. anastasiasavinova.com

Ekaterina Sharova (RUS/NOR)

is an educator, curator and producer with a background in pedagogy, literature, linguistics, philosophy, history of art, performance studies and leadership. In 2016–2018, Sharova co-curated Arctic Art Forum, an annual multidisciplinary event organized by the Arctic Art Institute in Arkhangelsk.
arcticartinstitute.com

Stephanie von Spreter (DE/NO)

is a freelance curator and writer, and currently a PhD fellow in art history at UiT The Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø.

Inuuteq Storch (GL)

is a photograph artist based in Copenhagen and Sisimiut.
inuuteqstorch.com

Ivínguak Stork Høegh (GL)

is a contemporary Greenlandic artist currently working with digital photo collages in which a traditional Inuit culture is mixed with a modern globalized world.
instagram@art_graphic_artist

Taibola Assemble (RU)

is the main creative force behind the Taibola festival in Arkhangelsk area, and beyond.
taibola.ru

Sergei Terentyev (RU)

is a multidisciplinary artist and curator based in Petrozavodsk, and also the creative director of the VYHOD media center.

Sasha Ts (RU)

is a street photographer from Arkhangelsk.

Espen Tversland (NO)

investigates how knowledge-building occurs and how it relates to phenomena related to climate change
tversland.com

Misha del Val (ES)

& Raisa Raekallio (FI)
create co-paintings in the village of Sirkka in Finnish Lapland.
raekalliodelval.com

Jussi Valtakari (FI)

is a sculptor from Taivalkoski, Northern Ostrobothnia.

Alexander Veryovkin (RU)

studies photojournalism at FotoDepartment and at the School for Young Artists of the Pro Arte foundation in St. Petersburg.
alexandervervovkin.com

Antti Ylönen (FI)

is a sculptor and environmental artist from Ii, Northern Ostrobothnia.
anttiylonen.fi

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Cover art

by Anastasia Savinova

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by Victor Tiapkov
and Nadezhda Staritsyna

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by Marion Bouvier,
Paavo J. Heinonen
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Marion Bouvier

Proofreaders

Marion Bouvier
Sarah Caufield

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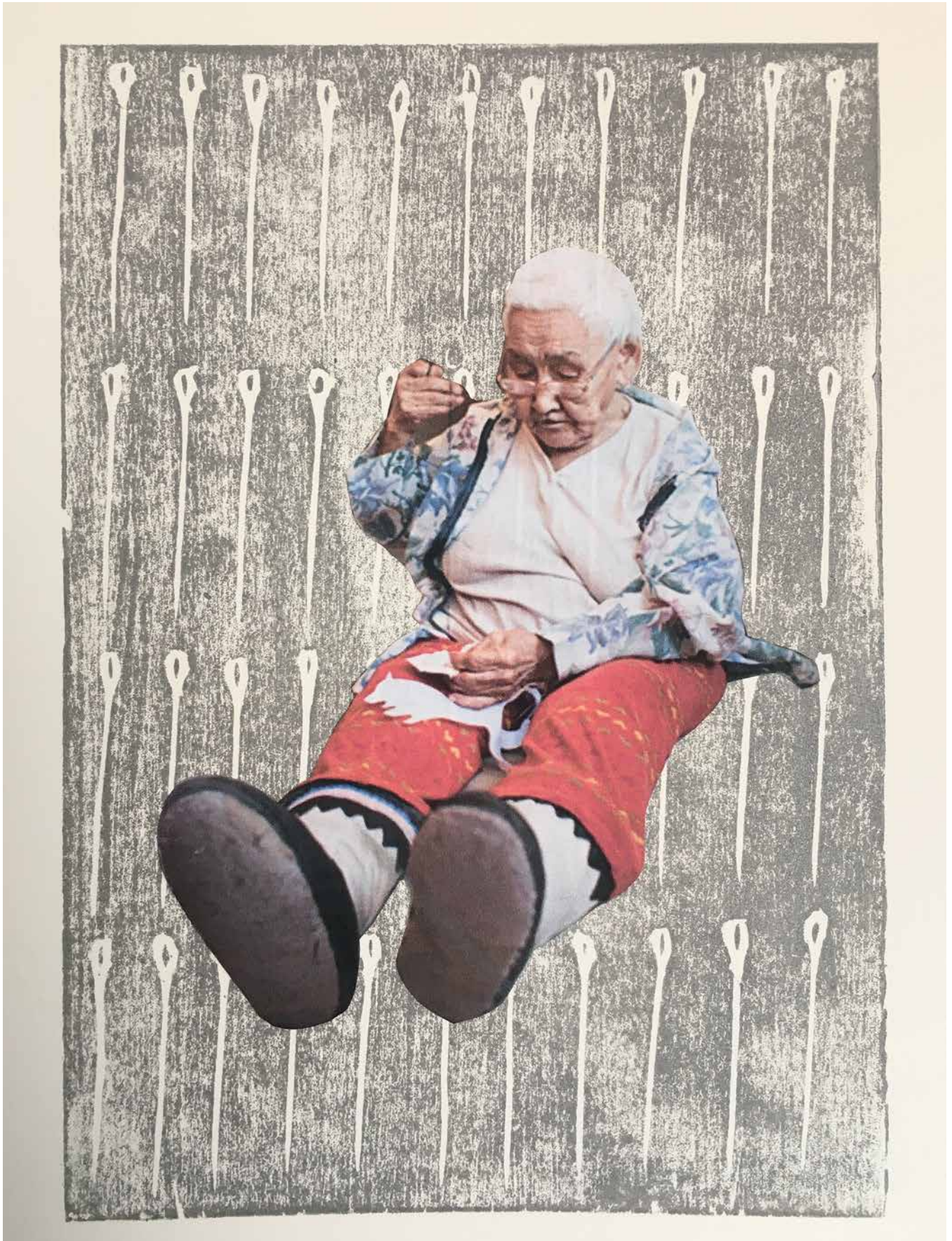
NORDISK
KULTURFOND



Troms og Finnmark fylkeskommune
Romssa ja Finnmarkku fylkkagielda
Tromssan ja Finmarkun fylkinkomuuni

Gayle *Kabloona* CANADA
NINGIUQ

My grandmother and avvaq (namesake), Victoria Mamnguqsualuk was a textile artist and printmaker from the Back River area in Nunavut, Canada. Her work has influenced my art career greatly. Her art is a legacy of the powerful woman she was.



Ningiuq, woodcut and collage, 35,6×27,9 cm, 2020

