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Homely and Unfamiliar Landscape

The landscape is flat and the flora, especially the forest, is very familiar. Bright hayfields open up around the village. They are proof of the similar kind of agricultural work found in my home village in Finnish Lapland. I can feel the nearness of the river, but the familiar sound of fast running water cannot be heard. The river is flowing slowly in deep sandy ground. In the evening, neighbours bring salted grayling to eat – the taste of the river is homely. The grey houses in the village create a sense

of timelessness. The blue-green paint here and there is a reminder of the time and the place where we are now.

I am looking for tools, boulders, scrapers and scraps, the equipment that villagers once used to create the essence of the landscape. Tools settle in my hands, prompting a bodily experience that awakes memories of familiar work in the hayfields. In addition to the sketchbook and the camera, I now have a measure of the physical work done in the landscape within my hands. With the tools on my shoulder, I walk in the footsteps of, and identify with, those people who created the village landscape of the past.

I wonder how it looks in the winter when the land is covered with snow and the river with ice. From my bag, I take out four photos of snow sculptures I made on the River Sysola a few years ago. I apply them to the grey walls of the old houses. The patterns of snow sculptures are the same as the textiles in the windows of the old houses. In the evening, the colours of the landscape change, while the river reflects the lights from the sky and its own silvery surface. I study the colours of the landscape by creating some pocket-size paintings. The same beauty, the same northern sky, curves above this village and my home village.

Mixed media installation, variable sizes, 2018

Images: Timo Jokela

