

A Winter playground project

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My project was an environmental design project, the aim was to design and build a playground with snow and ice in Tonttula, Kittila. The playground was intended for the many family tourists that visit the place during the Arctic winter.

The main idea behind of this winter art project was to entice more visitors from Finland and abroad to Finnish Lapland. In addition, it was for the tourists to get to know the climate of the Arctic Circle and appreciate the beauty of nature. Moreover, it was also for the people who live in the area to rediscover the charm of the local culture, nature and celebrate the value of the area.

The project was carried out from the 15th to 19th of January 2018. The tourists coming to Lapland during the winter are really interested in the natural phenomena of clear days, snow and nature. They are eager to see and experience the cold, snow, ice, darkness, Aurora, reindeer and folk cultures that existing in the Arctic area.

Therefore, I thought it would be an excellent opportunity for the audience to think about the ecosystem of the natural environment as well as the beauty of natural materials if we could use to create art using snow and ice. Snow is almost the ideal natural material that symbolizes the Arctic Circle.

Tonttula is located in the Lapland region of northern Finland. It is an experiential theme park that is operated by the Hullu Poro group. They own many hotels and facilities in the Levi area that is world famous as a ski resort. The theme of Tonttula is Santa Claus and his Elves so the park consists of old buildings, antique furniture, and things related to fairy tales such as Santa Claus and Elves.

During the project, I made a winter playground with university students which was a part of university workshop. I designed a labyrinth in the form of old books, a slide in the shape of a wooden spoon, a resting place (a dome in the shape of a Kuksa), and some ice swirls in the shape of fallen leaves. The inspiration for those ideas came from Finnish traditional crafts, fairy tales and nature.

As our time was limited, In the end, we made three snow Kuksa domes and one wooden spoon shaped slide. The results can be seen in Figures 6-8.



Figure 1. Scale models for the playground. Image: Maiko Ikeuchi, 2017.

Figure 2. Making snow domes. Image: Shi Si, 2018.



Figure 3. Finalised snow playground at the Tonttula yard. Image: Maiko Ikeuchi, 2018.

I also had wanted to include an animation, this was created using a simple elves' shadow animation and projected on to snow objects as an experiment. I tested the concept to see if it would make the playground more attractive. My idea was that when a person was playing in the playground and standing between the projector and the snow, a shadow of would become a part of the interactive media art because it was projected simultaneously on the animation.

The process was tested on the 4th of February because we did not have enough time to try it during the actual workshop. However, it went well even with a small audience and I feel the use of animation can be developed further as just one possibility for winter art playgrounds and other tourism related art installations.