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Non-locality Of Water

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Abstract

Non-locality of Water aims at addressing exclusion and non-locality that happens in the water context through the combined methods of ABAR, Artistic Research and Filming. Targeting migrating pink salmon that originated in the soviet era, the result of this research process is a transnational investigation through Norway, Finland, and Taiwan that culminated into three group exhibitions. The final exhibition *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.* brought together narratives from various places. These included Tenojoki in Finland, Varangerfjord in Norway, Kemijoki in Finland, and Liuqiu in Taiwan. Each narrative explored themes of exclusion beyond the local context. Together, they threaded a two-channel installation that invited viewers to consider these issues across different regions. With the aid of fieldwork and literature review, the artistic process of *Non-locality of Water* explores multiple layers of water—cultural, natural, colonial and underwater.

Introduction

-Background

My experience in free diving allows me to redirect terrestrial habits and explore the relationship between humans and ecology starting from the water. This shift in water perception shares common ground with my experiences in gender transition, world travel, and other transitional activities, which echoes Melody Jue's (2020) view that scuba diving and the ocean are environments (milieu) with situational knowledge, intertwined with gender, culture, race, and class. Colonial cultures and cultural rules become hyper-forces that influence the environment (Morton, 2013). This applies to both open environments like rivers and confined built environments such as your local swimming pool. Complex concepts such as Timothy Morton's (2013) "non-locality" has informed my research that led to the invisible others, for instance, invasive pink salmon, nuclear waste water, and how these processes entangle with colonial history, state powers and networks at play.

The research question arises within my research actions is: **"How could filmmaking and art based action serve as an artist's tool for localizing hydro-non-localities and hydro-exclusions?"**

Working with water, it is very clear from the beginning that exclusions are practiced in local water bodies. Through three "place-moments", this thesis aims to unfold Non-locality Of Water. This will include the Tenojoki watercourse area, the Kemi River watercourse area, and the Liu Qiu island open water area.

The Tenojoki watercourse area connects Finland and Norway at their shared border. This region is critical due to its connection with the Barents Sea, and the length of the Tenojoki River stretches far into Finland. Furthermore, it holds a colonial reality tied to the Indigenous Sámi people. This complex significance is also reflected in the entanglement of fishing practices and regulations managed by multiple governmental bodies.

The Kemi River watercourse area is another extensive river spanning a large portion of Finland. It flows through Rovaniemi and, in the past, provided a rich fishing resource, particularly Atlantic salmon, until it was dammed after the Second World War. This highlights the continued importance of the Tenojoki River, which still attracts salmon.

Finally, the open waters around Liuqiu Island introduce us to a subtropical ocean environment. The island is located in the Taiwan Strait, between China and Taiwan, and the surrounding waters are often impacted by pollution and fishing practices from nearby major cities.

Each place-moment respectively has a different yet interconnected aspect of hydro-exclusion. This is reflected through governmental policy, the public's general notion, and a sort of collective bureaucracy in updating out-dated conceptions and practices around nature. For example, in the chapter for Tenojoki watercourse area, the reality of pink salmon will be researched, field-worked, and concluded in a public screening in the Ateneum Museum. For the Kemi River watercourse area, two chapters will be dedicated, under Ice on Kemi and Workshops. The ice chapter will focus on underwater fieldwork about the sensation of ice, the sensation of flowing rivers, and the cultural layers surrounding these practices. The Workshop chapter will focus on participatory workshops working with local university students (Relate North 12), local primary students (NAAE) on water related themes. Finally, in the chapter for Liu Qiu island open water area, the milieu of free-diving will be delved into.

The concerns of my thesis are not only to raise awareness in scientific, cultural, legal, colonial realities but also to develop my subjective art practice that reflects my personal background as an artist. In the film-making process, water will become the medium that touches upon my own experience in growing up within the settler colonizer government in Taiwan, which is also my parents and grandparents' experience. While my parents grew up in schools that physically punished students that spoke Taiwanese, in my grandparents generation, they are forced to learn and speak Japanese and forbidden to use any other languages, if they ever even go to school. Under this political climate, I grew up hearing my parents warn me not to talk about politics at school and not to tell others that we speak Taiwanese—a dialect originally used by some of the early immigrants from Fujian, China, in the 17th and 18th centuries. To give a brief summary, Taiwan was colonized by Spanish and Dutch Government in the 17th century and ruled by Imperial Qing Dynasty. Then given away to Imperial Japan for a period of 50 years beginning from 1895. Shortly after the Republic of China government retreated to Taiwan in 1949, a massacre called Two-two-eight and the period of white terror (suspension of civilian legal process) began, where the local intellectuals were executed, killed, and imprisoned. Taiwanese is the language that's been used to narrate the two Channel videos in the thesis show titled, *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.*

The chapter on exhibition will discuss not only the exhibition itself, but also the process that goes into art based decision making in presenting *Non-locality Of Water* to the public.

Last but not least, in the chapter of Practical Training, research experience at Mustarinda Art Residency will be reflected and featured as analysis of my art based practice in the context of art residency.

- The Question of Fieldwork

The circumstances for the fieldworks practiced in this research all have significant seasonal, time-sensitive constraints, in addition to economic ones. For instance, the fieldwork at Tenojoki watercourse area. The invasive pink salmon swims upstream once every two years. The duration for this master thesis is also two years. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to visit the area during the 2023 summer's spawning cycle, which coincided with the start date of my master studies, otherwise the fieldwork would have to happen after graduation. Similar conditions apply to both the art based actions taking place in Kemi River watercourse area and Liu Qiu island open water area. This is because of seasonal ocean current and built-up thickness in ice during winter, making these efforts a race with time. The travel cost in researching at Liu Qiu island open water area should have also caused stress on the project. Luckily since it was done at the beginning of my master studies, I was able to save the flight cost between Finland and Taiwan.

The journey of visiting these transnational, cross-continental water bodies have made the research on non-locality possible. My personal perspective as an artist has made me emphasize these visits in the thesis. I believe that physical immersions inside these waters have provided the necessary inspiration and experience for me to carry out all the artistic works during the pre-writing, writing, and production part of *Non-locality Of Water*. Pink salmon migration happens because of human induced habitat and migration changes. I want to raise awareness not only of the effects—the rising number of migrated species such as the humps, but also opening up questions on how to live with these environmental changes. The workshops about water and air, immersion in Kemi River during winter period, and later the underwater exploration in Liu Qiu island all are exploration, responses and processes for the questioning of the colonial environment legacy. How do we deal with these problems now? How will we deal with these problems in the future? As an artist, what can I do? Examples like the Dutch Serengeti prompt us to re-think about paradigms. I think the climate will keep changing. Successful, and overly successful migration of certain species will happen in unexpected places. Gate-keeping a couple of specially attended rivers, such as the situation in

Tenojoki, really reflects the consumption preference— the prized Atlantic salmon, and the growing numbers in the practice of its farming.

The heart of the issue remains in the general attitude in treating what is on the surface, but never what is underneath. Because the underneath brings up dark history and practice that extend to the present day and to the deep layers of binary tradition, binary culture, and binary norms. Here at the introduction of *Non-locality Of Water*, I want to say, welcome to the underneath.

The theory chapter opens up the thesis through literature discussion on exclusion, hierarchy and ocean. It is also owe to Hilma Network For Gender Studies courses like Gender, Body, Water by Anastasia Khodyreva, PhD, and Crazy Witches-Nature, Animals and The Creation of Hierarchies by Freja Högbäck, PhD, that some of the thinking and discussion recorded in the thesis could have even taken roots. Not to mention the importance of courses like Introduction to The Arctic by Nuccio Mazzullo, PhD, Introduction to The Arctic Cultures and Master Thesis Seminars by Maria Huhmarniemi, PhD, who is also my thesis supervisor that provided invaluable support throughout the entire thesis research period.

I also want to thank Aino Erkinaro, for generously sharing information, and Hannah Rowan, for encouragement in the very beginning. And above all else, I want to thank the ocean and Iita, who shared the excitement of this journey.

Combining Methods

Combining Art Based Action Research, Film and Artistic Research Method.

“...beyond individualistic brains and turns inward, training the camera on ourselves as knowledge creators”

—Hilary Bradbury, *Setting the table: How to Do Action Research Transformations*, p.4

-ABAR

The research action of ABAR will feed into the process of using film as an artistic research method. Artistic research method involves apnea diving, fieldwork, exhibition, screening, participatory workshop, making, performing. The basis of my research method is art-based action research, which is research that aims to reflect and refine one's practice that involves art-based methods in collection and/or analysis of data. It is also a research method that weights inclusion and interaction in its approach (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018, p. 13).

It has strong association with environmental politics as well as social politics that promote freedom, according to Jokela and Huhmarniemi (2018). While art-based action research has similarity with art-based design research, art-based research, a/r/tography, it tends to be less autobiographical and places its solution on interactive process while utilizing influences of third parties as an important part of the research. Lastly, it has a cyclical nature that runs practice and theoretical research in parallel while performing reflection, investigation, action, documentation (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018, p. 14).

I think this is a great process for refining one's practice. In my case, as the filming project unfolds, it will naturally allow me to reflect and investigate each individual event happening in the timeline of the film. Be it workshop, show, or fieldwork. One critical motivation of utilizing art-based research methods (ABR) is its ability to bring out alternative and counter narrative to the dissemination of existing power structures (Barone & Eisner, 2011, p. 124). Power structure in this sense can be not only master narratives but also behavioral tendencies, thinking habits, and non-verbal clues that follow these narratives without knowing the possibilities of alternative ones.

-Artistic Research

As discussed by Hallnäs (2017, p. 99), artistic research is “all about searching, searching, and searching, and searching again” , which manifests in the expressional implications of an artist's discoveries. In Hallnäs' view, the artistic research method is not about knowledge production, however, his definition of artistic research as a way of developing artist's practice coincides with ABAR's goal of reviewing, updating one's artistic practice. Furthermore, Phillips (2017, p. 25) brought forth important insight on openness and accessibility of artistic research by questioning the availability of an artwork in a university database versus an art gallery. This confirms another characteristic of using film as part of the artistic output, that it has the possibility to be distributed without any “pay to say”, gate keeping, or privatization in various forms. One other thing to keep in mind is that if artists solely rely on institutions and organizations to popularize their work, it could be troublesome if you don't necessarily agree with the paradigm, method, values of hosts. For instance, how does the gallery you are associated with get their funding? Whose work do they represent? In Decolonizing Nature's last chapter, Labofii declined an offer to participate in Donaufestival in Krebs, Austria because they saw the sponsors included EVN and Raiffeisen, who involves in coal-fired power station for distribution across Europe and the later funded oil refinery and Siberian coal mines (Demos, 2016, p. 266). For another instance, the Liberate Tate movement successfully made Tate ending 26 years practice of accepting BP sponsorship (Demos, 2016, p. 267). Alternative channels of distribution should be emphasized especially if the artist belongs to non European heritage, potentially compounding with racial, gender based hierarchies.

-Film

In Hearing and Jones's (2018, p. 428) discussion, they concluded that using film is an embodied process that can tell about how the researcher perceives their surrounding environment, hence it can relate to the autoethnography research method. Interestingly, in Eva Hayward's *Spider Woman*, she talks about how telling a story (a narrative) is a way of constructing truth for oneself on how you(or everyone else) see yourself. This relates to the core idea of the self-filming method in this research, in a way, it is a practice about using one's own voice to tell one's own story, as opposed to what is common in colonial power structure.

In Louise Bourgeois's *Destruction of the Father, Reconstruction of the Father*, as analyzed by Svenungsson (2007, p. 24), Bourgeois uses diary, writings, and interviews to construct a narrative about her work based on reconstruction of her memories. Film has been used as a major data collection tool among anthropologists (Levy, 2009, p. 217). And it has also untold potentials other

than how “video-as-becoming” can reflect on dynamic recognition of relationship from subject/object to their entanglement(relation) (Levy, 2018, p. 448). In terms of data collection, to a degree this method automatically becomes participatory (Levy, 2018, p. 439). In the context of filming, documentary makers often become a separate spectator making a film without the subject's input (Lunch, 2006, p. 10). In my case, I am both the subject and filmmaker. While there might be participatory aspects involved, it is different from the participatory video method described by Lunch & Lunch (2006), even though vertical and horizontal communication can be achieved in a different sense. The filming can take place across regions of different climate, culture, nation, place-species while its target extends downward to water molecules and upward to large scale human interference and cultural trends.

While filming is the central axis, other indirect ways of feedback will also be considered such as review and comments from exhibition, screening, sharing sessions related to the project. Skill performers can influence the audience in a way that flat representation could not (Gergen & Gergen, 2018, p. 61). To perform in a film can also achieve similar artistic effect. To physically perform movement(in this case breathing, diving) is also a way of embodiment that focuses on linking the separateness common in mind and body (Snowber, 2018, p. 249). This reaffirms with Neimanis's (Gnraton, 2022) view that human bodies often become disembodied and over sensitized with language, to a point that sensing and re-connection to environment becomes elemental in her methodology.

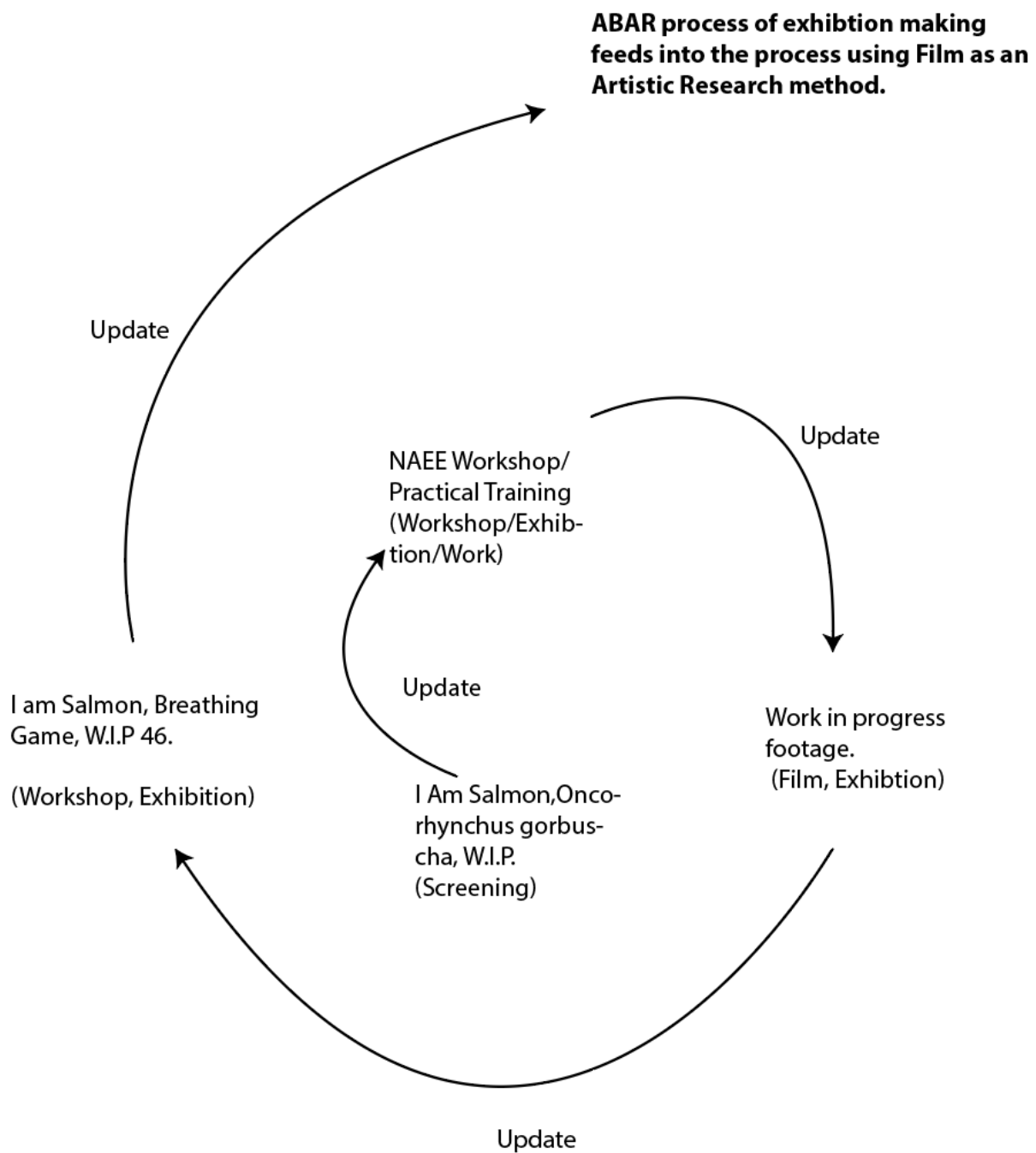


Figure 1. Info diagram for Combination of Method, Lin Ni.

On Exclusion, Hierarchy, and Ocean

- Binary Exclusion- Art and Non-locality

Art can be exploited as a tool for maintaining hierarchical power relationships. In Lippard's (1997, p. 265) word, "to put us in awe of the power of our government or the power of corporate sponsorship." Moreover, the critical issue remains today, even in 2024, that "artists are not trained to deal with people, community conflict...worse still, bureaucracies and legal system" (Lippard, 1997, p. 268). Even though Lippard (1984) faces criticism of retrogression, as elaborated in her book, I would argue that the binary exclusion of the local from the global plays an important part in the detrimental continuation of the Anthropocene.

Non-locality is an important and strange characteristic for a hyperobject, and one example of it is nuclear radiation (Morton, 2013). In December 2001, three woodcutters in Liya village, Georgia discovered two radioactive strontium-90 cylinders and used them as a heater for the night before they died from radiation sickness (IAEA, 2014). The report from the International Atomic Energy Agency was published 13 years later in December, 2014. To date, there are still two more radioactive sources, serving to be electrical power supplies in 1980s Georgia, yet to be found relating to this particular case (IAEA, 2014, p. 5). The case here extends the idea of non-locality to that of temporality, a relative slowness to human time in this case. According to Morton (2013), temporality and non-locality are two closely related characteristics for hyperobject nuclear. Here I want to point out the binaries of local/faraway, long-time-ago/now, are compromised by radioactive objects. An interesting case to be inserted here, is the Otolith Group's appropriated footage of Kota Takeuchi who pointed a finger at the security camera for 10 minutes after the Fukushima meltdown in 2011 (Demos, 2016). Indeed, Takeuchi's pointing finger is "the meeting point of the present and future" (Demos, 2016, p. 255).

An instance of how binary exclusion is manipulated by policy making can be found in Norimatsu's (2011) article. After the Fukushima incident, the government increased "allowable radiation exposure levels for ordinary people by twenty times" (Norimatsu, p. 2). Therefore redrawn the boundary separating what is safe, and what is not safe. This type of governmental strategy often is based on the false idea of "locality", and oftentimes this becomes an area of imaginable exclusion while nuclear radiation travels invisibly beyond the illusory boundaries drawn by equally illusory governmental bodies. What makes the 2011 Fukushima incident different from Chernobyl is that it

was released into the ocean (Norimatsu, 2011). 12 years later, during the summer of 2023, the Japanese government began its plan for releasing nuclear wastewater, about 1.33 million tons, in the following 25 years (Yamaguchi, 2023). In early December of the same year, news across the globe reported never before seen 1200 tonnes of fish washed up to Hokkaido's shore, mostly sardines and mackerels (McCurry, 2023). While the IAEA (2023) report endorsed the nuclear release plan, it doesn't act as guarantee for the execution. In Norimatsu's (2011) report on the 2011 incident, the Japanese government really should have expected a tsunami of Fukushima scale, but "the government and TEPCO chose to ignore it". "Beyond the scope of imaginable" (Norimatsu, 2011), is what I would use to describe the gray practice of the Japanese government on nuclear regulation as a developed country.

Similar time scales are common in "temporary" nuclear waste disposal. For example, in the land of Navajo that belongs to indigenous Indians, the AEC (Atomic Energy Commission), state agencies and mine operators failed to inform the local indigenous community about the danger of uranium until 20 years later (Lippard, 1997). Furthermore, as Lippard (1997) described later, it was 40 years after when the compensation plan began, and all this colonialism happened while the AEC, state agencies and mine operators were aware of the risk involved.

In a different context, by accepting the fact that nuclear discharge is happening and affecting the ocean at the coast of Japan, the international citizens of the world are localizing the island nation, drawing imaginative boundaries around it, endorsing pollution happening while ignoring the "non-locality" of nuclear hyperobject. Not to mention another side effect of coastal nuclear power plants is its ability to continuously warm the ocean (Lippard, 1997). That is binary exclusionist thinking in practice. Local communities can become confused with their identity when corporations take root, for example, in the case of Hanford reactor in the U.S., when residents are "Proud of Handford" (Lippard, 1997, p. 175). The looming question is, how much do present societies associate their identities with nuclear power one way or another?

There are many examples of art works that attempt to communicate these non-localities (the effect of hyperobject that appears in a localized manner). For example, Peter Cusack's 2008 *Curse of the Black Gold*, Amar Kanwar's *Many Faces of Madness* and Ursula Biemann's *Egyptian Chemistry* (Demos, 2016). According to Demos (2016), especially the last, in which the depletion of local food production was exchanged for corporate profit in export, thus worsening regional poverty. In *Cooking Section* (Daniel Fernández Pascual and Alon Schwabe)'s performative lecture *Salmon: A*

Red Herring, salmon pink is a commodity that's manufactured in fish farms and shipped to global supermarkets while its grade is measured by color scales (The Berlarge, 2021). From 1972's Rhine Water Purification Plant' by Hans Haacke (Demos, 2016), to 1981's Save the Whale protest in London, surely it is not only echoing the animistic view that nature and other species have a "consciousness" of their own but also their agency and right to co-live in the world. Another instance of decomposing binary exclusion or non-local practice can be seen in the Tourism Day in The berry tours exhibition. Political photographer-researcher Laura Junka-Aikio and her husband invited two Thai berry pickers to spend the day as tourists instead of laborers (Huhmarniemi, 2012). There is indeed a paradigm shift towards object-oriented views that treats humans and others as equal (Huhmarniemi et al., 2021). And not just in northern art, but across the globe.

"If I swim in the sea, does the sea swim in me?" (Slonczewski, 1987, p. 37). In Joan Slonczewski's (1987) novel *A Door Into Ocean*, it speaks about a language where it is impossible to express binary action. All verbs are "shared" equally by both the subject and the object, hence agreement has to, by default, be reached when they express interest in action (because to act is to share the action). This idea is relatable to the idea of reciprocity in Nenets and other indigenous practice around the world. For instance, Stammler & Ivanova (2020) speak about the climate disasters induced absence of spiritual communication among Nenets has led to confusion and ability to cope with the natural environment. To return to Lippard's (1997, p. 266) words, "artists were to question all of the structures that carried art into the world". I worried that similar localization also exists in arts that are only expected to be presented in galleries or museums, even though hyperobject art is non-local and should be seen as non-local. Artists can not perform their potential of "giving places back" to people, if places are not given to artists by the people (Lippard, 1997, p. 292). Reciprocity is key in generating these social, environmental, political changes with art.

-Binary Exclusion- Ocean

Emerging from the hierarchical structure of binary exclusion, non-locality also underlies the ocean undergoing global warming. According to Demos' (2016) chapter on displacement, in *Tsunami Architecture / The Maldives Chapter Redux*, a video work by Christoph Draeger and Heidrun Holzfeind, binary exclusion is exemplified by the Maldivian situation. "One country, two systems...there is a six star world, a resort on one island...and couple of meters from that island, there is a third world island" (heidrun holzfeind, 2013). The same interviewee explains in the video uploaded by heidrun holzfeind (2013), most people in Maldivian didn't know the word "tsunami", the

president had to explain the meaning of tsunami to the public after the 2004 disaster. Maldives, an island nation facing the effect of sea level rising, will most probably be the first country where the entire population becomes a climate refugee (Demos, 2016). The greenhouse emissions created by industries in developed countries “have historically created the ecological effects that small island states are now confronting” (Demos, 2016, p. 70). Furthermore, in *Concerning Violence*, a Lauryn Hill narrated colonialism documentary, it was made clear the oppression and suffering of the third world in the on-going past, present are turned into profit and development of the developed world (Dogwoof, 2014).

The structure of binary exclusion and the practice of non-locality, in fact, run their roots deeper into the future. According to political theorist Angela Oels, cited by Demos, even if the Geneva Convention is expanded by UN frameworks in order to include climate refuge, it will only give sovereign power too much room to “abuse ambiguity in oppressive ways” (Demos, 2016, p. 77). In 2011 alone, around 1500 people died attempting to cross the political boundary of S&R zones in the Mediterranean, as a result of coastal states avoiding engagement in rescue missions by claiming the rescue target can’t be located, or outside of their jurisdiction zone (Heller & Pezzani, 2020). The room for interpretation in international law becomes cases of migrant boats left to die in a non-local manner.

Approximately sixty four percent of the ocean does not belong to any country (Obaidullah, 2023). According to Obaidullah (2023), IUU (illegal, unregulated, unreported) fishing is often executed in international waters by simply registering boats under a different country, or offloading catches to another boat while at sea. These tricks basically “exempt these vessels... from rules and regulations” (Obaidullah, 2003, p. 68). Furthermore, the same author explained that these wicked exploitations of loopholes are often associated with extreme labor conditions.

In an article by Hubbard (2023), a shocking difference between two Baltic cod were shown side by side, one taken in 1987 and the other in 2018. In the comparison, in 1987 the cod requires a full grown person to hug it with both hands, and its length is close to 80 centimeter. The 2018 picture is only about a human palm’s size, and is consider normal today (Hubbard, 2023). The disruption of the food web, ecological balance happens in so many ways, with governmental bodies “continue to ignore scientific advice and set fishing limits too high” (Hubbard, 2023, p. 58). The decrease in fish size, fish number, and the diversity of aquatic food web is not the only problem. As carbon storer and transporter, fish actually play an important role in micromanaging the underwater environment

(Martin, 2023). In redistributing nutrients with their feces, migration, death, small fishes deposit nutrients and carbon to the deep sea (Lavery et al., 2010), whales dive vertically and redistribute nutrients like iron and nitrogen to the sunlight zone (200m above) of ocean (Roman et al., 2010).

As the ocean continues to warm, it affects so many aspects of the underwater non-human system, one of them is acidification due to an increase in carbon dioxide uptake. According to Findlay (2023), as the ocean acidifies, it will continue to impact some species' ability to sense and detect predators or prey, for example, cracked shells found in sea snails, decrease in coral growth, reduced number of oysters. The list can go on. Combined with other environmental stressors, such as nuclear wastewater, fish agriculture in the Anthropocene and other disturbances like drilling, it is hard to imagine an underwater future without decomposing the binary boundary drawn at the line making water a zone of exception from land. Dorey (2023) speaks about the fact that up to 25 percent of farmed salmon are overstressed to an extent that they often float lifelessly near the top of the cage, giving up life. Research has shown that the pink salmon abundance in the Pacific is linked to sea warming, and because of the species odd year cycle (they swim upstream to reproduce once every two years), they found out a link that the birth rate of humpback whales in Southeast Alaska is lower during odd years (Ruggerone et al., 2023). This means a restructuring of the ecosystem underwater is happening while the globe continues to warm due to greenhouse gas.

Demos (2016) mentioned the rising rights of nature, a juridic-political movement, in his book *Decolonizing Nature*. Indeed, a great transition has to happen in order to counteract all of the above arguments of global injustice. As a matter of fact, Bolivia and Ecuador have rewritten their constitution to cover rights of non-human, such as animal and environmental objects (Demos, 2016). In the words of Demos (2016, p. 221), this legislation “dissolves conceptual boundaries between matter and life, human and non-human subjects...”. However, the difficulties in executing these laws and international treaties return us to previous discussion on non-locality and binary exclusion. Whether it is nuclear management, IUU fishing, or left-to-die migrant boats, the roots of excluding “the other” is deep in the nationalistic, land-based, profit-oriented, human-centered practices led by developed countries. In order to remediate the complex interaction between each of these transactions, action and thought must actively question, thus decomposing each layer of binary exclusion at every step of the path toward decolonizing nature.

- Hydro-Hierarchy

My experience in free diving has allowed me to confront raw, underwater sensation and encounters that come from reorienting a human body's gravity-oriented land habits in water. The experience and feelings of re-orientation have common attributes to my experience of gender transitioning, world traveling, cross-cultural interactions among other transitional activities. This echoes Jue's (2020, p.10) reflection on scuba diving and water (ocean) as a milieu that holds situated knowledge in parallel to gender, culture, race, class. Diving (underwater) and traveling are critical also because it allows humans to sense differences in cultural and physical pressure. In the ocean, every ten meters deeper underwater, the pressure increase equals one atmospheric pressure. Similarly, when traveling, I worried about if trans-identity is something that's culturally acceptable, or if it's a subject against the law. Even though it's not entirely linear, the feeling of discomfort, comfort in both "milieus" have strong resemblances. Being in the depth of water is also a start of seeing these pressures as distributed and volumetric phenomenon (Jue, 2020, p. 17). In Jue's (2017) book, breathing underwater (scuba diving) is an important part of seeing the ocean as media but it differs for freediving, as freediving relies solely on breath holding. This marks a difference not only in underwater mobility, length, frequency, depth of dive, but also sensations and feelings. In my experience, the freediving experience is highlighted with an intensified sense of transience. Jue (2020, p. 165) describes diving as a method of cognitive estrangement because it allows divers to experience phenomena that are not straightforward in other media.

In a research originally published in 2019, fish were shown passing the mirror test, designed to test if species was self aware (Kohda et al., 2022). It is worth noting that the power of colonial relations often run through not only gender, race but also ecology and other species. In Maria Lugones's view, when people are reduced only to their accessible values, it becomes problematic (Cal State LA Department of Philosophy, 2021). And so is reduction of other species to only what sustains humans without understanding the immense impact humans can have by favoring or killing these species in a manner of supply and demand. Scientific studies about salmon have tendency to focus on numbers of species without showing evidence of condition(ie. weight, health) or its role as ecosystem provider (Ruggerone et al., 2023). Neimanis coined the term, hydro-feminism, in order to describe her work on including hydro-experience inspired feminism practice (Suoyrjö & Khodyreva, 2024). Fanon (1963, p. 45) says, "from the moment the colonial context disappears, has no longer interest in ...co-existing". This is a description of the hierarchy of the colonial settlers in Algerian/French context. Similarly, governing bodies and institutions often remain oppressors of

minorities and remote environment while holding the power of interpretation. Especially in matters such climate justice, colonization of nature. There are too much room for top-down power to exercise exploitation when hierarchy is at the roots of the world. In Strandvad & Davis (2016)'s observation about 2015's Vertical Blue, the freediving competition, diving is at the same time an act of disappearance and an experience of challenging physical, mental, environmental pressure. I often associate freediving as a practice in learning to coexist with unfriendly factors, such as temperature, atmospheric pressure, urge to breath, metal and physical discomfort. Whether it is diving, or swimming, these hydro-activities not only challenge the performer's endurance but also become political action. For instance, Khoury (2016) described swimming as an political act of rebellion against privatization of the Lebanese coast.

It is true that being immersed in the water brings a feeling of freedom and peacefulness. A swimmer since a young age, I stopped swimming in pools in recent years because of the effect of chlorine on skin and hair, especially when practiced daily. It is strange to think that the toxicity that is supposed to keep the water clean, is actually causing damage to people. While there are different ways of regulating pool water, for example, filtration, or use of sea water, chlorine remains the most common method of choice. The same thing is true for the pool facilities in Rovaniemi. Another cultural influence in pool water, and to an extend coastal water has to do with heterosexuality, the idea that gender is a binary idea and enforced through general education and how the thoughts such as, "you should dress like this, because of your gender", or "it's not okay to dress like this, because this is not accepted in the society". Banning of burkini, bikini, skinny dipping are forms of discrimination that happens in different corners of the world. The difficulty of accessing water is layered in these cultural expectations, for another instance, if you go to a public sauna in Finland, it's most likely someone would ask you to take off your swimwear. Similar thing happens in Japanese public bath houses where if you have a tattoo, you are expected to cover it in bandages. Bruce Robbins argues that capitalism is treated as if it came from somewhere else (Massey, 2005, p. 102). Again, this is true for top-down colonial exclusion practices across different "milieus".

-Why Decomposing Binary Exclusion?

Binary thinking patterns divide choices into two options, yes and no, inside and outside, right and left. These seemingly "natural" binaries of our day to day choices have created structural bias, hierarchy, exploitation. I will examine some consequences of binary thinking patterns in two parts. First, as an ecological bias in relation to hyperobject coined by Timothy Morton (2013). Second, as

a political bias resulted in poor political imagination in popular movies argued by David Graeber (2015).

Alaimo (1996) criticized classic ecofeminists' basis on binary division despite their contribution to denaturalizing gender of nature from authors such as Carolyn Merchant, for instance, concepts such as "the angel in the ecosystem" or "woman must assume the responsibility for housekeeping". This agrees with Morton's (2010) view that this view is generated out of biological essentialism and feminist separatism. Nevertheless, by destroying and reinventing the binary divide of nature/culture, several theorists began to build important works for queer and ecological theory, for instance, Donna Haraway on techno/natural, and Val Plumwood on continuity/difference (Alaimo, 1996).

The narrow path of decomposing binary is continued by Judith Butler's argument that heterosexist gender performance (violence) sustains inside/outside rituals of exclusion (Morton, 2010). In fact, this kind of exclusionist denialism exists in how we rephrase "global warming" to "climate change" and how we can deny responsibility by saying, "the climate has always been changing" or by flushing the waste in the toilet and think it is simply gone (Morton, 2013). Morton (2013) coined the term hyperobject, describing objects that cannot be perceived directly, distributed across vast geological distance, time into past and future. This indicates hyperobject can be many things such as global warming, democratic systems, oceans, and colonialism. If we turn to Fanon (1963, p. 36), who said decolonization "cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content". Thus we know that decolonization is a temporal process, just like global warming. According to Morton (2013), there are few key uncanny characteristics of hyperobjects, the most important one here for our examination is viscosity, the idea that you do not experience hyperobject indirectly, rather, it sticks on you. "Hyperobjects are here, right here in my social and experiential space" (Morton, 2013, p. 27). This shows fundamental problems in thinking about ecology with the binary mindset. As explained by Morton (2013), the ecological problem is not outside versus inside, and can not be pushed out to the wilderness or the arctic because they are happening right here as you ignite your car engine. The discussion of hyperobject do extend to situated aesthetic experience, which I will discuss later in the chapter about diving.

The fallacy of binary exclusion also has drastic political effects. This has to do with legal systems, how they came to be, and what political choices do people think they have. Graeber's (2015)

argument seems to indicate in two parts on how constituent power and popular narratives in movies create a stale binary system that exclude legitimacy and imagination.

As demonstrated by Graeber (2015), sovereignty and law are created from illegal uprisings, revolutions but it seems the default to think that now the only way to change law is through legal means, as a result, the basic structure of a two party system will never change. While some states evolved to have multiple parties, the basic structure of policing power as means of legal violence always belongs to the government. In a sense, with existing hierarchy in place, the power remains in the hand of the powerful, but never releases itself directly to the people. Furthermore, as pointed out by Graeber (2015), the people ruled by the systems never could consent to such a rule because they are usually created by people hundreds of years ago, as in the United States' case, it was 1789.

The binary notion, that this kind of changes are “outside” of the norm, because it is not anymore, in Graeber's (2015, p. 215) word, “the age of revolution” stems from the same exclusionist denialism that the west does not involve war or revolutions. This type of binary exclusionist thinking can be played out another way. According to Ghanim (2008, p. 71), space of exception (occupied territories during colonial occupation in Palestine) follows the same mechanism of “imaginative geographies” coined by Edward Said, by “demarcating the same from the other”. Furthermore, in the instance of the Separation Wall construction in Palestinian, the physical wall becomes a visible boundary between “inside/outside, rule/exception, political life/bare life” (Ghanim, 2008, p. 72).

Graeber (2015, p. 218) asks, “what is the foundation of social order, when one has exorcised the very idea of revolution?” By reaffirming the propagandized notion that imagination and rebellion only lead to violence, superheroes are only allowed to be imaginative in the design of their costumes and other accessories, but not political action (Graeber, 2015). The standard maneuver in popular binary narratives of the good/the evil, police/criminal, businessman/citizen, reinforces the idea that addressing structural problems is madness, and it's better to hope for heroes, in other word, political leaders, to save the world (Graeber, 2015). It is uncanny to see the structural bias in binary thinking pattern sticks to every subject it encounters, such as popular narrative in superhero movies, ecological problems in daily lives, and political action concerning constituent power. Consequently, the unspoken rules of political imagination and binary system seem to reveal influences and entanglement to each other, just like how Morton (2015, p. 34) puts it, “the mirror has ceased to be merely a reflective surface.”

Process and Analysis

-Between Teno and Tana

I went on a fieldwork week at Varangerfjord next to Tana river with a team of researchers from Oulu University, to study the bi-annual pink salmon run along a few small rivers in the region. The unusual surge in the numbers of pink salmon has been happening for several years. The researchers were there to study the effect of salmon carcasses on the river algae. I was there to dive into the rivers in an effort to make the invisible links visible. Tana river is one of few rivers that run straight to the Barents Sea from Finland. My initial hunch was that it has a direct link to a lot of environmental influences at play in the Arctic, and through the ocean currents to the Pacific and Atlantic. It also interests me more so because migratory species move across a long distance across geological space, and any impact in the tributaries' land area or in the ocean could be reflected in the salmon's wellbeing.

The immigration history of pink salmon in the Tana River (tenojoki) goes back to the 50s, when soviet scientists introduced the pacific species to the Kola Peninsula (the White Sea), adjacent to Barents Sea. A simultaneous movement to the global moon landing attempts, or the political climate of production competition between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The pink salmon population didn't become self-sustaining due to temperature differences in the destination rivers. But the fish eggs from River Ola (Reka Ola) in 1978 later became the current population in the Barents Sea. The transportation of eggs did not stop until the early 2000s (Office of the Finnmark County Governor Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016).

At Bergebyelva, a small river on the north side of the fjord (Varangerfjord), I had my first dive. The water felt like 14 to 16 degrees at 10 in the morning. It is a beautiful area where the Norwegian fish guard frequents many times a day to make sure no fishing is going on. Further up stream there was a big waterfall and a pool area, a major spawning spot for the Atlantic salmon. "The pacific ones can't get there", said the fish guard. (anonymous fish guard at Bergebyelva) "Or only very few of them make it", they added, after I told them I just spotted a few pinks out there. I followed the river downstream, and the weird smell hit me at some point, a smell I remembered from fish markets, a slightly rotten scent. Here the algae and underwater moss were thriving just like at the upstream, but somehow the dead bodies of pink salmon made the center stage. I spotted as much as eight bodies clamped in between bed rocks. Some were slightly older, with bones exposing, like it was eaten.

Some retained full shapes, with strange colors on their skin. Blue, green in stripes and spots. Some formed a distinct humpback and jawline and the others looked much like the Atlantic cousin (Atlantic salmon). The water was still cold downstream, and it seemed to help with overcoming the smell and texture of these bodies. Some were left rotten on the shore when water level changed, then eaten by the birds and animals.

Looking at at three works in the North on Sami: from Svein Flygari Johansen's This Is My Land, Maria Helander's Birds In The Earth, to Jenni Laiti's Asking Salmon to Return, two of whom have Sami roots and the other's work is about Sami (Hautala-Hirvioja, 2017; Jokela et al., 2021). While appreciating all of their efforts towards environmental changes, I also struggle with the strong binary opposition among them. Another similarity is the importance of fish. Johansen fishes every year, while Laiti's work is about wild salmon. In Helander's work, as it features Sami land in Finland, there are places representing salmon and tourism. I want to note that even with environmental, colonial concerns in some of these works in mind, only Helander's video piece speaks more loudly on human slow violence. This is not to say that environmental concerns are not a critical part of their works. The research context of these artists are deep and to an extent, regional thus in a sense validated by their identities presented.

"The sea is a Farm, and we must farm it." —*Salmon, The World's Most Harassed Fish* (Netboy, 1980, p. 278)

I hold the view that the above quote from Magadan Fisheries Trust's manager interviewed by Farley Mowat who visited Siberian fishing village in the 1960s is still commonly held view 60 years later in the globe, while millions of fish eggs are planted in North Pacific Ocean from hatcheries per year (Office of the Finnmark County Governor Department of Environmental Affairs, 2016). Learning on Kemijoki's history in Krause's (2023, p. 209) *Thinking Like A River*, compensation, fish planting are common mediations from state-owned companies after the forced building of hydropower stations, even though some might take years of lawsuit until the locals are compensated. I can't yet get hold of data on exactly how many eggs per year, per water course area are released each year in Finland at the time of writing. In my video work, *I am Salmon* (work in progress), video footage of an artist's body crossing the river using four limbs is juxtaposed and merged with underwater footage of pink salmon bodies. The dead unmoving rotten flesh of salmon becomes the artist's body transiting in the flowing river. While the pink bodies waits to enter the natural cycle of feeding into the river thus the

Figure 2. Scan of exhibition program public catalogue of *In The Deep On The Surface*.



Ateneum-sali, 2. krs
/ 2nd floor

SCREENING NIGHT
15.11.2023
17:30-20:15

IELI / LANGUAGE
Englanti
/ English

KESTO / DURATION
20 min

Nell I am Salmon, Oncorhynchus gorbuscha (work in progress)

17:30-20:15
(the whole screening evening)



SISÄLÖSUORITUKSET / CONTENT WARNING Nudity **18+**
INHUOSTUS / AGE RECOMMENDATION

[ENG]

For three years in a row, Finnish and Norwegian governments have banned fishing at the Tana River. This September I have been immersed in several small rivers along Tana witnessing the unusual amount of dead bodies of invasive pink salmon, which happens following a strict two-year cycle. Learning together with Norwegian fish guard, river guard, and Finnish researchers: The resulting performative-work-in-progress is part of *The Water Carries me*. It is a poetic work of reflection on decolonizing binary ideas of ownership, nationality, identity, cross-species politics featuring deep insertion-submersion (of bodies in transition) to place-species of flowing waters. The water carries me here, it will also carry you elsewhere.

Nell Lin is a multidisciplinary artist working with xeno-hydro-transitions. They approach their subject in question through physical and art-based insertion-submersions. They are drawn toward the gentleness in poetic relations, such as bizarre weather conditions, making wood fire, licking ice, deep skin dive in the ocean. Their works have been exhibited and screened at Haus Der Statistik, Kunstraftwerk, Helmut Space, Herdubreia Gallery, Augusta Gallery, Saari Residence, Songsnan Culturewarehouse, PKTV, DahabFilmFest, HorsesWhale/Hrosshvalr Pier Show.

[FIN]

Suomi ja Norja ovat kolmen vuoden ajan kieltäneet kalastuksen Tenojoessa. Tämän vuoden syyskuussa taiteilija Nell Lin on nähnyt Tenoj varren pienemmillä joenhaaroilla epätavallisen paljon kuolleita kyttyälöhiä. Kyttyälöhi on haitallinen vieraslaji, jonka kalayksilöt elävät kaksi vuotta. *I am Salmon, Oncorhynchus gorbuscha, W.I.P* on osa tekeillä olevaa *The Water Carries me* -kokonaisuutta. Se on runollinen ja reflektioiva teos, joka pyrkii dekolonisoidaan omistamiseen liittyviä binäärejä, kansallisuutta, identiteettiä ja lairvajaa ylittävää politiikkaa. Vesi kuljettaa minut tänne ja sinut jonnekin toisaalle.

Nell Lin on monialainen, vierauteen ja veteen liittyvien teemojen kanssa työskentelevä taiteilija. Hän lähestyy aiheitaan fyysisten ja taideperustaisten insertio-submersioiden kautta. Lin tuntee vetoa runollisten suhteiden hellyyteen, kuten outoihin sääolosuhteisiin, halkojen hakkaamiseen, jään nuolemiseen ja meren sukeltamiseen. Hänen töitään on ollut esillä Haus Der Statisticissa, Kunstraftwerkissa, Helmut Spacessa, Herdubreia Galleryssa, Augusta Galleryssa, Saari Residenssissä, Songsnan Culturewarehousessa, PKTV:ssä, DahabFilmFestissa, HorsesWhale/Hrosshvalr Pier Show'ssa.

Figure 3. The artist body juxtaposing with the pink salmon. Film still from *I am Salmon*, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha* (work in progress).



Figure 4. The artist body juxtaposing with the pink salmon. Film still from *I am Salmon*, *Oncorhynchus gorbuscha* (work in progress).



ocean, the artist hums in eerie tones, then whispers repeatedly, “here be salmon”. A phrase borrowed from the medieval western practice of marking unknown territory in maps with latin HIC SVNT LEONES (here be lions) or HIC SVNT DRACONES (here be dragons). The video was screened during UrbanApa X Ateneum Festival at the Ateneum Art Museum in Helsinki after three Sami works from Ritni Ráste Pieski, Pessi Jouste, Wanda Holopainen, Jenni Laiti, Carl-Johan Utsi, Suvi West.

Attending the screening myself in the Ateneum Museum was a rewarding experience for not only seeing my own artistic work with other audiences but also for experiencing my own reality as an artist. The difference is that, with other audiences present, the work feels no longer part of my internal dialogue, instead it is manifested as its own. It feels very much like hearing feedback when you ask a question. For instance, at the end of screening as the audience slowly walks out of the museum, I heard two audiences discussing the salmon story. One was asking how the Russian influence is related to this pink salmon. The other explains, “it is because...”. Incidents like this made me realize how the art is working in raising awareness, and when people engage with it, it does prompt them to question and to be aware of things not obvious on the surface. I think it is also fitting that the theme of the screening was ”In the Deep, On the Surface”.

-Ice On Kemi

“Conscious beings were meant to control pain, to say yes or no to their physical selves...”

—*A Door Into Ocean*

(Slonczewski, 1987, p. 289)

In Joan Slonczewski's (1987) novel *A Door Into Ocean*, it speaks about an ability, called white trance, in the ocean planet of Shora, where they can go into a trance-like state of not feeling pain, hence being able to reject force and violence. In the Arctic, lakes and rivers get frozen during winter. This presents both opportunities and consequences. One thing, the freezing temperature combined with frozen surface means no physical access to the water bodies, unless you break the ice. Coldness is a character of the Arctic, it shapes not only the Arctic ecosystem but also its people and their ways of life. In Rea Pihlasviita & Kimmo Koskela's *Världens Hämnd* (The Ateneum Museum, 2023), it features Northern (Arctic like) snowscape, as well as the aesthetic sensations of working in the cold. For instance chopping wood, cutting trees, making fire, being in the cold with bare skin. Freezing temperatures also present a fantastic environment for artists like Andy Goldsworthy (Goldsworthy & Friedman, 1990), whose work has strong connection to ice, not to mention the process of these works often demand Goldsworthy to stay in the cold for an extended period of time. In the wake of melting glaciers and thriving petroleum industry, the fragile structure of the arctic ecosystem is also worth mentioning as lives in the cold face a decrease in multi-year krauseice, while southern species migrate north due to the warming temperature (Anderson, 2009). Clyde Reflections, the art and science collaboration on River Clyde by Stephen Hurrell and Ruth Brennan (Coutts, 2018), is great inspiration for interdisciplinary approach in art. Environmental issues, especially invisible things that are beneath the water surface, are key to understanding human impact.

I approach a lake that is part of the Kemijoki, just as Onasjoki and Kemijoki merge into one. From the shapes of the rivers, you can easily see the famous antlers plan of architect Alva Aalto morphed to life. The three bridges in Rovaniemi connect not only the city center but also the pipelines of the logging industry from the main train station. Living in Rovaniemi, it is quite obvious that the city center is literally surrounded by the two rivers, creating a more humid micro-climate in comparison to other regions. The resources of the north such as the boreal forest and oil underneath the arctic sea bed serves as resources to be extracted from (Stammler & Ivanova, 2016; Mazzulo, 2013). Historically, Kemijoki has been used to perform log floating in the spring time when the frozen

river breaks free until this practice was completely replaced by train in the early 90s (Krause, 2023). If you ever travel on a boat in a river, the smoothness and speed of simply floating with the water can amaze you repeatedly. It is not a wonder that Rovaniemi was built in the intersection of two rivers, they are the pipeline of not only flowing water but also critical means of transportation. Kemijoki was one of the major salmon rivers in the whole of Finland, with around 139 farms that place equal importance on farming and fishing, in the 16th century (Krause, 2023, p. 87). The salmon only stopped appearing after the construction and damming of several hydro power stations along Kemi River after the Second World War (Krause, 2023, p.100). As a post war strategy, these hydropower stations were built by state-owned companies. The result of this is the disruption of fishing as a source of food for locals along the lengthy Kemijoki. Fish planting, compensation, and fish passes were three solutions negotiated after years and years of discussion, research and legal fights. However, the full picture of ecological consequence in fish planting (planting fish fingerlings into the river) is not very well known. In hatchery operations, the fishes' genetic variation narrows down and influences their immune systems and ability to fight natural diseases.

Doreen Massey (2005) talks about the idea of “place-moments” in *For Space*, referring to the non western, Aztec notion of place. The idea that place and space is a complex being that involves time, events and other factors. This is not a completely unique view among non-western cultures. Perhaps it is easier to imagine, and associate place with habitats, or “place-species” (I made this up), the idea that places inherently involve living things that utilize the place/space. For instance, salmon swimming upstream to rivers, migrating across rivers that are affected by vast expanse of land, and ocean (often thousands of miles in its routes). I want to emphasize this point because when working with water bodies as place/space, it is apparent that the physical laws, environmental factors and human impact have a strong influence in establishing place-species. Furthermore, water bodies often connect to each other and other living, growing, decaying things in visible and invisible ways.

Encouraged by G. Coutts who said, during the Arctic Art and Innovation course to the classroom, “if you have a burning desire to do something, you should do it”. I decided to intervene with the river with some action. The idea is to make a swimming pool (1.2m by 5m) in the frozen lake and swim in it. This differs from the Finnish avanto (cold water plunge in an ice hole). Although winter swimming is practiced in many nordic countries, even in Russia, there are such events as epiphany day swimming, where they dip in the ice water after new year. In preparation for the proposal, I am constantly checking weather reports to estimate the amount of ice that will be formed, as well as how many hours I get to work in the outdoor, extremely cold, environment. It is not really a friendly

environment when it is minus twenty Celsius and you have a pair of wet gloves on your hands. To cut a hole that is about the size of a man-hole when the ice is about 15 cm thick doesn't take long when you have the right tool. However, things start to get hard when you have minus 20 for more than a week.

The ice plate has been forming for around 10 days without interruption from when I last opened it. And it has been extremely cold, most days are below minus 10 degrees, while some days are below minus 20. The resulting ice was almost 60 centimeters in thickness. This not only means it requires more power and time to cut the ice open, but also that the pieces cut out were significantly heavier than 15 cm ice. Most of the ice had to be sunk underneath the frozen surface and pushed out of the opening. The intervention involves about 20 visits (consisting of cutting, moving, swimming) at the site until the final version. I am eager to evolve this experience into an even larger pool in the future. Perhaps it can be a community pool, or workshop event for experienced winter swimmers. An anonymous neighbor of the area commented that if I maintain the opening with some styrofoam board, it might be easier since the opening won't freeze easily overnight.

At some point I fell into the hole after a warm night (minus five degree Celsius), the water didn't freeze as well and it is hard to see the opening if it's covered with snow. It's not the first time, and probably won't be the last. When working with coldness, the importance of evaluating physical ability in weather conditions becomes important. Usually, during days of practice, I am thinking about questions listed below.

How long could I be sawing the ice until I am too tired to recover the next day?

How large the size of the pool can be, if I want to maintain it everyday?

How often should I go to the site?

What is the temperature at night and what will probably be the condition of ice?

How long can I let my hands be wet before feeling too cold?

How long can I stay underwater before it's too cold for my toes?

Is this a day of using gloves, or do I feel like getting into water without?

A lot of decision making is needed in working with cold in order to not fail the coldness. Another interesting characteristic of the working conditions in the arctic is the polar night. In late November when the project was completed, there was only five to six hours of very dim daylight. This means not only that the outdoor working hour is shortened, but also that there is a general moodiness,

tiredness that comes with decreasing sunlight. Sullivan (2000) speaks about teaching attention and awareness to children, I want to talk a little bit about ice and attention here. I think with physical practice it is a much more embodying method of learning awareness. It is much like “stare at the grass until something happens” (Sullivan, 2000). When immersed in the cold water, something happens immediately. And I think the goal of this intervention is to be able to say yes or no under cultural, physical forcing of our environment. Because of my gender transition, I stopped going to the local swimming pool and winter swimming club because of the general lack of awareness of gender diversity presented in the dressing rooms. In order not to feel too consumed about facing these daily confrontations on people questioning or not knowing if you fit in their gender group, I stopped these water activities. It is particularly triggering if everyday in the morning, when I look into the mirror, I have to think about if my facial features look okay for my gender presentation. On the other hand, the ice cold water in the river presented physical challenges, while forgiving on the cultural challenges such as language, gender image, swim style, dress code presented in places such as your local swimming pool.

Being immersed under the ice cold water, it really dawned on me that when the environment changes, you have to find ways to adapt with it. The pink salmon responded to the warming environment they are living in, by populating more and by swimming further. I responded to my transitioning identity and its respecting cultural factor by swimming in the frozen river. Then, my body responded to the extreme cold by not letting me stay too long in the frozen river. I can't help but realize with my body the power of exclusion and realities manifested on me and the pink salmon, while the sensation of coldness kept me awake, kept my head cool.

Figure 5. Film still from filming, Lin Ni removing ice from Kemijoki.



Figure 6. Film still from filming, Lin Ni half-immersed below the frozen Kemijoki.



-Diving at Liu Qiu

Diving is, in a sense, a passage into another medium of thinking, where thoughts are processed differently and form a new perspective. In this medium—the medium of diving—how I relate to the immediate environment is completely different than on land. There are several reasons for this, but the most obvious, in my view, is the shift from a land-oriented to a water-oriented experience. I imagine the first visual clue, for viewers of my underwater footage, is also the fact that they are witnessing something water-oriented. The visuals convey messages like, “this should be uncomfortable, but it doesn’t seem uncomfortable”, “this feels like an alienated, unknown experience” or “this shouldn’t be a place for humans, but they seem at home.” For the artist, performing underwater takes practice. For the audience, adapting to this shift in perspective may also require practice. While I make no assumptions about the viewers’ reactions, the experience of diving profoundly changes my process in art-based actions.

Diving, for me, is an act of inclusion. It involves incorporating water into my thought process and immersing myself fully in the aquatic environment, becoming a part of it rather than remaining separate. On the other hand, while being on land, air alone doesn’t necessarily help me in sensing the spatial environment with my body. It always requires the presence of water processes such as steam, moisture that are associated with temperature changes. For example, in a sauna room or on a rainy day.

Most of the video footage shot during diving sessions, ice work at Kemijoki, or river immersion in Tenojoki shares something in common: the selected footage that makes it into the final presentation always includes the artist's physical body. This conveys a few things, some obvious and others that are more subtle which require deeper analysis. At face value, they all present an Asian, feminine-looking person in some environment. The visual elements lead the audience to speculate on and experience the context of the environment, stimulating them in various ways. For the Tenojoki sessions, this combination involves nudity and the decaying flesh of salmon. For Kemijoki, it’s a combination of ice and a swimming body. Each offers a certain contrast or provocation to the viewer’s perception. What is the artist’s intention? On a personal level, each attempt is a trial in gender transition. On an artistic level, each trial is an attempt to cross the precise yet invisible boundaries shaped by cultural and environmental pressures.

In Tenojoki’s case, this is expressed through the untouchable smell and flesh of the rotten salmon,

the artificial migration underpinning its history, and the ongoing reality of legal frameworks concerning climate action. Most importantly, there's an unsettling feeling of remoteness when confronting these realities—both the surge in pink salmon populations and the way government bodies are addressing it. In Kemijoki's case, salmon has nearly disappeared. However, cultural and legal forces present themselves in a different context. In a more indirect way, the visual of ice swimming in Kemijoki connects the salmon's migration and struggle with the physical, transitional struggle of the artist. Here, “transitional” refers not only to gender but also to nationality, race, and, most importantly, to the process of decolonial and de-hierarchical work, before, during and after these transitory activities.

I did diving sessions both in Liu Qiu, Taiwan and Nusa Penida, Indonesia. With the purpose of filming diving in action, these Southeast Asia islands presented some opportunities. During my stay at Nusa Penida, the locals explained that this winter for some reason the water visibility wasn't very good, which is confirmed by my own experience. To put things in perspective, an average lake in the countryside of Finland probably has a visibility of 2 to 3 meters, at its maximum. Nusa Penida, during its bad visibility season, has a visibility of 20 meters. It was said that summer time usually has better visibility. The visibility changes were caused by ocean currents carrying micro substances. In Liu Qiu's summer, when it rains heavily at the nearby major city, Kaohsiung, the water visibility could drop from 20 meters to 5 meters. This is due to the dirt, sand, soil rushing out from the city's drainage, when it is pouring very heavy rain. With monsoon season, typhoon season, and other rainy factors, it is not uncommon for this to happen.

The highlight of my filming process in Liu Qiu was capturing an abandoned underwater box-net. Box-nets are used for fish farming, particularly for salmon, although they can also be used for farming other species like tuna. With assistance from freediver Chen Zhi Xuan, I recorded myself performing a roughly 3-minute dive through the underwater structure of the box-net. At around 24 meters below the surface, the entire box-net could be seen in its full scale. In connection with other parts of the filming during the research process, the abandoned structure and ropes became a key underwater monument for the project.

This structure not only links the land-oriented aspect—fish farming and its production centered architecture with little regard for long-term environmental consequences—with the water-oriented perspective, where the scale of ruin and waste is monumental, unnatural, and simultaneously sensational, but it also highlights, through breathtaking views, the transitory and transformative nature of diving as an art-based activity.

In Robert Smithson's *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey*, it reads, "...today our unsophisticated cameras record in their own way our hastily assembled and painted world" (Holt, 1979, p. 52). To think about the underwater architectural ruin witnessed in Liu Qiu, I realize there are so many underwater monuments left by humans who think and live in a land-centered, human-centered manner. Some are abandoned like the box net filmed in Liu Qiu, some are literally underwater monuments in operation such as nuclear power plant facilities. Upon returning to Finland from my fieldwork at Liu Qiu and Nusa Penida, I realized the filming had to stop for the time being, at least the parts which involve explorations in underwater monuments in the deep water. I am out of budget.

I also included an appendix on diving notes at the end of the thesis, through which some mental notes on diving during Nusa Penida are recorded. I think they serve well as explanatory footnotes for some of the experiences that are common in the practice of diving.

Figure 7. A few kicks from shore, in a different world. Film Still from Liu Qiu, taken by Lin Ni.



Figure 8. Underwater view of the box-net. Film Still from Liu Qiu, taken by Chen Zhi Xuan.



Figure 9. Air wrapping Lin Ni while diving in. Film Still from Liu Qiu, taken by Chen Zhi Xuan.



Figure 10. Turtle resting near shore. Film Still from Nusa Penida, taken by Lin Ni.



-Practical Training at Mustarinda Art Residency

The period I spent at the Mustarinda Art Residency proved to be important for the development of my thesis and art practice. Originally, I mistakenly thought the residency was located in Hossa National Park, known for its abundance of natural lakes and water bodies. However, upon arrival, I quickly learned that this was not the case; instead, Mustarinda is located in a forest area with trees that are two to three hundred years old. This forest is in the early stages of applying to become a new national park, with the help of local researchers and communities. My time working here, through non-verbal means, also contributed to the workshop and exhibitions *I Am Salmon*, *Breathing Game*, *46 W.I.P.* In a sense, this was a practical experience and analysis that highlighted certain sustainable practices critical to the concept of non-locality.

Mustarinda Art Residency is composed of 20 Mustarinda Association members, the Mustarinda House, the old growth forest surrounding it, the neighbors, as well as all the visiting researcher, artists. The physical house is located at Hyrynsalmi, Finland. It is about a 20 minute drive from Hyrynsalmi town center. The House itself is renovated from an old school building. Within 2 minutes walking distance from the front door of the house, is a Kota located before the forest trail for the public. A bird watching tower is located in the forest, around 700 meters from the Kota. A few hundred meters further, the tree opera stage built in 2019 is still standing in the middle of the forest.

On the opposite side of the house, there is a small stream running, marking the boundary of a restricted nature reserve, an area that requires a special permit to enter. Adjacent to the house, there is the sauna building, the barn house that serve as summer workshop and sleeping area, the greenhouse, and the field where vegetables, herbs and potatoes are grown during summer months. The house uses a combination of solar power, geothermal heating system, and purchased wind power. The overall consumption is estimated to be 150,500 kWh/v per year, from which 33,000 kWh is purchased (Järvensivu, 2020, p. 19). The dry toilet and food waste serves as composting material for later fertilizing the field. The house has two floors, consisting of multiple bedrooms and multiple studio spaces.

Further down in the adjacent forest, the EContainer by artist Sandra Nybergin serves as Mustarinda space as well. During this practical training, I worked alongside Leena Reittu and Sanna Ritvanen, who also served as my supervisors. Both have their individual artistic, curatorial practices parallel

to the house role. Aistė Ambrazevičiūtė, Aksel Haagenzen, Jonas Palekas, Kamile Pikelyte, Petter Yxell were the visiting residents. Nina Wilenius, Robin Everett, Hanna Kaisa Vainio, Riitta "Nyyskä" Nykänen from the Mustarinda Association visited briefly. Anna Jensen and Eliisa Suvanto also stayed for a couple of weeks as curators. During the entirety of May, there was presence of snow. Summer started in June. It was said that last year it snowed for 10cm in the first week of June. In parallel to the residency practice, there are several on-going projects related to the residency. For example, the Mustarinda magazine/online blog that already sprang several annual editions. Another is the European Social Fund project "Sinipyrstö", targeting eco-social well being. And finally, the Vaara-Kainuu Art National Park plan (Cahoon et al., 2023, p. 18).

Everyday Tasks

The task at Mustarinda generally requires curiosity, and hands-on action. For example, in the beginning of the summer several birds such as willow tits, bullfinches were crushed into windows of the house. We had to install nets and fabric over those windows. The process required us to collectively understand that putting a predatory bird sticker won't help with the crushing, and to come up with an effective solution through thinking, discussion, and searching. My task for this practical training is to be part of the communal living in the Mustarinda House. This involves daily care on the running of the house. Moving, chopping wood, rotating soil, planting, watering, maintaining, recycling, composting, cleaning are some of the duties in this respect. The other aspect is more oriented towards the visiting residents. Conversing, answering, negotiating, organizing, driving, understanding, fighting, arguing, smiling, dining, cooking, sharing, presenting are some of the tasks in this orientation. On top of this, trying is also essential in these various tasks. A working day starts at 8 in the morning, and ends at 9 in the evening. Seven days a week. Usually a day starts with watering plants, fields, opening doors of the greenhouse.

This would be followed by a group meeting, once or twice a week. After this, there are few slots of office hours in between hours for outdoor working. Screenings and events are organized on some of the days. For instance, Open House Day, kayak trip, ecological tour, forest gatherings, exhibition opening. In these events, my task is to help with organizing, setting things up, preparing equipment, assisting with workshops, setting up guest rooms, and doing laundry. Everyday usually passes quickly, as I also need to find time to continue my own practice.

Deepening One's Artistic Practice During Residency— In 2 Parts

Part1 Microbial Activities

According to one of the residency artist, Jonas Palekas, who was a chef before embarking on performative artistic practice, he calls his practice “microbiological activism “. This is the process where he utilizes the microbial activities of bacteria instead of seeing them as harmful. This seems fitting for the opening of this part of analysis, not only because fermenting plays an important part for the daily lives in the residency, but also because the association runs in such a way that only with a macro lens—being close with it—you start to see the microbial activities of Mustarinda. According to *Bring Worlds Together: A Rethinking Residencies Reader*, Ritvanen and Everett brought forth some important views for Mustarinda during the discussion panel in 2021 (Weist et al., 2023). One of the conclusions is that for this residency, it is deeply entangled with the forest, the non-human aspect, and the surrounding localities, so much so that it wouldn't be the same residency if they relocate somewhere else. This kind of micro-activities can be reflected in at least two examples.

First, such as the panel discussion mentioned earlier, ideas and thoughts are broadcasted through activities linking other platforms. Furthermore, sustainable practice or practical examples are shared among residencies organizations. In the case of the *Residencies Reader*, the panels were joined by Sally Mizrahi, who represented Lugar a Dudas in Cali, Colombia and Catherine Lee, who represented Taipei Artist Village in Taiwan (Weist et al., 2023). It is evident that the sharing-linking between spaces provided important feedback not only to the residents themselves but also to the reader such as myself. Particularly, both Mizrahi and Lee were interested to know more about the sustainable energy practice and practical way of implementing them (Weist et al., 2023). However, Mustarinda has the benefit of funding for travel reimbursement, which means they are able to provide economical support for some of the artists coming from abroad and ask them to travel slowly. This is not a common feature in other residencies, as usually travel supports are non-existent, not to mention that slow travel usually costs more.

Second, residency has the ability to connect art practitioners with overlapping interest, thus creating creative inspiration or sparkles for their own growth. For example, during one of the many conversation over the kitchen table, Sanna Ritvanen (2020) shared their own article about sourdough making and mental health in the context of Jonas Palekas's sourdough workshop. The discussion later extended to the book published in 1986, called *A Taste Of Finland*, featuring the operation menus of the Finnish Council of State's reception area from 1976 to 1983 (Lampi &

Salonen). This relates the performative aspect of cooking toward the practice of state government, which echoes back to the microbial activism mentioned earlier. According to the book, the Government Banqueting House is supposed to serve guests in the most impressive manner possible and it follows a strict, formal pattern (Lampi & Salonen, 1986, p. 10). To read this book in the context of communal houses such as Mustarinda, that has an activism undertone, provides absolute reflections of power and hierarchy on the matter of daily cooking versus lavish state menus.

Part2 Cross-referencing

“...Artists in the film seem incapable of being creative...condemned to aimless wandering.”

(Cichocki & Polska, 2013, p. 93)

The residency house itself has the collection of few hundred printed materials, such as books, magazines, pamphlets etc. One of these books is *Tourists Like Us* (Cichocki & Polska, 2013). It features the discussion and script about a film by Agnieszka Polska, titled *Future Days*. The work is a result from Polska's stay during The Site Residency in Gotland, Sweden, where the empty landscape provides the ghostly atmosphere for the fictional film. None of the scripted conversation was used in the film, however, reading them does provide additional layers to the meaning and process of understanding the work.

Interestingly, a reference was made in the Cichocki and Polska (2013, p.99) text toward Robert Smithson's *A Tour Of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey* since the protagonists in *Future Days* (the film) also constantly stumble over the remains of works of art. At the same time, in Svenungsson's *An Artist's TextBook*, the text from Robert Smithson is as well referenced for its quality for artistic writing. In the script and text authored by Cichocki & Polska (2013, p. 99), it continues to relate the film and Robert Smithson's mental exercise on the “appropriation of the world as an exhibition”. Smithson interpreted the remains of the several monuments along his journey from New York in *A Tour Of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey* (Holt, 1979). Whereas during *Future Days*, the viewers are invited to interpret the remains of dead artist's work in an uncanny landscape. This type of cross-referenced, cross-analyzed instants are crucial for deepening one's artistic research, especially in the context where an ongoing project, for example, a thesis, is developing. It seems to me that to be able to have the realization that there are other people searching about similar concepts, or experiencing similar experience, really helps with the feeling of anxiety and negative cycle during the solitude of research. For instance, in the description for

Future Days, Polska speaks about the solitude during her residency in Gotland as “I missed nothing and felt very good on my own” (Cichocki & Polska, 2013, p. 95). This echoes my own experience in situations that don't require one to be talking.

Towards The End

Towards the end of my time in Mustarinda, I feel that it was such a rich immersion with a tremendous amount of knowledge, experience, and networks. While most of it is really non-verbal, there are also inspirations and curiosities that were spurred during my stay. From experimenting with sourdough starter, fighting with mosquitoes, to nurturing potatoes and reflection in my own practice. Conversations with researchers, artists, and creative practitioners do help with consolidating my own directions. These conversations also build foundations for possible networks. I recalled one time when at the Kota near the Mustarinda house, a random encounter with the hiker that was staying the night sparked conversation about my future. It was exactly this kind of moment that made me reflect and pulled me to realize reality. I would not have these moments if I was not there, hence I left the house with satisfaction and deep gratitude. One of the future tasks I concluded during this period was the idea to apply for doctoral studies in order to deepen and continue my research. Perhaps hydro-activism can serve to be a new structure of my own work, to explore how water can be activated for social change, and diving into the rabbit hole of colonial reality.

Another key skill I am learning through this internship is negotiation, communication experiences. Working with a larger group of people often means dealing with different sets of background, expectation. It is important to say things that concern you clearly and simply so that it can be understood. It is also important to stand your ground and raise different opinions, especially on the spot. It is equally important to know the next-steps if you feel like simply talking about your opinion is not enough. Sophie Scott-Brown has an interesting theory on everyday anarchism, listing three ways of disobedience (The Institute of Art and Ideas, 2023). First is what she calls quiet quitting, meaning getting through the days with as little work done as possible. Second is disruption by rebelling against authority. Third is to walk away in order to refuse. However, if change is to be made, it most likely needs something else, as per my experience. I think this is where activism and art come in. I ask myself, “what can art activate?” Perhaps not only frustration and insecurity, but also something such as growth and change. In thinking about different aspects of non-locality of water, the time away from water practices also proved to be important. Although water is still everywhere in my daily activities, for example during sourdough fermentation, shaping, and baking.

While the snow season very slowly passed away, the melted ice formed water running across roads, fields, or simply dropping from the roofs of buildings. The microbial activities of water are only obvious when you are aware of them.

Figure 11. Swimming practice continues for me towards the summer during this period. Picture taken by Petter Yxell.



- Workshop- NAAE

It was decided in the early phase of the thesis to host some kind of workshop. So that it can help develop my central theme on water. However, the process is not without hiccups, though important skill sets are acquired through this process. The learning experience during NAAE benefited me in coming up with my own workshop for *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.* This will be elaborated after NAAE.

The ideas for these workshops all have a central theme— water.

The original plan for me was to collaborate with LungA School in Iceland and host a workshop while staying there for at least one month. For numerous reasons, some personal, I decided not to embark on the journey. The resulting circumstance is for me to join the New Genre Arctic Art Education (NAAE) project led by the University of Lapland. There are several project teams. This includes teams for Sustainable Portrait Project, teams for project collaborating Sweden, and teams located in Rovaniemi, focusing on the local elementary school. Among teams focusing on the local elementary school, my team is composed of Aino Jäälinoja, Aleksi Ignatius, Sade Lylykoski and Annamari Manninen, who is also the coordinator and course tutor for the many small teams. Though in the beginning, through the general meetings with other teams, coordinators, and project leader, esteemed professor and artist Timo Jokela, it was clear that master students are expected to come into the project as independent collaborators. However, with language and other barriers, I also think that it is clear that I am positioned as an outsider even among the small team of students. While it is not impossible to break through these barriers, the project timeline does not allow this to happen.

The final workshop happens during approximately one week. It is composed of ice-fishing field trips at the local lake, presentation, and filming workshops happening both at the lake and in the school. The place/area of our workshops is in the arctic/sub-arctic (Rovaniemi) region, inside the local elementary school 30 mins from the city center. This means the area has the usual boreal forest composition (spruce, birch, pine) and cold, dry climate with two rivers merging (Kemijoki and Onasjoki). There is a good possibility to swim in the rivers in the summer, as well as winter swimming in the winter. There are also local swimming pools in the city center. However, considering the gendered entrance and other cultural layers that come with a swimming pool, I hesitate about this option. The alternative opportunity is the abundance of snow during the winter

season (6 to 7 months). Ideally, the workshop is better organized on the river, or next to the river (river or lakes), as there are also numerous lavvu around the area. To make a point about the circularity of water, I think the natural spring at Ounasvaara can also be a great place to have some kind of workshop. Throughout the NAAE project, we have monthly meetings. Each monthly meeting from October to February seems like a joint effort in ice-breaking, brainstorming as we are waiting for the elementary school teacher that we are working with to confirm if we can make use of their swimming pool schedule to conduct the workshops. (The young students are required to have swimming lessons). In late February, the location and collaborator was finally confirmed. Originally, I was unable to go into details about this project, since the local school and parents of students do not consent to a research permit. Later at the thesis seminar organized by my supervisor Maria, I learned that there was actually permission for research. However, I still retained my position that I won't go into too much detail analysis on this project. The GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) in the EU also requires parental consent for working with youths under 16 years of age. This also leads to difficulty in the execution of the project, since the face and identification of the participating students have to remain private. Nevertheless, this was a learning experience from which I greatly benefited. Through the process of coordinating with different participants' schedules and approaches, I gained valuable experience in negotiating, collaborating, and solving unexpected and surprising circumstances.

During the workshop period, some critical thought and reflection also began formation. Particularly on research ethics and research paradigm. For example, is it ethical to bring the youths to ice-fishing while not even briefly mentioning animal rights? When is it necessary to interfere, when the youths, after experiencing ice-fishing and the animation process of fish imagery, name their finished work "Kalojen Ihmemaa" (Fish Wonderland) when the film is produced on practicing ice-fishing? What is considered an act of giving voice to the local youths versus misleading their expectation on cross-species relationships? Within the structure of the workshop, there is not enough time, budget, or staff to, in my opinion, properly set up the project. These are the problems I acknowledged, and will put special attention on in the on-going workshop developments.

To sum up, using tools for filming in order to engage with water is in fact a very central method from the beginning to the end of *Non-locality of Water*. Even though the workshop experience with the local youths can not be analyzed thoroughly in the research because of the lack of permission, time and project experience, the experience in teaching, sharing, collaborating with local youths do transfer to other phases of my thesis research. For example, the workshop during Relate North 12.

Figure 12. Visiting workshop location in Rovaniemi before the workshop. Frozen river banks with snow on top. Film still by Lin Ni.



Figure 13. Visiting workshop location in Rovaniemi before the workshop. It is always exciting to work out doors. Film still by Lin Ni.



- Workshop- *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.*

“Good field researchers need to know how to maneuver around obstacles...”

(Fonow & Cook, 1991, p. 13)

The idea to host a participatory workshop about *Non-locality of Water* has been adjusted throughout the development of the thesis. In the beginning, I even thought of making a kombucha brewing workshop since the symbiotic process represents an opportunity for participants to spend time with these water based creatures. I was looking forward to seeing how the participants can observe, document, and later taste these interesting processes. However, there wasn't a suitable time, place, or even group of participants for this idea throughout my search for collaborators. Later, during my practical training period at Mustarinda, there was an idea to host a breathing workshop through violin playing during the open day event. After a few tries at the local kota, I was determined to think that it wasn't making much sense because it is very difficult to play the violin while performing a breathing demonstration. Furthermore, the weather condition during 2024 November was particularly wet and warm for Rovaniemi, hence an ice-swimming workshop was also out of the question. Reducing these potential workshop ideas, I decided to continue with the idea of breathing workshop under the projection of underwater footage at the exhibition *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.*

Based on my thesis research on the practice of hydro-exclusion and hydro-hierarchy, it was clear from the beginning that the workshop had to be conducted under the principle of inclusion and non-hierarchical practice. In another word, I want to make participants feel welcome no matter what their profiles are. Secondly, I want to make instruction minimal in order to discourage the top-down notion of workshop-host versus workshop-participant, or vice versa.

There are two approaches for achieving this. First is to create multilingual promotional materials for the workshop. For example, for the promotional post a week before the workshop taking place on 6th of November, I used English, Finnish, and Mandarin as the languages used for these posts on the instagram accounts Sustainable Art and Design , University Of Lapland, and UArctic Community. Since there is the word count limit, I also make use of the comment function to elaborate on the content of the workshop. Furthermore, it is also written in the promotional post that the workshop is conducted in a safe space where assumptions based on people's appearances, race,

gender are a no-go. On top of this, since it is a workshop with physical movement and contact, consent always needs to be asked and granted verbally before physical contact or visual contact.

Second, the workshop is facilitated in a way that the focus is not to teach something, but to set up an opportunity for experience to happen. This is also a critical marking point to differentiate non-hierarchical hosting from traditional workshops where participants are told exactly what to do. In my case, few sequences of breathing rhythm were shared among the participants after a brief warm up. Then everyone including the host myself were invited to create our own breathing rhythms between breathing and not breathing, inhaling and exhaling. Another key responsibility for me as a workshop host, is to maintain the inclusion principle and non-assumption principle of a safe space. This is similar to a mutual aid agreement than militarized top-down instruction.

Other than the physical workshop on breathing experience, I think one of the most critical value creation of this event is its ability to invite participatory, interactive action. This happens not only through the interaction between my exhibition *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.* and the active, movement based event but also through providing motivation for participants and audiences to enter other art works and events during the Relate North 12 symposium. On a tight schedule, both the 5th and the 6th of November feature talks, panels and other workshops that participants could go before or after a particular hour.

According to Fonow and Cook (1991, p. 11), negative feelings and emotional dimensions are important aspects to pay attention to during research practice. During the beginning of the workshop, a brief round of check-ins revealed the ten workshop participants' overall mood. Even though the workshop begins at 4 P.M., the arctic sun brings the night closer than it seemed. Some say they are feeling excited. Some say they are feeling curious. However, overall there is a tiredness mixed in with the relaxed attitude among the participants. It was good that the workshop activity evolved to be more relaxed than originally planned, since it serves the participants better in this way. Few participants recalled that they almost fell asleep during the workshop, while others exclaimed that this was the best thing that happened in the day. I was very happy to hear these feedbacks as the participants walked out of the gallery when the session was concluded. It seems that the participants feel that the exercise in breathing helped their mental process in relaxation. And it was a good idea to use the exhibition set up as the environment for the workshop. I was worried that the workshop event wouldn't attract enough participants beforehand, so I was surprised by the number of participants. This was the best breathing workshop I have led.

In my artistic practice, water immersion is an important milieu for making and processing. Swimming requires awareness in breathing. Even more so for freediving practice and winter swimming. The attention to controlling breath, being aware of breath, and the muscles associated with them are important in the praxis of *Non-locality of Water*. This applies not only in water immersion, but also in dealing with exclusion and negative environments. For example, in freediving, if you fail to remain relaxed underwater, you won't be able to perform well. Relaxation and awareness in breathing does transfer back to everyday living from the underwater world. When relaxed, it is easier to confront stress. Last but not least, participating in the workshop or not, for mammalian creatures, breathing is required for seeing the exhibition of *I am Salmon, Breathing Game*, 46 W.I.P.

In retrospect, it was also quite a catharsis experience for me to speak out the introduction that started with, "I am a non-binary identified trans-woman artist...", in front of a group of people unknown to me. The group of participants behaved well and seemed aware of safe space principles and the etiquette of sharing pronouns. This is quite a wonderful learning experience even for me.

Figure 14. Setting up with not enough pillows for the workshop. On the left wall is artwork by Elina Mazzi. Picture by Lin Ni.



- Artistic Part Exhibition - *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.*

The preparation for the exhibition titled *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.* from November 4th- 21st in 2024 started the year before in May 2023. The process included research, fieldwork, and production happening at Tenojoki, Kemijoki, and Liu Qiu. The installation material production composed of kombucha leather and alginate based bioplastic took 5 months each, with a total of 10 months. The lengthy timeline is due to the growing, brewing, setting, drying processes, which also presented ample time to literally live with and care for these bio-processes. For almost one year, my living room, which I share with my partner whom I feel grateful for their support, smelled like either vinegar or rotten grass. Throughout this period, the final form of installation shifted from one to another, though I was determined from start to end in engaging with bio-materials.

The material preparation also takes many experiments. For kombucha, there were numerous recipes for brewing the kombucha drink including different types and quantities of teas, sugar. For alginate, there were numerous recipes for consistency, content and chemicals. Successful experimentation requires the artist to stay loose, stay artistic, and stay playful. I drink the kombucha tea I brewed during this process. I used the grass cuts from my own yard for the alginate mixture. Then later I used the steel net used for cat rails in the same yard to make the binding structure seen at the exhibition. Since these materials in the making all have their other lives before, and perhaps lives after the exhibition, the resulting process was very interesting since their purposes entangled with each other and became multi-layered.

A similar process of multi-layering occurs in the two Channel videos projected onto the material structure in the same exhibition. The videos, presented as work-in-progress footage with narration, layer not only the underwater explorations that took place at Tenojoki, Kemijoki, and Liu Qiu, but also found footage ranging from news reports in policing pink salmon, historical events like racism during the space race, nuclear activism, and, most importantly, the theoretical chapters in *Non-locality of Water*. For instance, the literature by T.J. Demos, Timothy Morton and a general sense of decomposing binary notions in exclusionary practices.

Andy Goldsworthy said about nature that, "...you feel it as soon as you go out to the land...a beauty that's underwritten by extreme feelings" (Tufnell, 2006, p. 81). Nature certainly is complex. So is the relationship between human and nature, and even more so for lands inhabited by humans. Each event happening has an impact. Snow falls, water freezes, summer comes. River flows, toilet

flushes, plastic accumulates. The final idea for the exhibition for Non-locality of Water is to title the exhibition, with *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.* The goal is to reflect on hydro-realities with the help of becoming salmon. Using filmed imagery of Tenojoki, Kemijoki, Liu Qiu, the narrative of how the water carries human practice was told. The presented video also has references from other video art works, for example “Donna Haraway Reads The National Geographic on Primates” (Paper Tiger TV, 2015) and “Finger Pointing Worker” (Takechi, 2012). This is shown through the narration about Chop Chop Chang, the racist naming of the space monkey. Then later the pointing gun barrel of animated battleship Yamato, confronting the viewer’s everyday energy consumption in relation to Takechi’s work. Just like the first line of the video narration, “non-locality is like a hole that does not end...Or a hole that is everywhere, in everything, and all at once” that is shown in Hämärä Gallery. The narration then goes on to explain how nuclear power plants can not only kill numerous tons of fish underwater annually, but also heat up the water body. Juxtaposing the racist and cruel treatment (animal testing) of Chop Chop Chang, the work positioned itself visually, prompting viewers to cross boundaries with the artist. The flesh of pink salmon in the video soon projected themselves on to the physical installation. The subtle vinegary, earthy smell of the biomaterial quickly transports the audience into a sense of nature (Here the word nature is used to describe an engineered experience of nature). This experience is heightened by the intense sensation of cold in the film, for instance, underwater ice footage, which brings out the sharp contrasts between the warmth of the gallery and the arctic outdoors. It provokes a question about artificial separateness—or, more precisely, exclusion.

The number 46, that appears in the title of *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.*, is a hint to the connection between Finland’s Olkiluoto 3 that went into full operation in 2023 and the historical battleship Yamato. It doesn’t matter if the viewer knows what 46 means, but it is the gauge of the gun barrel on the battleship Yamato, which during the Second World War was the largest in the world. Japan Steel Works Ltd., as one of five companies globally today capable of manufacturing nuclear reactor pressure vessels required for nuclear power plants, produced Olkiluoto 3’s nuclear reactor pressure vessel (Takemoto & Katz, 2008). The history of Japan Steel Works goes back to its manufacturing of battleship Yamato’s gun barrel. This links to the history of colonization from imperial Japan in Taiwanese speaking Taiwan, which marks the importance in narrating the story through Taiwanese. Reflecting on this, the earlier literature examined on non-locality of nuclear waste, nuclear colonialism in several sites across the globe come back alive here in the exhibition (Demos, 2016; IAEE, 2014; Lippard, 1997; Morton, 2013; Norimatsu, 2011).

Figure 15. The artist body in Tenojoki layering with Chop Chop Chang. Film Still from *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, W.I.P. 46*.



Figure 16. Animation of Battleship Yamato layered with underwater footage. Film Still from *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, W.I.P. 46*.



The installation structure's recycled metal net in cylinder shape is a reference to these vessels pointing at everyday life.

The spiraling process of Art Based Action Research helps both the process of filmmaking and the coming-together of the exhibition. From the early screening event at the Ateneum Museum to the practical training period at the Mustarinda Art Residency and the application for Relate North 12, each step contributes to the development of the thesis and the production of the artistic component. For example, at Mustarinda and Kesäkellari, I screened earlier versions of the presented two channel videos. Another aspect that underlies the production is the narration. The language used is Taiwanese, which I won't get into details for this chapter. There is a brief introduction in the beginning of this thesis on this. Nevertheless, I want to talk about the process of recording. Earlier for the screening at the Ateneum Museum, I experimented with voice manipulation. The original idea at the time was to perform a live vocal-over for the screening, but canceled at the last moment as I realized there wasn't enough time to prepare for it. At the time of recording for *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.*, it is already six months later. The practice of voice training continues, though with mild progress. Although I noted that the audio setup in the Hämärä Gallery was malfunctioning, the work presented was still conveyed well. One audience member during the Mustarinda screening commented, "you have a very soothing voice." This is good feedback, though I am still not confident about it. I guess Maria, my supervisor, was right. It is a life-long process, for any practice. Understanding the vastness of the subject matter, I also indicated the work-in-progress nature of the research through an acronym for work in progress in the exhibition title, "*I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.*"

In presenting the exhibition, I am also very happy that it is included in the Relate North 12 symposium, exhibition and gathering. Not only that it fostered an international audience, but it also enriched the exhibition context by presenting a series of talks and panels regarding new genres of arctic art, and the transiting environment. This connects the thesis, *Non-locality Of Water*, with clearly not just the exhibition of *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.* yet also other non-local situations manifested in the local arctic context. The result, I think, is better than what I can dream of. On the other hand, the Relate North 12 also provided me an opportunity to learn and converse with artists, researchers concerning the world through the event and exhibition. I would also say that this is one of the most important qualities of an exhibition: to trigger learning opportunities, provoke curiosity, and make connections.

Figure 17. Work in progress of the video footage exhibited at Kesäkellari's GRWM show. Film still taken at the gallery by Helmi Vuorimaa.



Figure 18. Pink salmon in the Tenojoki area serve as an visual reference through out the project.

Picture taken by Lin Ni.



Figure 19. Full size view of installation, *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, W.I.P. 46*. Picture taken by Lin Ni.



Figure 20. Close up showing the scale of installation, *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, W.I.P. 46.*

Picture taken by Iita Poijula.



Figure 21. Another view of the time based installation, *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, W.I.P. 46.*

Picture taken by Lin Ni.

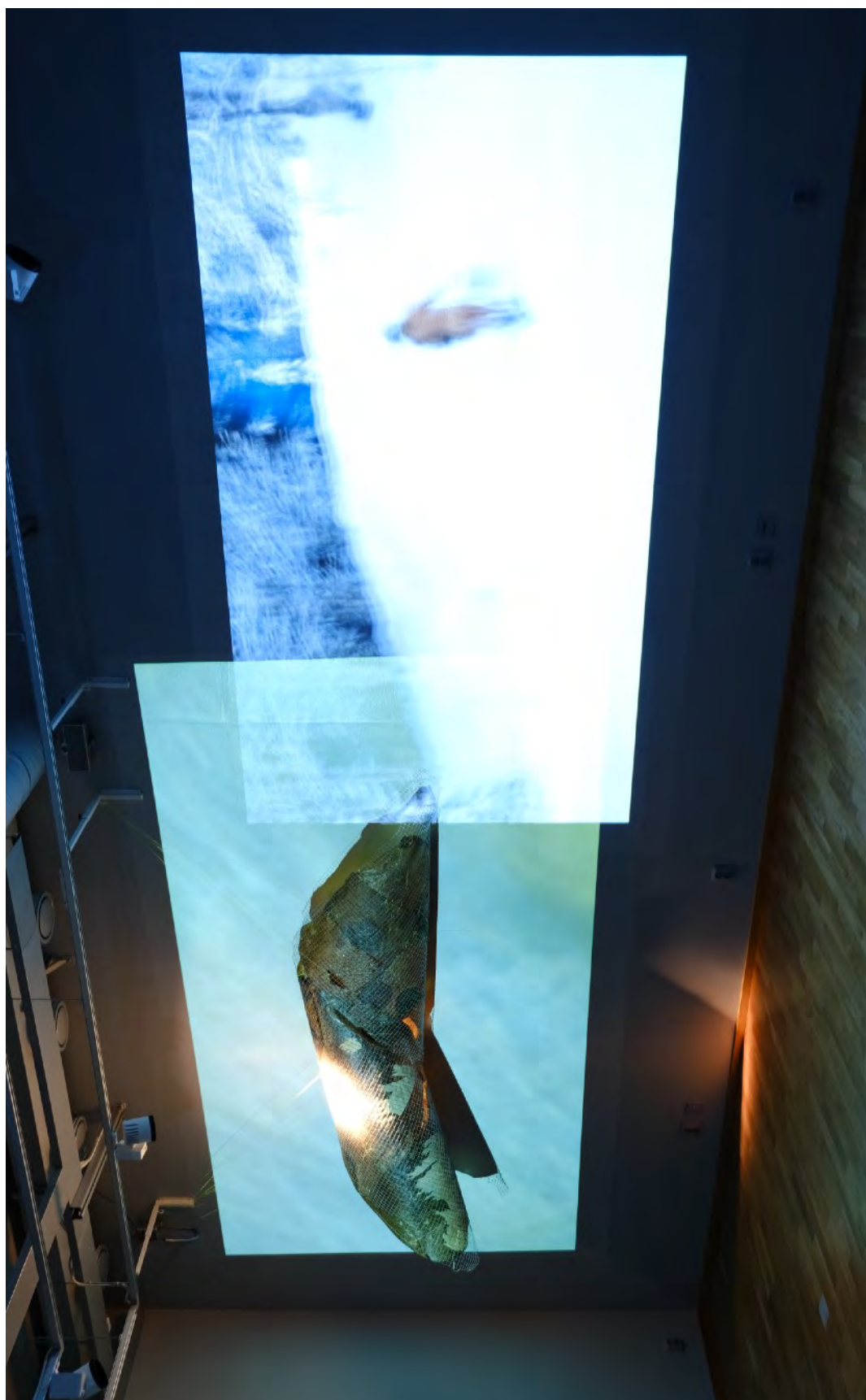


Figure 22. Close up of the gun barrel shaped installation, *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, W.I.P. 46*.
Picture taken by Lin Ni.

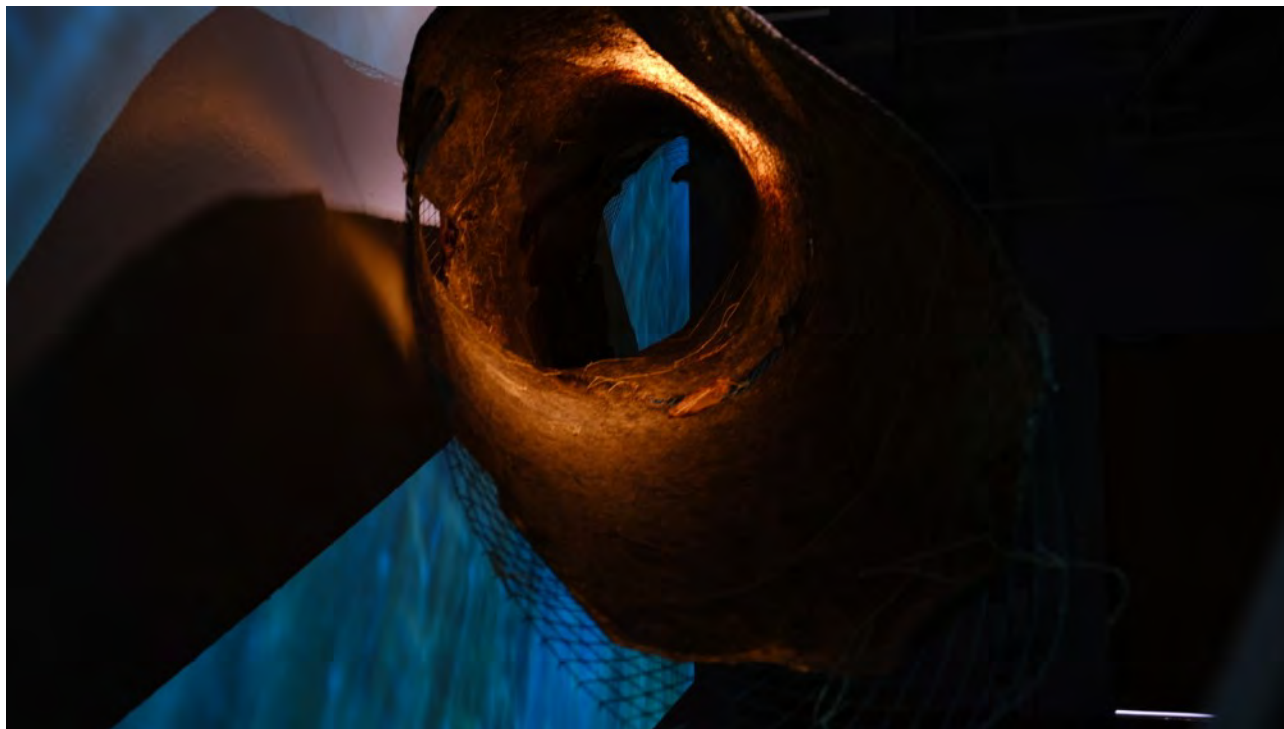
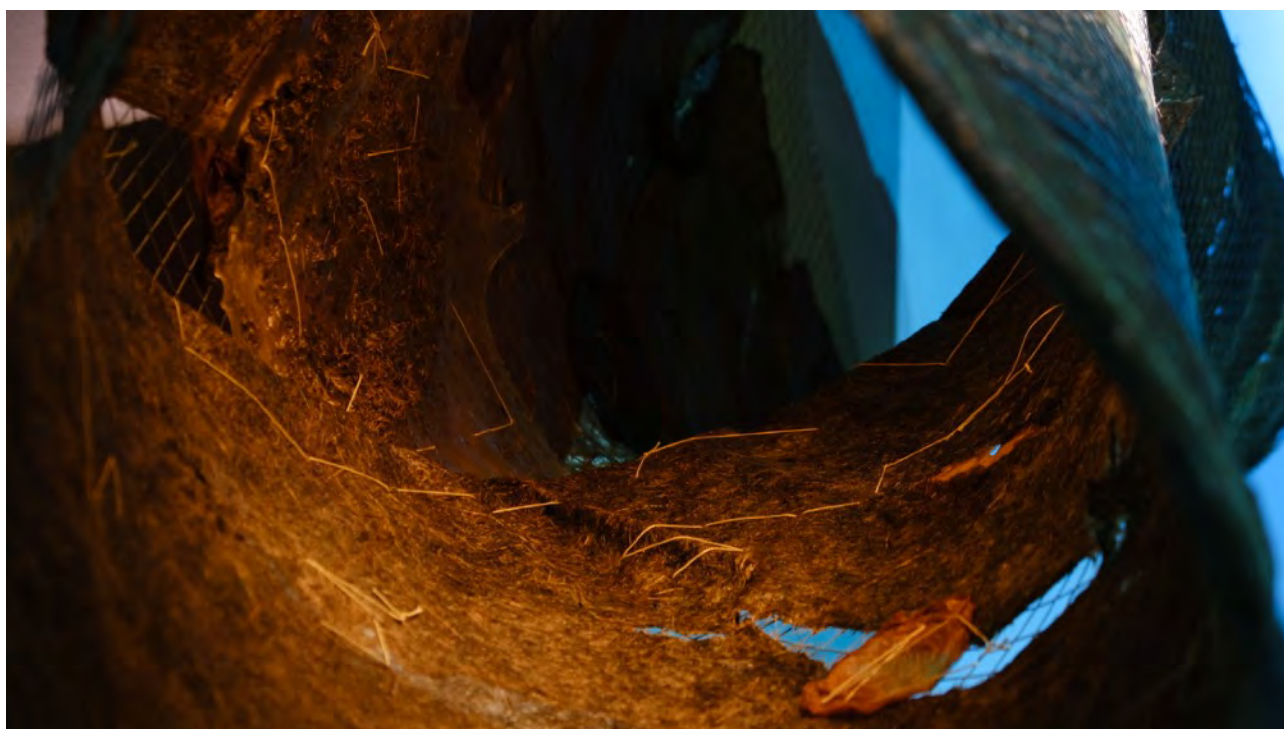


Figure 23. Details of the gun barrel shaped installation, *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, W.I.P. 46*.
Picture taken by Lin Ni.



Conclusion - Addressing the Question

"How can hydro-exclusion be localized using filmmaking and art-based action?" is one half of the research question I was addressing in this thesis. I divided the question into two parts: "using filmmaking to localize hydro-exclusion" and "using art-based action to localize hydro-exclusion." First, however, it is important to note that although hydro-exclusion was the focus of this question, its multidimensional nature interacted with other forms of exclusion that occur more broadly. While artists bring individual perspectives to such inquiries, I approached this research with the personal background—outlined in the introduction to *Non-locality of Water*—that sensitized me to exclusions present across various aspects of daily life.

To localize, verbalize, and visualize hydro-exclusion, I combined Art-Based Action Research with filmmaking. This created a spiraling process that enabled me to build a multidimensional practice impossible to achieve through a singular approach. For example, the fieldwork and filming described in the chapter, *Between Teno and Tana*, not only culminated in a screening event at the Ateneum Museum (2023), but the process also informed the development of later chapters. This was reflected in both the written and artistic components; indications of hydro-exclusion flowed between the Teno River and the Tana River, and later to the Kemi River. Through filmmaking and artistic action, I not only localized hydro-exclusion in these water bodies but also delved deeper into understanding the histories and current realities that shape contemporary life.

In the research practice of *Non-locality of Water*, it became clear that in order to use filmmaking and artistic action to localize hydro-exclusion, fieldwork and literature review are inseparable parts of the process. Fieldwork, such as water immersion, provided sensory evidence crucial to the filmmaking process, while the literature review helped identify and contextualize the evidence collected. Although an artistic researcher may not pose certain scientific research questions, an art practitioner can certainly engage with scientific frontiers through artistic means. Furthermore, the artistic process allowed for the exploration of different and multiple layers—cultural, natural, and beyond.

To localize something as an artist means not only to locate or pinpoint it but also to translate that information. This connects to the second half of my research question on localizing hydro-non-localities. While hydro-non-locality often accompanies hydro-exclusion, there are distinct, concrete differences in how they are addressed and localized. From the early planning

stages of this thesis, it was my intention to incorporate research locations that are geographically distant yet interconnected. For example, the research site at Tenojoki is 600 km from the site at Kemijoki, and the site at Liu Qiu is literally on the other side of the continent. Hydro-non-localities often transcend national, continental, and cultural borders. To localize them, artists must look beyond these boundaries.

In the chapter *Between Teno and Tana*, for instance, I conducted fieldwork across the borders of Norway and Finland while studying materials related to government practices during the artificial migration of pink salmon. The artistic exhibition, *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.* reflected this approach by editing, cutting, and forming interconnections between the times and spaces of hydro-non-locality. This was done by juxtaposing, merging visuals in order to signify and localize the non-localities targeted. For example, the filming sequence of the abandoned box net at Liu Qiu, brought viewer's attention towards the connection between fish farming practice and the fieldwork about pink salmon. Similar approach can also be seen at the air workshop performed at *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.* By asking the participants to focus their attention on their breath while immersed in the underwater projection of the exhibition, they were encouraged to enter an alternate, ocean-centered experience that not only allowed the viewer to see with their eyes, but also to feel with their own body. This approach dealt specifically with the mind/body separation elaborated by Neimanis (Gnraton, 2022).

During practical training at Mustarinda, although it appeared to not be in the center of water bodies, when more sustainable living is practiced, even in a remote location, it does have significant contribution towards the environment in general. In other words, if unsustainable activity is practiced in a remote location, it does also have a significant toll on the global environment in general. This brought back my theory discussion about exclusions happening in the ocean, as well the activism in asking for climate justice by colonized third world countries (Demos, 2016; Obaidullah, 2023). It is exactly this kind of awareness that is critical for me to localize and voice through filmmaking and artistic action—to locate these global issues and restrict it to a local scale in order for society to take action and bring positive change.

Water became the medium to make the thesis exhibition material, for instance, in kombucha brewing and later drying, and in alginate bioplastic mixing, forming. Water was the medium of artistic research in deep diving underwater at Liu Qiu, Taiwan, in Tenojoki's flowing water bodies, and under the frozen Kemi River in Rovaniemi. Water is also what links Olkiluoto 3 and battleship

Yamato together, forming the figure in 46 centimeter gauge referenced in the installation of *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.*

From Norway, Finland to Japan, each autonomous body plays a part in the trans-national process of exchanging power, technology, resources concerning water, salmon, and nuclear technology. In my spiraling, multilayered research process, each voice found was quickly echoed, submerged by yet another ghostly link of non-localities that appeared to be more “local” than others.

I initiated the research with an interest into the lives of salmon in migration. Despite being vegan for four years at the time, I was asked how I feel about the pink salmon after screening one of the earlier versions of the work in progress footage for the artistic part exhibition, *I am Salmon, Breathing Game, 46 W.I.P.* To me that question represented so many things other than how I felt. Partly this is because I find strong resemblance between the way the salmon has been excluded and the exclusion practiced in other aspects of society. There are differences, of course, some subtle, almost invisible, some obvious. These differences penetrate our society across nations, borders, and species. For example, the Norwegian river guard joked about “they are doing border controls for the salmon” on the news report video (The Barents Observer, 2023). Or for another example, a cisgender woman joked about trans women wanting their sausages getting cut off. While the first example is from news recording footage I used for my artistic part, the second example is from my own everyday life. My perception of some of these experiences reflected my own background and upbringing at a colonial-settler society, like what Fanon (1963) observed, I was aware that in a colonial setting, there is the colonizer and the colonized. In a hierarchical society, there is always “the othering” that shapes societal dynamics. Asking the question, “How could filmmaking and art based action serve as an artist's tool for localizing hydro-non-localities and hydro-exclusions?”, was to build up an artistic practice capable of addressing these challenges.

The journey was far from easy, both academically and personally. However, I found myself enthusiastically chasing the rabbit hole, from Between Teno and Tana, Ice on Kemi, Diving at Liu Qiu, Practical Training at Mustarinda Art Residency, Workshop- NAAE, Workshop-Breathing Game, to finally Exhibition-*I am Salmon, Breathing Game, W.I.P. 46*. Each chapter built upon the last like another roll in the snow for my thesis snowball. Running around from location to location, constant rescheduling, and backup plan were the norms during this research period.

Beyond the written analysis, there were many non-verbal transmissions of research happening at the same time. For example, the smell of pink salmon for one, the experience of diving into the ocean for two, the low angle of sub-arctic sun for three. It was one thing to learn that the angle of the sub-arctic sun is low, it was another to experience it. It was one thing to write about the thesis, but an entirely different experience to live with it for two years. I hope these non-verbal aspects of my research were translated effectively in both my written report and artistic part, for instance, in the record of Process and Analysis. The freediving notes included in the appendix are meant to support the thesis body in this respect. I believe this represents the non-verbal non-locality that I must continue to develop through ongoing artistic practice, expanding and deepening in the colorful, mesmerizing layers of the world in transition.

Appendix- Dive Note in Indonesia, 12/2023-1/2024

12/21 afternoon 1:30pm

First day of training. The dive felt mellower. I don't have the excitement before, but also not feeling bad. Things progress in a calm but relaxed way. It was about three warm ups around 10-15m, then few dives of charging my mouthfill at 15m then going down to 25.

12/22 morning 9:30

Second day. I think my body still felt the dives from yesterday, though I tried to recover as much as I could. The waves are choppy. From the warm up dives I lose my relaxation. The second dive of the day I started a few early returns before 15, 20, 25. I think overall the water wasn't comfortable for me today. I was thinking why I turned back, I think it was because I don't feel comfortable with the uncomfortableness. (Tight fins, not mentally feeling relaxed, slightly colder water, perhaps even the neck weight was uncomfortable) It is a bad day, but to conclude it, result wise, I don't think the dive was much worse than yesterday. But mental impact was big.

12/26 afternoon 13:30

This is the third dive. After resting for three days I think I feel much rested. Mostly I think I felt dehydrated and tired from sweating too much, without supplementing electrolytes. Today the visibility is much better than before, you can see the bottom weight in 20meter. I managed several relaxed dives, for warm ups to 20. And managed to do a few 30m dives with the new charging technique. I think the good sea condition contribute to my mental relaxation. Another point to note is that I practiced with guidance of an instructor "sonic de concentrations" like meditation to de-focus but using sonic clues. We were asked to concentrate and expand the area of focus and in the end the instructor was making weird sounds like blowing bubbles, dropping rocks on the floor. And asked us not to lose de-concentration. It was interesting, because in a way it's like having asmr effect, but trying not to be affected. It's funny that in the past few days I have been thinking to return to Taiwan early, perhaps because of mental reasons. But today after the dive, I felt like I should stay and also come back next winter. This is quite a big swing of mood that I observed.

12/29 afternoon 13:30

The night after last dive, I realized I had food poisoning. And had to rest for two days because of fever, puking, diarrhea, tummy cramps. I couldn't eat or drink anything much for almost two days. With all these, this was a good dive session though. I was relaxed and did a few dives to 30. Including a FIM. I think I enjoy pulling the rope.

12/30 morning 10:00

This is a relaxed session, I did a few FRC dives to 15m to simulate lung and rib pressure at depth. It was exhausting to dive in consecutive days though.

1/4 morning 10:00

This is a good relaxed session, with several fRc dives to 15m, and a 25m dive in the end. I can feel much better the air moving in the mouth (decreased, compressed when descending)when doing mouthful.

1/5 afternoon 13:30

This is the last dive for the training. I did two long hangs at 10, then bi-fin dive to 30, then another at 40. The last dive was aiming at 50, but ended up around 40. Overall I think for the next training period, I should start and focus on FRC dives using mouthfill from 20-30 in order to train for mouthfill from 40-60 in a normal dive. I think there needs to be more training on using air in the mouth more efficiently for the early phase after charging, as well as better tongue, throat awareness in moving air to equalize. Towards the end of the two 40m dives, my mouth is already with little air that I am not used to equalize with, perhaps if those rest-of-air were used well, or if earlier equalization were managed better, I could still have air until much later.

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