

The Stream:

The beauty and peace in nature

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When I think of rivers, the image that comes to my head is not the wide, strong waters that are the most accurate form for the word. Instead, my mind goes to smaller streams bubbling along a forest path. There is a peace and serenity there, as you walk down a small and rocky forest path, and the sunlight reaches through the surrounding trees and hits the water's surface. As the wind moves, the leaves and water move across the forest floor: a near-silent sound of water moving across rocks and down small waterfalls. These streams are also prime areas to walk alongside and make finds: collect rocks and sticks, and look at bugs and plants, while enjoying the quiet atmosphere in privacy.

But when it comes to water, rivers are not the first association. Even on these forest walks, the streams come second to the forest itself. I grew up in a coastal town near the ocean and lakes. When talking about bodies of water, or planning for an artwork relating to rivers, I can't help but think of the ocean and lakes instead, and the beautiful view across a still body of water.

In contemplating my association with water, I notice the connecting thread of stopping and enjoying the world around me. The environment stills



Figure 1. Image: Lampela, 2024

you, to look out into the beauty and variety of nature, and to the peace that it brings you, to kneel next to a stream to pick up a nice rock or listen to the sound of bubbling water. Or, to stop at the shores of a body of water to look to the never-ending horizon.

This is what I wanted to bring across in my work. The peacefulness and stillness of nature, as well as the movement of waters, leaves and animals. Of light reflecting off the water, of snow melting from the trees.



Figure 2. Image: Lampela, 2024

Behind the process

During our fieldwork week in Vuotso, and in the first thoughts for my art production, I had multiple open-ended ideas, geared towards a collage of sorts, created during walks in nature or from things found in nature. From this first draft, the idea of a walk was the one that stayed and developed into the final product. What I want to encourage with my artwork is the idea of stopping to enjoy what is around you. To take a breath and experience your surroundings.

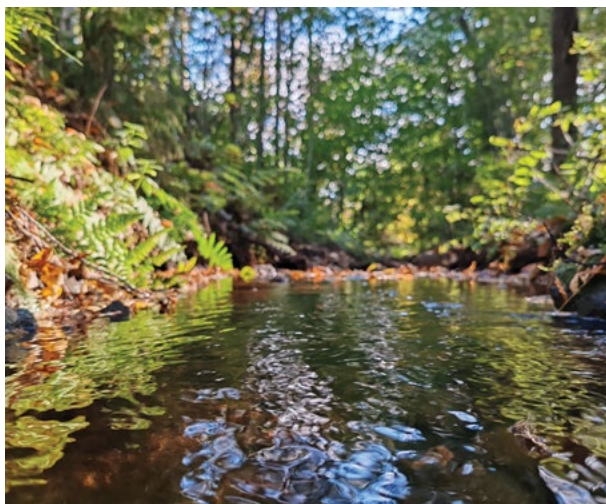


Figure 3. Image: Lampela, 2024

In Lisa Torell's *Place to Place* (2009), a somewhat similar idea is Magnus Thierfelder's performative documentation, where he took and posted pictures of details from his walk to his studio. The documentation could be described as curiosity and interest in the aesthetics of a place, with the meaning of drawing attention to your surroundings (Torell, 2009). In Thierfelder's case, he said that his surroundings were a route he often took and was familiar, but the focus was drawn to things you may not otherwise pay attention to. While my own artwork is more

about exploring something unfamiliar, they both encourage you to interact with and exist in the space you are in.

As I was planning my final product, I drew inspiration from Ingold's *The Temporality of Landscape* (2002) and his descriptions of landscape. Specifically, from how he speaks of the landscape as moving and changing alongside us. They are formed through movement and exist as something solid and seen, even if movement stops and the landscape seems to be still. Ingold goes on to describe how a landscape will continue to change, even if that change is not noticeable: rivers straighten from their curved forms, eroding the stone and earth around them, and trees and plants grow and reach higher into the clouds. (Ingold, 2022.) The seemingly fixed landscape is not that, but is instead ever-changing. In my artwork, I documented this change on a smaller scale, as it was happening. The flowing water, the plants moving in the wind, the birds flying. Small changes in what you can see around you if you just stop and watch.



A Walk by The Waters

During this year's *Living in the Landscape*, the relationship between people and water was explored through the experiences of us participants, the people of Vuotso, and other sources, discussing the effects of green energy, artificial lakes and power plants. Through this, we saw how both the people and the environment are affected by these man-made changes. Instead of this, I wanted to purely focus on the landscape outside of them, and showcase nature as it is, without the obvious human influence. The relationship between humans and nature is then in how the person is affected by nature and its landscape, outside of the man-made.

The finished artwork is in video format and consists of imagery from multiple different sites across Finland, spanning from the South Coast all the way to Vuotso. As stated, the plan was to go outside, explore and find places to stop and relax. The importance of this was to document both the stillness and the movement of nature and the world around you, from snow melting to water flowing, to the waves of the ocean and the stillness of a wide swamp. The sites I visited included both those familiar and unfamiliar to me, which will not be distinguishable in the video, as the familiarity exists only in what I have visited before. The viewer may also find familiarity in some and unfamiliarity in others, depending on the environments they are used to.

Conclusion

As I try to show my own experiences of landscape and nature, and its varied beauty, to the best of my capabilities, I encourage others to enjoy the world

Figure 4. Image: Lampela, 2024

as well. As is discussed in Torell's (2009) text on site-specific artworks and processes, it is impossible to take something specific to one place or time and bring it into text or video format. The true experience cannot be replicated in such a way, and will always have missing pieces.

The finished product is a summary of my own experiences exploring and connecting different sites across Finland. Through this, I hope to bring across even some of the peace found in nature, be it in the stillness or business of it.

References

Ingold, T. (2009) The Temporality on the Landscape *World Archaeology*, 25(2), 152–174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00438243.1993.9980235>

Torell, L., Torell, L., & Strand, Å. (2017). *Place to place: 9 artists reflection about site-specificity and place-related processes: environment, location, site, spot, space, room*. Folkkrörelsernas Konstfrämjandet

Figure 5. Image: Lampela, 2024

