

MAPPING THE New Genre Arctic Art Education



Edited by
Timo Jokela,
Annamari Manninen
and Peter Berliner

MAPPING THE
NEW GENRE
ARCTIC ART
EDUCATION



LAPIN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND

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Edited by
Timo Jokela, Annamari Manninen and Peter Berliner
Rovaniemi, 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction: A Journey with New Genre Arctic Art

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¹University of Lapland, Finland and ²Association Siunissaq, Greenland

We met; we shared ideas. We drove together on long, grey tarmac roads through white landscapes of snow. We gathered in lecture halls and opened the windows to let the Arctic light stream. We traversed deep snow at the foot of the Quassussuaq mountain; we curated exhibitions, conversed and laughed together—artists, researchers, educators and youth—all united in a spirit of creativity. Together, we ran along the frozen river in Karasjok, twilight casting a magical glow as we celebrated the river, the sky and our unity and our shared visions in the fading light of the day and the soft coming of the Arctic night. We revelled in the act of creation, shaping our northern world collectively and using art as our beacon for a sustainable future.

This book is a testament to that journey, a chronicle for all who wish to join us in this shared endeavour, continually unveiling new and wondrous ways to engage art in building

a sustainable present and future in the Arctic. Whether you are an artist, a citizen, an educator, a herder in the forest, a parent, a hunter on the trail, a tourist group guide, a child sketching in the margins of a schoolbook, an environmental activist, a social worker, a public health advocate or any other contributor to our shared Arctic life, you will find ideas and inspiration within these pages. That is our hope. We extend our hand to you, wishing you joy in this exploration.

We are pleased to share the outcomes of the two-year (2022–2024) development project – New Genre Arctic Art Education (AAE) – with you. The project involved collaboration among the Arctic University’s Thematic Networks – Arctic Sustainable Art and Design (ASAD) and Children in the Arctic – and it was organised in collaboration with four universities: University of Lapland, Finland; Nord University, Norway; Umeå University, Sweden; and Ilisimatusarfik – University of Greenland. For reasons unrelated to the project, the Association Siunissaq

replaced the University of Greenland as the Greenlandic partner. The project was funded by the Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education, represented by the University of the Arctic (UArctic). The present project was the initial phase of a larger collaborative effort by the mentioned thematic networks of the UArctic (Jokela & Hiltunen, 2024).

For both UArctic thematic networks, the values of UArctic were central to the project, promoting northern voices and a circumpolar perspective. The AAE initiative embraced cultural diversity, linguistic plurality and gender equality, supporting peaceful coexistence and collaboration with equal civil and social rights. It fostered respectful, trust-based partnerships and valued the insights and knowledge of the northern Indigenous peoples. The project championed participatory knowledge production, including Indigenous methodologies and ethics, ensuring an open dialogue with all stakeholders. By reducing barriers to cooperation across borders, cultures and academic systems, the network upheld transparency and openness. It created accessible, research-based knowledge to support sustainable development in the Arctic.

The AAE project aimed to create and maintain long-term transdisciplinary partnerships between Arctic universities in fields such as education, art, design, craft, humanities, nature and social sciences. The objective was to address the emerging challenges brought about by changes in the Arctic. These challenges were driven by megatrends, such as urbanisation, globalisation and the consequences of climate and environmental changes, which significantly impacted the social and cultural lives of local communities. The effects of these changes

on children and youth in the Arctic, both in Indigenous and multi-ethnic communities, have become increasingly visible.

The concept of ‘new genre Arctic art’ was developed by ASAD researchers (Jokela et al., 2021). It builds on Lacy’s (1995) concept of ‘new genre public art’, which emphasises participatory, political and aesthetic artworks, activities and events. New genre Arctic art combines activism and engagement with current issues in the Arctic, such as resource extraction, climate change, social and mental challenges, and the rights of Indigenous peoples. A turn in contemporary art education contributes to this new genre of art and highlights how artists present the Arctic through participatory, socially engaged practices. Thus, art educators play a crucial role in ecoculture and in decolonisation through art-based ways of strengthening our endeavours to build a sustainable present and future in the Arctic (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2022).

The convergence of critical Arctic sustainability studies with this new genre Arctic art has led to a fundamental notion: sustainable art education must incorporate and respect local cultures and Indigenous and Northern knowledge. This approach to art education is forward-looking, imagining a future in which art education plays a critical role in shaping sustainable communities in the Arctic. The AAE initiative consists of several funded sub-projects that explore how art and design education can address local ecocultures issues, identities and social structures.

In the UArctic Network: Children in the Arctic, Siunissaq has likewise implemented a series of projects combining community art and psychosocial activities in communities in the

Arctic. The collaboration of the two networks leads to continuous networking on art and sustainability through an art-based building community and an overarching culture of cooperation, trust and mutual respect between the diverse cultures in the Arctic.

This project was planned to foster decolonisation, social resilience and sustainability through art-based local involvements and educational practices. Supported by art-based action research, we have demonstrated how artists and art educators can work together with communities to revitalise cultures and decolonise discourses and practices through self-determined social and cultural identities that open pathways to sustainable futures in the North and Arctic regions.

We have broadened the understanding of living in the Arctic sociocultural landscapes by utilising transdisciplinary and culturally diverse approaches and by including culturally and linguistically diverse communities, students and staff. Collaboration among participants in seminars and workshops was central to the project's values. To reduce barriers such as linguistic, cultural and participatory challenges, a hybrid implementation was used, ensuring openness and accessibility for students from diverse backgrounds and fields of study.

The activities designed for this project aimed to promote respect, cultural sensitivity and social sustainability in the Arctic region. This involved consulting and engaging with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous local communities in the development of activities and knowledge construction. By bringing together various stakeholders to share the best practices and knowledge of art education, the project

aimed to better promote sustainability in the Arctic region. The impact of these seminars and workshops was enhanced through interdisciplinary collaboration, which enabled a deeper understanding and visualisation of the many facets of Arctic life.

The five chapters and 24 visual essays of this book clarify the richness of the AAE. This publication is divided into three parts. In the first part, the authors shed light on the bases of the project. Timo Jokela and Mirja Hiltunen structure the main conceptual and practical steps of AAE based on a review of new genre arctic art and art education activities. Peter Berliner and Elena de Casas draw the connections between art-based activities, psychosocial well-being and the ecocultural approach to sustainability. They also present a closer view of the cultural, environmental and social contexts in Greenland and community art's and activities' potential to decolonise values and knowledge building. Sara Rylander and Lotta Lundstedt discuss the concept of ecocultural resilience in art and handicraft education by examining the example of the university course *Sloyd, Design and Sustainable Development*, in which crafts connect tradition with today and include social, cultural and ecological aspects. Karin Stoll, Wenche Sørmo and Mette Gårdvik offer some insight into a multidisciplinary approach for sustainability education by defining the roles of artistic activities in art and natural science integration. In the first section's last chapter, Annamari Manninen opens the concept of hybrid teaching that aims for situational and dialogical learning that forms the ground for collaboration in Arctic art education.

The second part of the book consists of several visual essays that present snapshots of what

was done during the project period and how artists, art educators, researchers and students have, through their contributions, applied and developed AAE. These visual essays highlight different mediums and methods of contemporary art, including digital possibilities for creating AAE individually, in collaboration with others or in community settings.

Timo Jokela and Peter Berliner shed light on the first steps of the AAE project's art-based activities in Nuuk, Greenland, where the project's first phase was initiated in the spring of 2023. Mirja Hiltunen, in turn, illustrates with two contemporary artworks how she approached new situations, places and communities in Greenland.

The second AAE project development pilot, a hybrid course and field school, was organised at Karasjok in the spring of 2024 in the Sámi region of Norway, where the key local partners were the Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art (Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš) and the Karasjok School. In his visual essay, Timo Jokela explains how the course and field school were built and implemented based on AAE principles. Then, Ante Jalvela and Emilia Tuononen present an example of art-based work during the online part of the course. The next four essays – Emilia Tuononen and Silja Peltola about painting, Dylan Stiegemeier and Sara Rylander about clay, Lotta Lundstedt about craft and Korinna Korsström-Magga about reindeer antler carving – delve deeper into the implementation of the field school and intra-actions with Karasjok ecoculture and visualise the art education carried out, conveying the experiences of the various activities and outcomes.

In addition to the AAE pilot field schools in Nuuk and Karasjok, where all universities par-

ticipated together, each university developed its own AAE activities based on its specific disciplines and regional contexts. The visual essays by Mirja Hiltunen, Karin Stoll, Wenche Sørmo, Mette Gårdvik, Peter Berliner, Elena de Casas, Antti Stöckell and Timo Jokela provide a glimpse into the diverse regions of Utsjoki in Finland, Kautokeino, Nesna and Bodö in Norway, as well as Nuuk and Maniitsoq in Greenland, illustrating how AAE practices were forged in collaboration and intra-action with local Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, considering the potential of northern ecocultures.

As editors, we have included in this publication examples from "AAE's sister projects" coordinated by the ASAD network and the University of Lapland, since these cases adequately illustrate AAE thinking. Emmi Kairenius and Saara Lappeteläinen give us views on the Living in the Landscape (LiLa) projects that run a multidisciplinary summer school on art-based landscape research methodologies in collaboration with universities. Gina Wall and Timo Jokela's essay is also related to UArctic collaboration. They present how art education at the University of Lapland and architecture education at the Glasgow School of Art collaborated on a course consisting of distance learning, co-design and a field school. Within this framework, an architectural work combining traditional temporary shelters, the Finnish 'laavu' and the Scottish 'sheiling-bouch' was constructed in Scotland in the spirit of AAE.

Aki Lintumäki, in turn, inspires young people to create event-based and publicly displayed art to promote the expression of young people's voices and emotions in climate change-related discussions.

Maria Huhmarniemi and her colleagues Lola Cervantes, Minna Kovero, Tanya Kravtsov and Elina Lairo present art activities from projects focusing on the revitalisation of wool use and handicrafts. One article deals with the tradition of the large-scale felting of raw wool, while another article focuses on revitalised traditional Nordic wool embroidery through the lens of craftivism.

In her third article, Maria Huhmarniemi collaborates closely with forest restoration efforts, raising questions about environmental ethics, cultural sustainability and the role of humans in nature. The project also facilitates art workshops for school pupils, further enhancing its educational aspect.

We have included two essays from Scotland, a near-Arctic region, in our publication. Roxane Permar presents a mobile film project implemented in an urban environment, which served as a new way for care-experienced young people in Shetland to creatively engage with each other. Siun Garden examines the utility of an individual social artist mapping their 'landscape of practice', proposing this exercise as a beneficial activity for individuals working in new genre Arctic art and as a tool for mapping routes towards new collaborations and ways of working.

As editors, we appreciate the UArctic network partners who have, over the years, contributed to raising awareness and rethinking art education in the Arctic region. Herminia Din's visual essay offers a window into how she has, over the years, innovated steps in art education towards Arctic sustainability activities in her work.

In the third part, the authors summarise the results of the AAE project. The project was

monitored, reflected upon and evaluated during the process using art-based action research methods. The core results and learning outcomes are presented in this publication to support their implementation and integration into the curricula of participating universities as well as joint education of UArctic.

The AAE initiative proved to be a profound means of artfully articulating emotions and perceptions regarding the current situation, challenges, strengths and transformations in the living Arctic. It served as a model for fostering socially and culturally sustainable communities, connecting diverse groups and ensuring that everyone in the Arctic has freedom of expression, democratic participation and access to art and culture.

The project has been a wondrous journey for all of us. A journey of creating art together and, through that, artfully creating a supportive, inspiring and joyful collaboration. It has been, and will continue to be, an experience of applying art to convey a profound understanding of our shared life in the Arctic and to join in building an overarching and embracing Arctic culture of environmental and social justice, respect for diversity, and peaceful coexistence. We have experienced that in every moment of the project – and we hope that this book transmits that sensation to you and to everyone who reads it. ●

**Timo Jokela, Annamari Manninen
and Peter Berliner**

In Rovaniemi and Nuuk, 24 October 2024

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CONCEPTUAL BASIS



◀ **Figure 1. Left:** Sámi artist Outi Pieski's public artwork *Guovssat (Protective Forest)* in Lapland Central Hospital, Rovaniemi. In her work, Pieski has transformed traditional Sámi handycraft into a contemporary artistic piece. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2024.
Right: Antti Stöckell uses wood, combining elements with soundscape in his installation *A Drowning Ground*, which was exhibited in the *Shifting Ground* exhibition at the Korundi Art Museum, Rovaniemi, 2024. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2024.

Connecting the Steps for New Genre Arctic Art Education

Timo Jokela and Mirja Hiltunen
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In this chapter, we outline and conceptualise the steps for developing the activities of the *New Genre Arctic Art Education (AAE)* initiative. We understand art education as a broad phenomenon that encompasses activities in schools and educational institutions, ranging from work with children to artist training. Alongside formal education and teaching, art education also takes place in informal environments, in organisations and unofficial groups, wherever individuals and groups engage with art for self and community development. From the perspective of educational institutions, the curriculum is a way to outline the aims and

pedagogical methods, which may appear as clearly defined progressions. However, the steps that we outline here are not separate, fixed entities. Advancing through them can be understood as states of entanglement, involving a co-formation where contemporary art encounters the Arctic. In these encounters, in the intra-action, steps emerge through which the goals and activities of the AAE can be outlined (Figure 2).

Our discussion in this chapter is informed by a research review, which clarified the inter-connections among the key concepts of AAE

and explored their relation to sustainability in the Arctic (Jokela & Hiltunen, 2024). Carried out as part of the AAE initiative of mapping 'the stage of arts', the review was based on research articles, visual essays, artworks and project reports within the Arctic Sustainable Art and Design (ASAD, 2024) thematic network of the University of the Arctic (UArctic, 2024).

The AAE initiative started when Jokela et al. (2021) presented the concept of *New Genre Arctic Art*, building on Lacy's (1995, 2008) framework of *new genre public art*. Lacy described her framework as a means for artistic interventions that would engage directly with society to tackle social and political issues, primarily in urban settings. In the Arctic, artists often focus on opposing the exploitation of natural resources, defending the rights of Indigenous peoples or addressing other local issues, using art as a tool to share understandings of the region's challenges (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020b). We recognise that the field of *New Genre Arctic Art* demonstrates a potential for a pedagogical shift towards art education aiming to promote decolonisation, revitalisation, resilience and sustainability in the region.

We see that art education in the Arctic, which has historical connections to colonialism, must now adapt to social, cultural and environmental changes occurring in the region (Jokela & Hiltunen, 2023). The relation between Arctic sustainability research and the emerging *New Genre Arctic Art* activities highlights the

necessity for art education that resonates with northern contexts. Educational systems should focus on raising awareness of challenging stereotypes and re-evaluating the roles of art education today. The importance of tangible, material experiences of Arctic children (Rautio & Stenvall, 2018) and the significance of land-based pedagogy in Indigenous cultures are vital educational factors (Wildcat et al., 2014).

Researchers, artists and educators of ASAD and Children of the Arctic networks have recently defined the AAE initiative (Jokela & Hiltunen, 2024; Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2022). AAE aims to foster sustainable art education, particularly for youth, and is supported by various funding sources. This initiative is based on long-term development of art-based environmental education at the University of Lapland (UoL), highlighting place-based learning and situational learning methodologies inspired by participatory approaches of new genre public art. We realised that in the face of rapid Arctic changes, AAE can serve as a leverage point for the sustainability transformation proposed by Meadows (2008).

New Genre Arctic Art as Intra-action of Contemporary Art and Traditional Skills

The Arctic has attracted international contemporary artists from outside the region to explore the evolving dynamics of art, media and aesthetics in its unique environments (Bloom, 2022; Marsching & Polli, 2012). In the

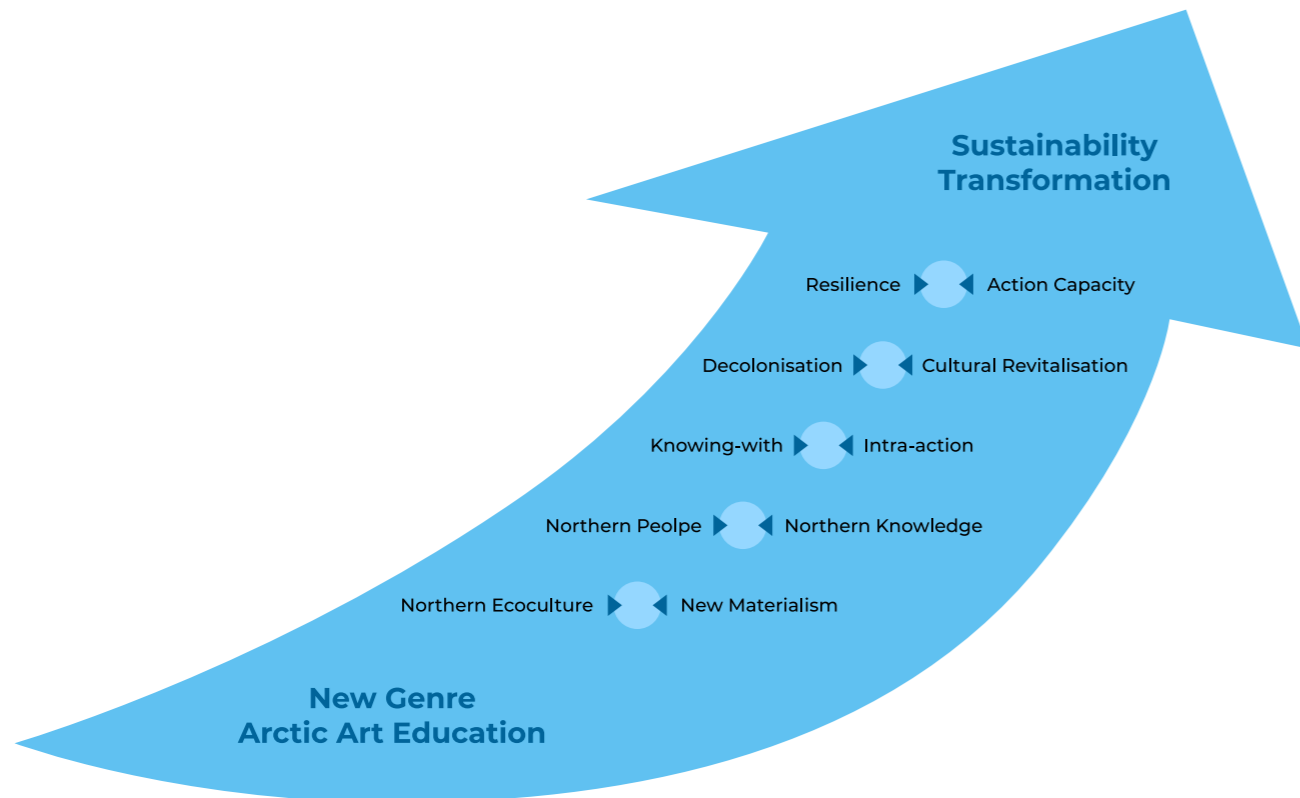


Figure 2. Steps of New Genre Arctic Art Education Towards Sustainable Transformation. Graphic design: Rosa Kansala, 2024.

context of AAE, we find that it is essential to emphasise the agency of artists and communities living in the North. In the frame of the New Genre Arctic Art, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists increasingly utilise modern technologies – videos, photographs, installations, performances to transform traditions – employing creative skills to address questions related to the environment and society. These contemporary artworks could serve as inspiring examples for art education.

Notably, in art and design education, the New Genre Arctic Art often merges art, design and crafts, rejecting the dualistic and segregating tradition of Western art and education. Artists combine beauty and practicality, sustaining

and transforming local ecocultures through their contemporary artworks (figure 1.) (Jokela et al., 2021). This approach emphasises the material culture and craftsmanship of the Arctic region in the spirit of posthumanism and new materialism (Härkönen et al., 2018). When discussing sustainability, tensions also arise, such as in discussions about the use of traditional animal-based materials, for example, seal skin in art and design (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020b).

New Materialism and Fertile Mesh of Northern Ecoculture

Ecoculture is a central concept in the effort to understand AAE’s essence. It allows the exami-



Figure 3. Intra-action of northern material culture, seasons and artistic work outdoors. Photos: Timo Jokela, 2001-2008. Photocollage: Kuutti Terävä, 2024.

nation of art education from a posthumanistic and new materialistic perspective, focusing on the coexistence of humans and non-human entities, including soil, water, plants and animals. Morton (2010) uses the metaphor of a “mesh” to describe the invisible interconnectedness of

human beings and nature, which extends from bacteria in the human body to carbon atoms in space. In the Arctic region, the intertwining of material culture with nature is particularly strong, highlighting the importance of recognising ecoculture (Ingold & Kurttila, 2000;

Valkonen & Valkonen, 2018). In AAE, ecoculture is viewed as a state of “baradian” intra-action (Barad, 2011) rather than an integration of separate ecological and cultural entities. There are no separate ecological and cultural aspects, but they shape and define each other in the space of Arctic co-existence, where AAE is created, often using local materials in the spirit of new materialism.

Traditional Arctic arts, such as Indigenous art and craft, are linked to materials from local ecosystems transmitting ecocultural heritage and knowledge from one generation to the next. However, climate change and resource exploitation have disrupted Arctic ecosystems, with impacts on livelihoods and social dynamics (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2011). AAE seeks to address these tensions by applying a posthumanist approach to understanding current northern ecocultures.

Ecocultural intra-action also serves as the foundation for Arctic sustainability transformation, having been studied in various art-based research projects related to snow, forests, natural materials and coastlines (figure 3.) (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2022b). The ASAD network’s Living in the Landscape summer schools have developed art-based research methods that connect ecoculture with sustainability, mainly social and cultural (Jokela & Härkönen, 2021). These art activities demonstrate how art-based research can act as a driving force for change, promoting Arctic sustainability in line with sustainability transformation (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2024).

People of the North and the Arctic

Discussions around sustainability in today’s posthumanist framework often highlight Indigenous cultures for their harmonious relationship with nature (Vadén, 2016). Nonetheless, the

Arctic should not be perceived as a uniform region although it is frequently associated with genuine Indigenous heritage. Stephen (2018) points out the challenges in defining who qualifies as Indigenous, a crucial aspect of the region’s ethnic identity. Alongside Indigenous groups, the Arctic is home to various other minority cultures that possess rich traditions. Chartier (2018) notes the Arctic’s multicultural and multilingual landscape, where the lifestyles of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples intersect. These dynamics have shaped sensitised and ethical approaches and theories in community-based art education (Hiltunen, 2010, 2023; Hiltunen et al., 2021).

In cultural discourse, Indigenous cultures often appear in dualistic terms. Stephen (2018) observes that Arctic Indigenous communities are perceived both as vulnerable to social change and as active agents in governance, legislation, research and the arts. Jokela (2024) advocates for an intersectional perspective to better understand the identities of Arctic inhabitants, acknowledging how they view their own identities. All kinds of framing can marginalise northern communities, which outsiders may mistakenly regard as isolated, despite their robust self-governance and cultural pride.

Rather than emphasising social, cultural or ethnic divides, AAE promotes for a contemporary art education that embraces all northern cultures. Various projects within the ASAD network have sought to enhance cultural sustainability while considering the intersectionality of the identities of the region’s inhabitants (Härkönen, 2021; Hiltunen, 2009, 2023; Hiltunen & Huhmarniemi, 2024). These initiatives have utilised a variety of media and

methods, including films, snow installations, self-portraits and Arctic design (Berliner & Enghoff, 2019; Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2022; Usenyuk-Kravchuk et al., 2020). AAE underscores the significance of intra-action of contemporary art with traditional Indigenous and other northern identities and ecocultural practices (Figure 4.).

Northern Knowledge: Knowing-with the North

Terms such as traditional, local and Indigenous knowledge are commonly used in studies related to northern ecocultures (Helander-Renvall & Markkula, 2017; Valkonen & Valkonen, 2018). Kuokkanen (2000, 2007) defines Indigenous knowledge as constituting the skills and practices transmitted through culture, emphasising the relationship between humans and nature. However, AAE adopts the broader term *northern knowledge*, which includes the ecocultures of all Arctic inhabitants, encompassing their traditions, social systems and resource management (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020a, 2020b). Northern knowledge comprises both material and spiritual aspects of culture and is fundamental to AAE. While northern ecocultural knowledge does not inherently ensure sustainability, it lays the groundwork for learning aimed at sustainability transformation. Posthumanist viewpoints, which focus on knowledge arising from intra-action between humans and non-human entities, challenge conventional notions of individualism and rationality (Ulmer, 2017). In AAE, knowing-with emphasises learning in relation to and intra-action with ecoculture, rather than merely about it. We clarify the intra-action of art education and northern ecoculture through two examples.

Figure 4. Sámi and Finnish children rejoice over their large snow installation in the schoolyard. The Great Bear snow sculpture, representing the constellation Ursa Major, is well-known in the northern night sky. The interactive installation reflects to the constellation and local ecocultural tradition and is a wonderful example of celebrating the connection between cultures and nature across generations. The piece is part of a week-long event in Utsjoki celebrating local reindeer herder Andaras Kittí (1844–1926), who was an astronomer specializing in the fishing culture, oral traditions of the Teno River, and stargazing. Photos: Mirja Hiltunen, 2024.



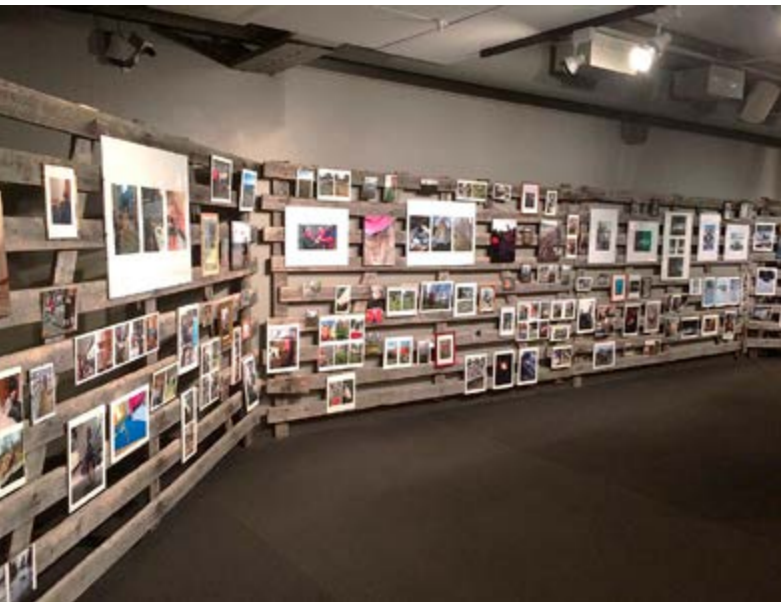


Figure 5. The installation *The Fence* along with the about 300 framed photos of Hilikka and Oula Sara's family in Sami Museum Siida Boazoeallin exhibition. Photo: Korinna Korsström-Magga, 2017. Right: Feeding reindeer. Photograph: Henrik Magga, 2017.

Korsström-Magga (2023) applied an art-based action research strategy using the photovoice method to highlight reindeer herders' daily lives and their connection to the local ecoculture. Five Sámi reindeer herder families took photographs of their everyday life over a year. Their lifestyle was characterized by sharing knowledge with the reindeer. The outcome was the *Boazoeallin (Reindeer Life)* exhibition at the Siida Sámi Museum in 2017, with photos and installation depicting key aspects of the families' daily tasks (Figure 5). The art education activities empowered the families, leading them to later create a book on contemporary reindeer herding (Korsström-Magga, 2023).

Soppela's (2022) art-based research *Call of the Summer Barn – Art-based and Posthumanistic Perspectives on the Co-existence of Cows and Humans* was inspired by her research on the conservation efforts for the endangered Lapland cow. She created a public exhibition at the local heritage museum (Figure 6.). The

exhibition highlighted the connection between the Lapland cow, humans, and the Northern ecoculture, emphasizing the importance of a delicate mutual balance. Soppela (2022) saw that art education can build new ontologies and epistemologies of knowing with animals and can awaken people to phenomena that deviate from the mainstream, carrying the potential for change towards ecocultural sustainability.

Decolonisation, Revitalisation and Resilience towards Sustainability Transformation

Many art educators within the ASAD network have already explored how art can address social, political and environmental concerns, linking these themes to the art of diverse communities and raising questions about the integration of art education and decolonisation (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2022b). Research on Indigenous education,

including Sámi pedagogy, is vital for decolonisation, tackling the effects of colonialism on culture and language (Keskitalo, 2010). Decolonisation is particularly significant for Indigenous communities, including those in Alaska, Nunavut, Greenland and the Northern Sámi-Finnish regions. AAE advocates for the self-determination of Indigenous peoples, empowering northern communities to define their own art forms and traditions while resisting globalisation's threats to cultural

diversity. The ASAD network has engaged in reflection on how art education and artist training can respect the cultural backgrounds of Indigenous students (Beer, 2023; Leddy, 2023). Decolonisation in art education is critical for refreshing curricula, especially in the northern territories. While promoting cultural sustainability and understanding, AAE must not only consider the decolonisation process but also note that Indigenous, non-Indigenous and mixed communities in the North exhibit



Figure 6. Above: An overview of the exhibition, with the installation *The Passage of Time* hanging from the ceiling in the middle of the barn and photographs hanging in a separate stall. Photos: Päivi Soppela, 2022. Left: An unknown woman with her Lapland Cow, Photo: Matti Körkkö, (year unknown), Lapland Provincial Museum's collection. Right: Present-day farmer Rami Hiltunen and his Lapland Cow, Kummi. Photo: Päivi Soppela, 2020.

a variety of intersecting colonised identities. In AAE, decolonisation is understood in a broader way than the Indigenous mission only (Figure 7, 8).

AAE supports activism and resilience, equipping communities with the knowledge and skills to navigate social and environmental shifts while maintaining their traditions. At the heart of AAE's mission is ecocultural revitalisation, which enhances resilience by fostering the cultural strengths of the

North. Expanding revitalisation efforts to include multi-ethnic and non-Indigenous populations is vital, and AAE influences social sectors, creative industries and responsible tourism (Burnett, 2017; Kravtsov et al., 2022). AAE could strengthen cultural identities in many ways, providing hope for Arctic youth and facilitating the transformation towards the region's resilience (Priebe et al., 2023). In AAE, resilience is not understood as a passive phenomenon or mere adaptation to changes; rather, it is associated with supporting action

Figure 7. Timo Jokela's art project *Ounas – Our Free River* realised a community-based environmental artwork in the spirit of AAE. The residents along the Ounas river participated in many ways in the creation of the artwork using their skills. Photos above: Aki Lintumäk, below: Timo Jokela, 2024.



Figure 8. The artwork erected with the villagers is a tribute to the river. The visual elements, old photos inside the 'memory box', and stories told around artwork refers to many meaningful aspects of the local ecoculture and traditions. The implementation of the project together with the residents and the river can also be seen as a revitalization that enhances resilience, the ability to act in situations of change. The piece is a statement in support of preserving the river's cleanliness in the face of threats from mining activities. Photos above: Mirja Hiltunen, below: Timo Jokela, 2024.

competence and self-direction of individuals and communities.

Intra-action as Pedagogical Framework for AAE

In this short chapter, we have described and conceptualised the steps involved in developing AAE based on our research review and previous experiences. One important aspect, the driving pedagogy of AAE, still requires attention. Earlier, we mentioned situational learning and place-based learning as key guiding principles tested in the UoL community art-based environmental education activities (Huhmarniemi et al. 2021). During AAE activities, as well as in this chapter, we have adopted and used the concept of intra-action. How do these three concepts intertwine?

Intra-action is a concept developed by Barad (2011) in her theory of agential realism (Barad, 2007, 2011). It differs from traditional ideas of interaction (or integration of entities, such as academic or school disciplines) because it emphasises that entities (humans or non-humans, nature or culture, teacher or student) are not pre-existing and independent but emerge through their relations and entanglements. Intra-action reveals how relationships jointly construct the subjects and objects involved, meaning that individuals and the environment shape each other in a continuous process. This is precisely what is at stake in northern ecoculture, particularly in learning within it.

When we apply intra-action to situational and place-based pedagogy while working in northern contexts – in places, communities,

schools and the social sector – it provides a more nuanced understanding of how learning occurs in specific contexts and situations. Therefore, AAE pedagogy must recognise that learning is deeply embedded in the temporal specificities of situations and is shaped not only by people but also by the immediate environment and the materials used. Intra-action from the perspective of situational pedagogy occurs when learners, teachers and the environment co-construct and apply knowledge in real time. The *learning situation* in AAE intra-action is not just a background for the *lesson* but an active agent co-forming learning outcomes. This aspect is particularly evident in art education, where the outcomes of learning are not just increased knowledge, skills or abilities but, more importantly the ability to question and create meanings and symbols for oneself and one's community.

AAE's place-based pedagogy emphasises learning that is connected to the local environment, culture and history. Often, it involves using the geographical location as the foundation for teaching. Intra-action in place-based pedagogy means that the learners become part of the place; in turn, the place is shaped by the learners. The learners' understanding of the place evolves as they engage with its physical, social and cultural dimensions, and the place is simultaneously transformed by the learners' actions, reflections and interactions. This mutual influence between students and the environment, that is, the intra-action, creates a unique learning experience where both the place and the learner develop together.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have outlined our understanding of the fundamental elements and concepts of AAE and their interrelationships and intra-actions. We have underscored the entanglement of Northern and Arctic nature and cultures, referred to as ecoculture. This is not described as a harmony but as a moment to scrutinise ecocultures, particularly in light of the impacts of significant environmental changes, and to comprehend the effects of these changes on the region's social and cultural situations.

New materialism serves as an underlying framework, guiding the methodologies of art education by questioning traditional Western separations between art, design, craftsmanship and media. The concept of “knowing-with” in posthumanism emphasises the agency of ecoculture and the necessity of moving beyond anthropocentric limits, acknowledging our relationships with other species as foundational to our existence.

In many ways, AAE critiques Western knowledge, connecting art education to the sustainability objectives in the Arctic. Therefore, key concepts from Indigenous studies, art and education – including decolonisation, revitalisation and resilience – are woven into AAE practices, highlighting the contributions of northern knowledge to ecocultural sustainability. Through collaborative efforts in the Arctic, AAE tackles global challenges, linking local ecocultures with posthumanist intra-actions that encompass connections with animals, plants, water and the land itself. ●

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A Closer Look – the Subtle Discovered through Altered Vantage Points

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In open spaces of the Siunissaq psychosocial and community-art activities with young participants in Greenland, we learn from the direct encounter with people, the environment, and the materials. We engage in a joint art and community education, making it a New Genre Art Education as it entails community art and psychosocial activities in an eco-social and ecocultural perspective of sustainability. It is a collective endeavour aiming at decolonizing as it values self-determination and knowledge build through local epistemologies and ontologies. It is also co-creating our identities (agency, subjectivity, and even positioning) in a framework of human dignity, freedom, and equality. We see a need to unfold our full

potential as creative human beings in our Anthropocene time, to secure and strengthen eco-political stewardship (Gross, 2020).

It has been said that the people of Greenland are the most important raw material for building the nation (Udvalget, 2014). In art, people are often the motif, serving as the material for the creation of an artwork. However, the concept of material is far broader, including materials such as wood, clay, canvas, colours, and other resources used in the craft of art. Today, in both global and local ecocultural understandings, people and the environment are not seen as separate but are intertwined, weaved together and folded into each other.

The aim of Siunissaq art-and-community education is to give space for young people in local communities to engage in creating sustainability in the local community. The young people participate in co-creations of aesthetic expressions, curate exhibitions, and organize community-art events.

The overall goal is to open spaces, where we, through collaborative action, have freedom to develop our full human potential as creative beings, able to originate a social and eco-cultural environment of caring for each other and for our planet. Participatory community art encompasses humans, non-humans, materials, and the shared presence and future. It is co-creative aesthetic expressions.

The education covers how art can contribute to building a sustainable present and future, i.e., an environmentally responsible and socially supportive community; and such a community opens spaces for creativity. It is a double loop of creativity. A core principle of creativity is to look beyond the immediate, the instantaneous, and to apply a close-up look at our environment, ourselves, others, and materials.

We use a closer look, which may include a close-up in photography or other techniques. A closer look is to examine the subject more carefully, in greater detail, and proximity. It includes intimacy, emotional closeness, and bonds or connection. The song A Closer Walk with Thee has given solace to many people in hard times as it conveys hope and comfort. It is a spiritual song about being in close connection and in movement, walking. The song evolved as community art.

In this essay, we will reflect upon the closer look in the art-and-community education, and in two visual essays, we will give examples of psychosocial activities and of aesthetic expression.

A Closer Look

There is a famous book for children by the Swedish author, Astrid Lindgren. It shows a *nisse*, a *tomta*, (which may translate to goblin or gnome), who walks around on a small, lonely farm in Sweden during a cold winter's night. He, the *tomten* walks there as a little household deity, a deep thinker of the present, the coming of spring, and the passing of the years in the eternal turn of times. The *tomten* may be the spirit of the first farmer who cleared the land and build the farm there. The Swedish word *tomt* signifies a homestead. The word *nisse* may mean "dear little relative" in Old Norse, or it may just be a nickname for Niels.

The *tomten* is small, a little, old figure in the night where the snow is white, and the moon provides a dim and calming light. Astrid Lindgren depicts how the little, old *tomten* cares for the small things at the farmstead, for the wellbeing and even the dreams of the animals, and of the people, who are fast asleep in their beds. He walks silently from building to building and leaves small footprints that only the children will notice in the snow the next morning. He talks with the animals in a still and hushed little language that the animals, but not the humans, understand.

The book builds on a poem by Viktor Rydberg, who offers a closer look at the considerations of the *tomten* as he walks his quiet round in the winter night. *Tomten* thinks of the unpaus-

ing stream of time, the years, the flow of life, generation following generation. The poem makes us understand the quiet and gentle language of the *tomten* and sense his caring presence in the silent night while the moon shines on the snowdrifts.

The novel *The God of Small Things* (Roy, 1997), is a narrative of how subtle moments and details can have profound impacts on our life. Small things are occurrences, which may seem small and unimportant, but turns out to be of major significance in the grand course of a life. Both the *Tomten* and *The Good of Small Things* address the trivial and subtle, yet significant, details and offer a closer look at them.

In Siunissaq, we take a closer look on the subtle yet potentially pivotal in our social, cultural, and environmental context to open space for creative expressions. To take a closer look becomes a meticulous quest to see, to touch, and to be touched by the world, we live in with its materials, localities, and people.

Into a World of Wonder

In accordance with our concept of the double loop of creativity, a closer look includes both seeing and being seen as it creates a closer look at things and a closer look at your identity, i.e., the position, we are looking from. When we go closer, we go beyond the superficial and start to discover previously unseen aspect of the other and of ourselves.

In the book *Bitácora* (logbook), the artist Jan Hendrix (2000) captures the Irish landscape through close-up photographs. His combination of travel notes, photos, and reflections show the beauty of, often overlooked, minu-

tiae details of the environment. Applying a new lens makes the ordinary extraordinary and converts it into a fount of wonder and creativity. His approach allows viewers to see the landscape in a new way, focusing on the details, the materials, and the very small things as they become visible through his camera lenses. It offers an arsenal of new visions and connections to the material, and thus to oneself as an engaged viewer.

There is a famous saying by the renowned war photographer Robert Capa, “*If your pictures aren’t good enough, you aren’t close enough.*” (Messums London, 2021). John Szarkowski (1966) argues that details in a photograph can highlight textures, patterns, and nuances that might otherwise go unnoticed. It is a way of transforming the ordinary into a wondrous world of beauty, textures, and patterns.

In Siunissaq, we follow a similar pathway of delving into the subtle things, the material of our environment, and our connections to each other. It is a quest and a discovery as it opens for the power of details to convey deeper meanings and evoke emotional responses. The before-unseen grows and opens a grand world of knowledge and intuitive insights. Metaphorically, we may call it an expanding universe that reveals itself as we travel into it. We see patterns, maybe even fractals, within the trivial material, akin to entering a world of marvel, like in a dream, or like sleepwalking and then waking up in a landscape full of previously unnoticed wonders.

The closer look is creative and challenges superficial and often automatically replications of thought and emotions. We connect to our material and social environment directly, with-

out immediately submitting to discursively imposed images of ourselves and the world. The closer look, beyond the immediate, removes the obstacles to seeing this world and discovers the poetry in the materials and relationships, in our seeing, and in our embeddedness in the material world and in our relations. It is like seeing the materials and relations around us for the first time, with astonishment. It is finding a light of wonder again, through joining psychosocial activities, where we start to really notice each other, and the aesthetic expressions of connectivity.

The Beauty of a Stone

Taking a closer look allows us to move beyond dominant narratives about people and the environment. Without this closer examination, we tend to view ourselves through these prevailing stories, which then become ingrained in our language, self-perception, and reality. However, when we observe with curiosity, we start to develop new insights, which we refer to as ‘post ideas.’ By ‘post,’ we mean transcending the traditional, abstract, generalized, and often restrictive ways of categorizing people and materials found in colonizing discourses.

The process of going beyond automatized and generalized ideas is fuelled by astonishment. It may be daring to go into the unknown without holding on to already formed ideas. But when you dare, then you see the stone instead of seeing the idea of a stone. You see the *Inua*, the heart or spirit, of the stone. In the Inuit ontology, the *Inua* means soul or spirit in everything, in human beings, in animals, plants, and stones, and thus connects everything that exists (Sonne, 2017). In 1920, William Thalbitzer (2016, 20) wrote that the Inuit said that “*there*

is a soul behind stone and water and no soul can die.” In new materialism terms, we will say, that the spirit of the stone, is the stone.

In Siunissaq workshops, the artists Tina Enghoff and Soeren Zeuth invite the participants to go closer and closer to snow, ice, the sounds of dripping meltwater, and footsteps in the melting snow. They encourage a closer look at a stone, into the stone, to see the world within the stone, the patterns, colours, and grains of sand, and still further, to engage in the discovery of the universe anew.

In psychosocial activities, in a comparable way, we invite the participants to notice details as expressions of life: a smile, a young adolescent suddenly climbing out the window, and a sad expression on a young girl’s face amidst the vivacious turmoil of the session. We go closer to these expressions that otherwise would be gone forever. We see them, we connect to them, and they stop being “small things”; they become significant as patterns of connections, as the grains of sand in human togetherness. From the micro world of relationships, they grow into a narrative and practice of connectivity, in a context, in a movement. The small things become grand as an art of living.

A principle of Siunissaq is that we do not impose on people; rather, we allow participants to be who they want to be. We don’t enforce theories or methods on people but connect by responding to the outspoken and to the slightest or most ephemeral expressions. We don’t go there to tell an already told story; we go there to come closer to the material and the togetherness with all its details, and its subtle, but significant movements.

Appreciating the details changes our perception of the space of the workshop session. It reveals a world of significant movements and expressions of life, providing a picture with far more nuances—an existence beyond the immediate impression of the “group.” Consequently, this picture displays a myriad of important interplays, connections, and negotiations through performances and speech acts that collectively shape and transform our social life.

The Quest

To go into the small things through a closer look is like a quest, as mentioned above. In the psychosocial activities, the quest is to build togetherness through recognizing the small, yet essential, expressions of connecting to each other with our full human potential. It is a search, an adventure, an expedition into the fractals of social support and shared action within our context, our landscape, and our environment.

At times, our prefixed ideas of a stone, a person, ourselves, our culture, and our environment make us blind. When we look closer, we start to see again, with fresh eyes. It is a journey into an open land and the journey sets us free from prefixed roles as an artist, researcher, or psychologist. Our role, position, and agency change with the closer look, as we become aware that we are part of the system and that we can have a closer look at our identity as we can have at a stone. By getting closer to people, or to the melting snow, or the inner world of a stone, we become attentive and let the discoveries happen to us, like an inspiration. We become deeply involved with the discoveries. Thus, the quest transforms both you and the world simultaneously. It is a “worlding” in the sense that the world forms

you, when you allow it to enter you, become you, and shape your identity. Journeying the quest makes us listen, see, and reflect with openness. We change as we journey on.

The closer we move to a person, a photograph, a stone, or a landscape, the more it widens. It starts to guide you. It feels surreal, as you touch the formerly unknown aspects of a stone, a person, or a snowflake. You enter another order of things.

When you take a closer look, you can never return to your previous views. There is a change within you, and you will never see stones as just stones again. The same happens when we love; we break the prefixed ideas about the other, open ourselves to the details, go beyond generalizations, and see the uniqueness and wonder in the other person. We meet the other with appreciation, caring, and human dignity. The closer look helps us to see the wondrous in the other person, in the group, in the community as a living system, and in the environment – and at times, even in our own contributions.

In the workshops as human encounters, we go beyond seeing people as participants, students, or co-workers in creativity. The closer we look, the more we see human beings – alive and present. The heart of Siunissaq as a psychosocial and community art project is to go beyond the immediate and the trivial and through a closer look to enter the wondrous aspects of people, materials, and the environment.

Nietzsche said that if you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you. Similarly, if you gaze long enough at the small, significant, and wondrous patterns of a stone, a person,

a relationship, and a community, the wonder will become part of you. If you focus on the “small” moments of connection between us as human beings and between us and our environment, humanity will become part of you, of us. ●

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Craft as Resilience in a Changing World

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In this article, we explore how creative expressions within the course *Sloyd, Design, and Sustainable Development* at Umeå University can function as a form of eco-cultural resilience. Eco-cultural resilience describes a society's or culture's ability to maintain its traditions and ecological methods despite environmental and social changes, often through sustainable and locally adapted solutions (Barthel et al., 2013). Craft is practiced globally but is also deeply local, as social, cultural, economic, and ecological contexts shape and define each community and its individuals through craft (Black & Burisch, 2020).

In this part-time, distance-based course, we aim to create opportunities for students to engage, resist, or use activism to explore issues related to climate change and social justice. We want students to recognize how craft can shift positions and boundaries, influence politics and engage society. By integrating Fry's vision of "Design Futuring", we demonstrate how craft can be a driving force for creating sustainable futures in a rapidly changing world (Fry, 2009). Craft and design not only describe how things are but also show how they ought to be.

We highlight two examples of how students use craft or design as tools for activism and social change.

Project: The Butterfly Effect

The Butterfly Effect is a craft-based project by Sophia Fredriksson that raises awareness about the threat to native butterflies, particularly the critically endangered butterfly *Reverdin's blue*. The project consists of embroidered butterfly brooches sent to well-known Swedish politicians, accompanied by a plea to prioritize biodiversity in politics. Additionally, a pattern is offered to spread the message further, including information about the plight of butterflies and a call to action.

The project *The Butterfly Effect* exemplifies how craft can serve as a tool for resistance and activism by raising awareness and mobilizing action to protect endangered species. By using a traditional technique in an innovative way, the project challenges norms and conventions around what craft can be and achieve. It illustrates how art and craft can be central in driving eco-social change.



Figure 1. *The Butterfly Effect*. Reverdin's blue butterfly (*Plebejus argyrognomon*) in stump-work embroidery. Photo: Sophia Fredriksson, 2024.



Figure 2. *The Butterfly Effect*. Pattern and embroidery kit to create your own Reverdin's blue butterfly using stump-work technique. Photo: Sophia Fredriksson, 2024.

By sending these artefacts to politicians with a plea, the project fosters a direct dialogue with decision-makers, challenging them to act in defence of biodiversity. The brooches serve as physical manifestations of activism. They are not merely decorative objects but carriers of an important message, a medium to communicate and reinforce the project's purpose, which is to make the recipients reflect on and act in line with sustainability demands.

Project: Dear Plastic

In the project *Dear Plastic*, Ami Olin Nordenmarker explores the role of plastic in our society from a sustainability perspective that connects both local and global issues. Based in Öland, Sweden, Olin Nordenmarker uses collected plastic waste to create a

christening gown—inspired by a traditional garment from the 1800s. The project has a strong connection to the UN's Global Goal 12 for sustainable consumption and production and aims to change our perception of plastic, from a disposable material to something more valuable and lasting. By recycling plastic and refining it through careful craftsmanship, Olin Nordenmarker seeks to elevate the material's status and evoke a deeper reflection on our consumption habits.

While highlighting plastic's long-lasting nature and its negative effects on both the environment and wildlife, *Dear Plastic* also showcases the potential of treating plastic with respect, seeing it as a resource. By combining local cultural heritage with a modern sustainability discourse, the project demonstrates how small



Figures 3–4. Child in christening gown made of plastic waste and a close-up of embroidery of endangered local flowers. Photos by Ami Olin Nordenmarker, 2021.

actions, such as collecting and reusing plastic, can contribute to broader social and ecological changes. The project reminds us that generations born into a world filled with plastic waste deserve a better future, and it calls for action through sustainable and respectful choices.

Discussion

By opening up for critical perspectives within an educational context, students are encouraged to focus on and reflect on the impact their artefact has on the environment and surrounding society. They also have the opportunity to test what they have created in a societal context. This, we believe, broadens the view of how small actions can spark large movements. Von Busch (2022) describes how we can reorganize the physical world, thereby breaking power positions and creating more sustainable systems.

The initiative *The Butterfly Effect* uses handmade butterfly brooches to raise awareness about biodiversity and call for political action. Similarly, the project *Dear Plastic* shows how traditional craft can be a powerful tool for activism. By transforming recycled plastic waste into valuable objects, *Dear Plastic* highlights our relationship with plastic and consumption, emphasizing plastic's potential to gain new life through mindful reuse. The butterfly brooches carry a symbolic message about the importance of biodiversity, while *Dear Plastic* demonstrates how plastic can become a resource rather than waste, if we approach the material with mindfulness and responsibility.

Both projects combine traditional craft techniques with modern sustainability goals and illustrate how small, handmade objects can play a significant role in shaping the public discourse on environmental issues. Through

direct actions—such as sending embroidered brooches to politicians or raising awareness about plastic's potential both locally and globally—these projects show how craft can function as a force for both social and ecological change. They inspire reflection and call for action, underscoring the role of craft as a medium for influencing our views on sustainability.

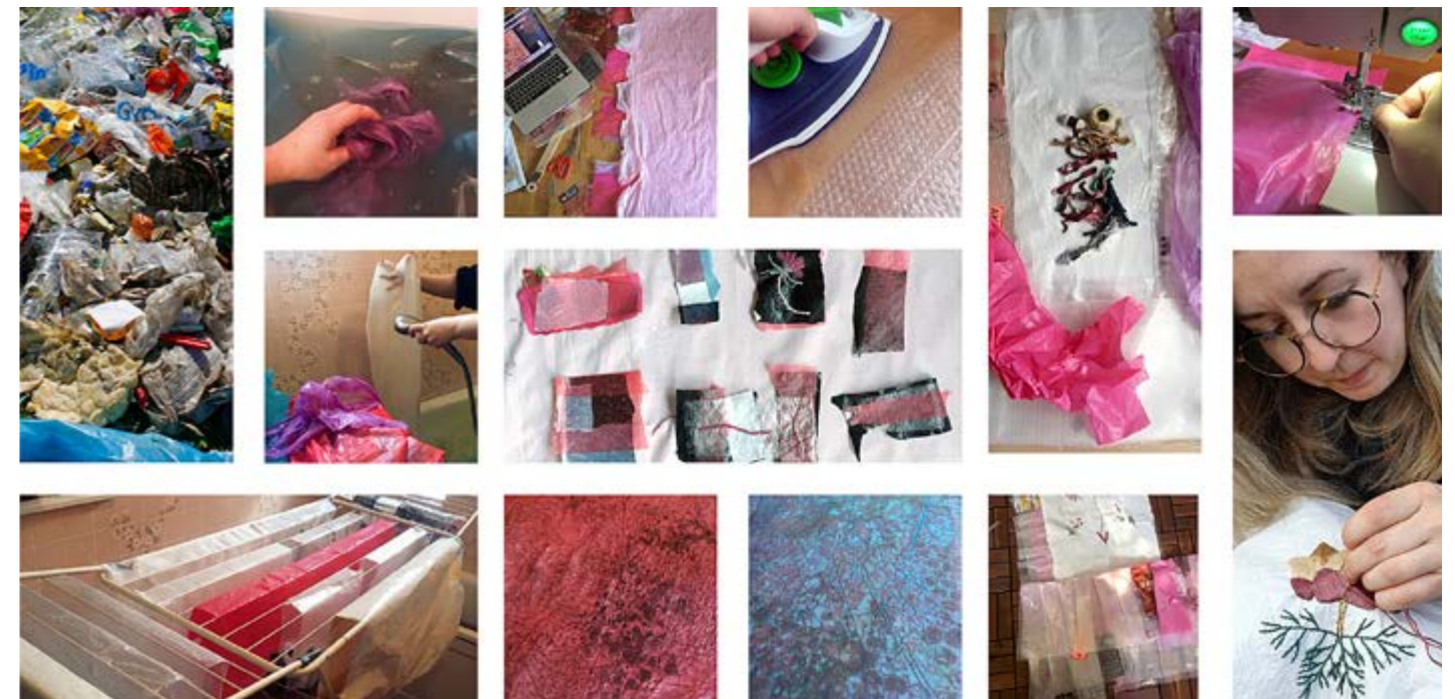
At Umeå University, craft is taught not only as a technical skill but also as a dynamic practice that combines the preservation of traditional techniques with innovation to meet contemporary sustainability goals. Through the two examples in this article, we want to show how artefacts not only highlight problems but also create tangible impact. We find that students develop an expanded view of their own ability

to influence, persuade, create debate around, or contribute to an alternative future for both local communities and the world at large through these types of projects. This reflects how craft education at Umeå University, through critical thinking and practice, provides students with the tools not only to shape their own reality but also to change it. ●

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Figure 5. Part of the process, material experimentation and embroidery. Photos: Ami Olin Nordenmarker, 2021.





◀ **Figure 1.** The sheep, the wool and hand spinning of yarn. Photo: Mette Gårdvik, 2023.

Art-science Integrated Sustainability Education in the Arctic Region

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Climate change, industrialisation and the extraction of natural resources change the social and cultural life in Arctic communities. The urgency of radical social transformation to sustainability underscores the necessity of alternative approaches which communities can learn about, relate to, and collaboratively act for sustainability in a local context (Trott et al., 2020). This requires the agency of education to address ecological, social, and cultural challenges in the North and the Arctic. Art has shown to be a way of expressing feelings and understandings of the changes and a way of building socially and culturally sustainable communities, both in

Indigenous and multi-cultural communities. It may also link and bridge various groups and segments to secure freedom of expression, democratic participation, and access to art and culture for all people living in the Arctic (Jokela et al., 2021).

In this article, we want to share experiences from two AAE workshops to reflect how art-science integrated sustainability education can engage participants in transformative learning processes contextualized in real-world problems supporting social justice and well-being for young people in local communities in the Arctic.

Theoretical grounding

Despite an increased focus on the importance of place-based, emotionally engaging and interdisciplinary teaching in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (Ojala, 2017; Stoll et al., 2022), the interconnection between cultural and ecological aspects is barely emphasized. Much of prevailing sustainability education is perspective rather than participatory. The learners are more often taught 'what is' than invited to imagine 'what if'. New methods are needed that allow community members to critically engage with the present, imagine a better future and act for sustainability today, using the transformative potential of the arts for social change (Trott et al., 2020).

The concept of ecocultural sustainability focuses on the connection of the local communities to the place (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2021) and can motivate students to engage in sustainability issues in their local environment. ESD projects related to local ecosystems, cultural identity and cultural heritage require different forms of knowledge, especially from Science and Arts and Crafts (Stoll et al., 2022). Science and Arts and Crafts are often considered opposites despite both subjects being used to work practically, and exploratively and relate to both nature and the empirical. Knowledge of science is fact-based and keen 'to know'. It is at once inductive, abstract, and intersubjective.

Admittedly, basic science knowledge plays a key role in environmental education, but when the task is to facilitate students connecting with the world, more than this type of knowledge is needed. What we need is an education that meets the world, that facilitates rich, aesthetic experiences, and that enables and develops the diverse relationships we have with the

world. To achieve this goal, both the natural sciences and the arts in the school, however different they may be, must move in the same direction (Østergaard, 2013).

The Arts and Crafts subject is based on developing knowledge of 'know-how', it is specific, subjective-intuitive, bodily-sensitive and connected to feelings. Art education allows us to speculate ways and means for relating, knowing, and doing differently in the long now (Trott et al., 2020). The opportunities afforded to learn through art opens for speculating about what if and what might and explores ways of de-colonising Euro-centric positions within the construction of knowledges. Social Art Practice and Community Art are about empowering and liberating individuals and communities to achieve personal, social, cultural, or political change. The purpose is to arouse emotions create awareness and commitment in individuals and stimulate dialogue between people to change their behaviour to increase quality of life (Permar, 2019; Hiltunen, 2008; Austin, 2008).

This is directly linked to the concept of the 'cultural dimension of sustainability', which is about increased social interaction and a sense of belonging within the local community, through collaboration (Illeris, 2017; Jónsdóttir, 2017). Mantere (1995) defined art-based environmental education as a form of learning, to develop understanding and responsibility for the environment, where the relationship between the individual and their environment is central. Her research shows that sensitivity to the environment can be developed through artistic activities. Innovative people with the ability to work interdisciplinary prove to be adaptable and creative problem solvers. Students



Figures 2-3. Participants explore marine organisms through a scientific and artistic approach where the in-depth learning occurs in the movement between the subjects. Photos: Mette Gårdvik, 2018.

must get the opportunity to practice these skills through education (Coutts, 2013; Eisner, 2002). Community and eco-art are creative learning arenas that generate new insight into their environment and provide knowledge and experience about local materials and culture (Gårdvik, 2011; van Boeckel, 2014).

Experiences from the AAE workshops

In the art-science integrated workshop *Sámi starry sky*, we invited participants to engage in the Sámi mythology. A story about a cosmic hunt set in the starry sky is conveyed in authentic settings. Unlike the known Greek mythology, the Sámi story is closely rooted in our northern way of living. The activity seems to engage pupils,

students, and teachers, especially in the outdoor activities when participants are challenged to project the hunting scene from a star map onto the ground. A holistic and authentic setting and being outdoors were important for the activity to engage and to be remembered. The participants get the opportunity to reconnect to this part of our common cultural identity through artistic expression. The artistic exploratory methods could contribute to bringing different Arctic populations together, talking about their myths under our common Arctic starry sky.

In the workshop *Sustainable portraits of plankton*, we used art-science integration to facilitate collaborative sustainability action in local settings with the spotlight on plankton.

Planktonic organisms are invisible to us and are therefore abstract. The goal of this community art workshop was to learn about the importance of planktonic organisms in the Arctic Sea, which have a huge importance for human settlements in Arctic coastal communities. We wanted the participants to become familiarized with plankton by studying them in microscopes, then drawing them and creating large examples on the beach using community art.

The participants' creative work showed how learning took place in the movement between the subjects. The working methods promoted transformative learning not only cognitively but with the entire sensory apparatus. Using exploratory and practical aesthetic methods, participants became acquainted with plankton from their regions and developed positive attitudes to the ocean and a better understanding of its eco-cultural importance.

Conclusion

Our experiences from the workshop showed that artistic expression appears as an active contribution to society and gives students insight into the local community's various issues, like colonialization with Western worldview and marine exploitation.

Artistic ways of expression can help to raise issues related to sustainability in the Arctic, both of a cultural and ecological nature. In this way, an artistic expression about these issues reaches a different and wider audience than a scientific inquiry. The expression can have a greater role as a carrier of both scientific knowledge and culture. They are important contributions since they describe the impacts when nature is viewed through cultural and art-based aspects. Sensory situated understanding and knowledge communication through organisms, materials and cultures emerge in artistic expressions. ●

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Hybrid Course for Situational and Dialogical Learning

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Online and hybrid learning have become a permanent part of learning settings in adult and higher education (Hwang, 2018). The terms *hybrid* and *blended* refer to the mixing of two or more different elements. Hybrid teaching refers to courses offering online and on-site participation at the same time or in subsequent parts. Combinations of online and face-to-face learning are also often defined as *blended learning* (e.g., Hrastinski, 2019). While on-site learning can be seen as authentic and situational hands-on learning, online learning in collaboration in communities of expertise may also offer interaction and authentic situations to build knowledge, when social media platforms enable the sharing of views and expertise or even to collaborate in a connecting project (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Niinistö, 2019; Manninen, 2021).

The New Genre Arctic Art education course is piloting a shared hybrid learning course in collaboration with Arctic network universities to promote situational learning in art education with a focus on Arctic areas' ecocultural contexts. The challenges in combining art and craft education with distance, online and web-based

teaching are at least twofold. The materiality of making arts and crafts requires building embodied knowledge and multisensory learning (Anttila, 2015). The AAE course is thus targeted at master-level and PhD students, for whom the emphasis is on applying and developing the skills and knowledge acquired in earlier studies. Learning a specific technique or mastering a material requires hands-on learning and has to be studied in previous courses on-site.

Art in Initiating Dialogues for Learning

It's also important to give students skills for interaction and communication when training future professionals in the field of education. The combination of online collaboration and on-site field week in the course makes it possible to offer situations for dialogical learning. The online collaboration can be focused on introducing, grounding, planning and reflecting on the on-site activities and workshops.

The emphasis on dialogue is also the key to successful online learning (Aarnio & Enqvist,

2004). The Dialogical Authentic Netlearning Activity Model (Aarnio & Enqvist, 2016) was originally developed for online learning but later applied more generally to different learning environments. Dialogical learning is based on the concept of situational learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), where the expertise on the topic is built in a community of participants with different levels of knowledge (Aarnio & Enqvist, 2016). Secondly, the important component is the idea of meaning-making in interaction between the participants (Vygotsky, 1978). The dialogue is at the core of building new understanding and a wider picture of the topic and is based on equal participation (Aarnio & Enqvist, 2016). Contemporary art activities offer arenas for equal participation and expression of views and opinions (Manninen, 2021; Heikkilä, 2019; Hiltunen, 2009). Making one's artwork is a motivating activity and creates personal connections to the topic. Sharing and looking at other artworks opens the multitude of meanings and multifaceted nature of the

phenomenon to the participants (Manninen, 2021). Dialogical learning acquires a shared and authentic setting for learning. It connects theory and practice and encourages dialogue by giving up on a teacher-centred approach and control to enhance interaction and participation (Aarnio & Enqvist, 2016; Manninen, 2021).

Developing a Shared Course for UArctic

Arctic areas are known for their long distances and small communities, with each community working to overcome the challenges of weather, nature and travel to collaborate and share their expertise (see Jokela et al. 2021). When developing a shared course in the University of the Arctic network, the aim is also to develop practices of working online and in a location in the right balance. Online meetings and video conferences are traditionally used for presentations and sharing theoretical information. The assignments with reading and

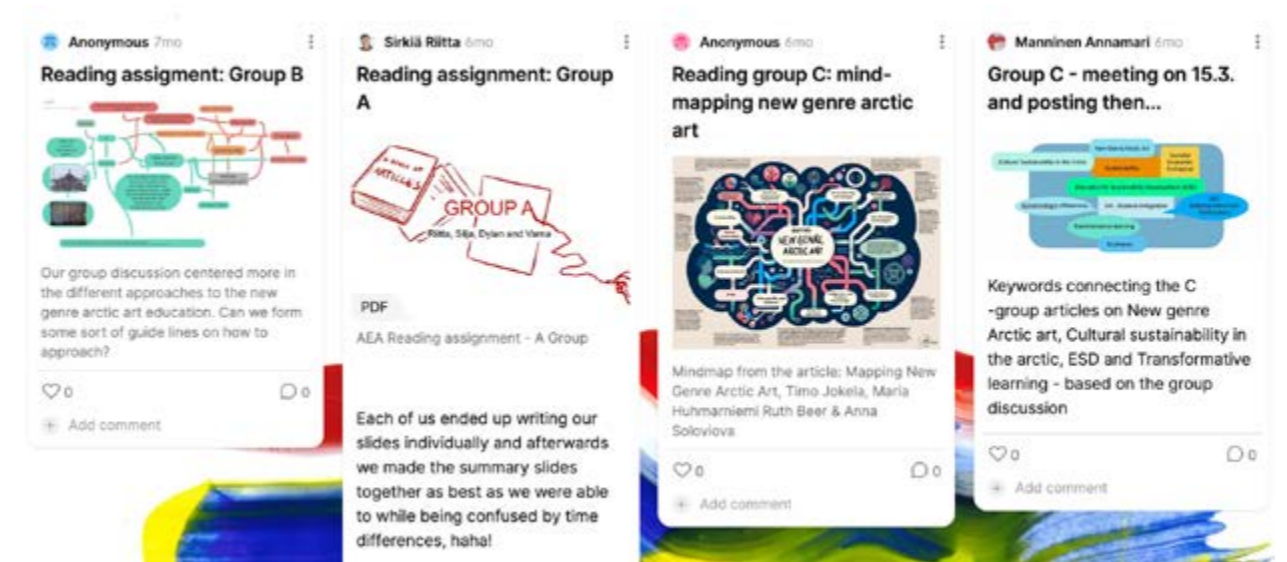


Figure 1. Study groups' literature mind maps on the course's page on the Padlet platform.

summarising theory can be quite painlessly adapted around the screens (Figure 1).

When aiming for an intensive fieldwork week, there is also a need to get to know the people you are going to closely work with and collaboratively plan the arriving activities on the spot. The time to spend together in the location is very limited and yet the knowledge and connection to the place and people are the foundation of the culturally sensitive and community and place-based contemporary Arctic art education (Jokela et al., 2021) that the course aimed for. In the first pilot of the New Genre Arctic Art education course, the shared platform was planned in

the Padlet and Zoom meetings with the whole group and partners as well as in smaller teams.

Art-based Activities in the Distance

Seeing others' artworks can lead to authentic learning of the shared topic, especially when the imagery presents the reality, the identity and the living surroundings of the author and is accompanied by enough information (Manninen, 2021). The pilot course was set up to figure out how to bring art-based activities into online and individual working periods. As an art and craft education project, the course aimed to include individual (Figure 3) and collaborative

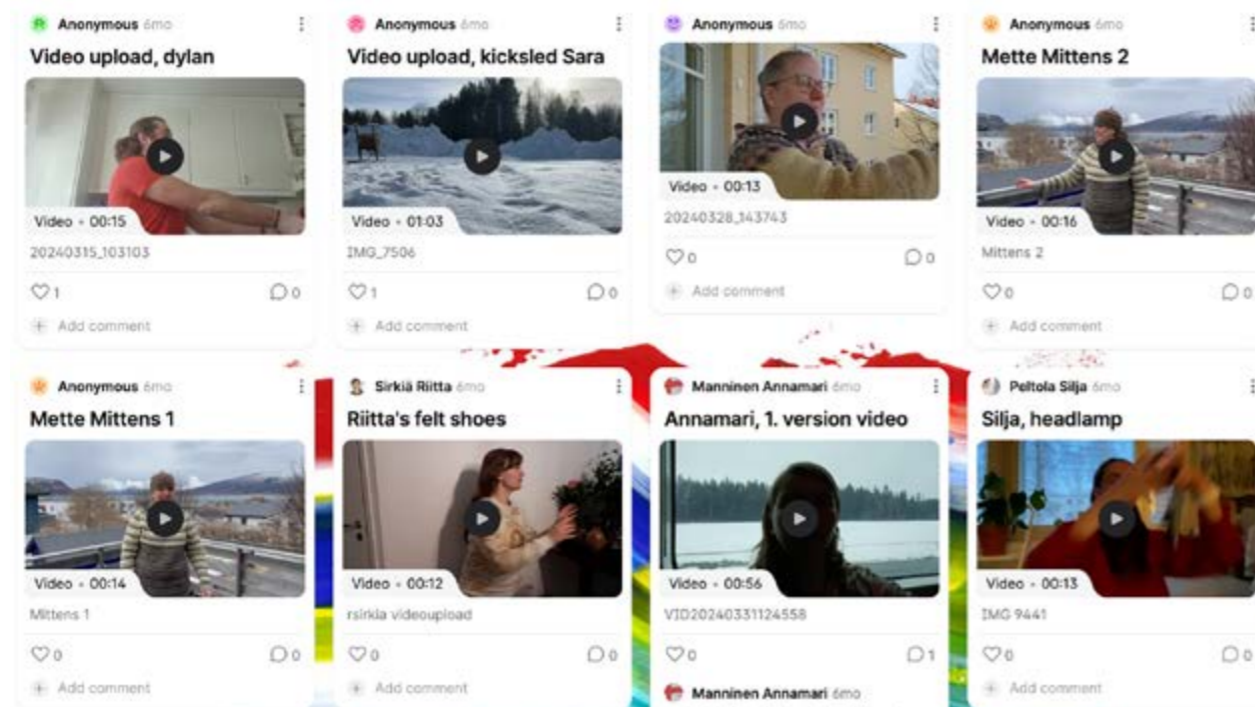
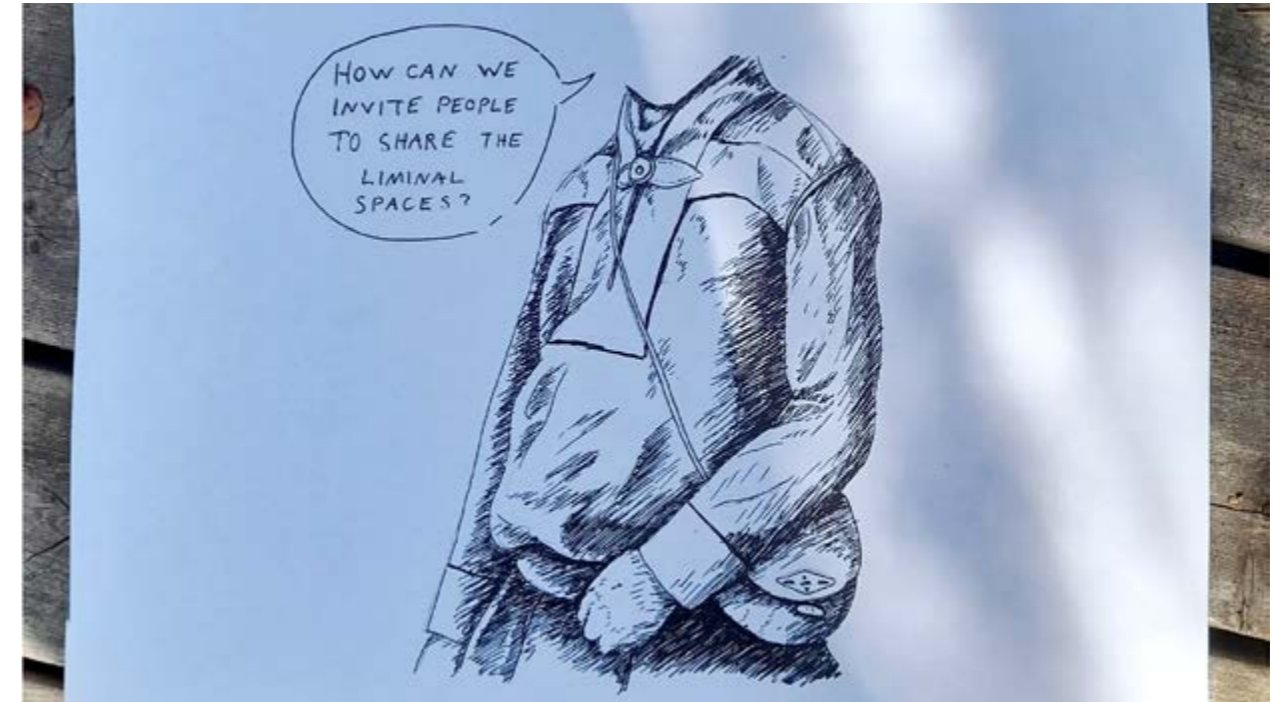


Figure 2. Building collaborative video art, sharing surroundings and views.



Figures 3–4. Reflections on the learning experience in artwork form by Ante Jalvela (above) in drawing and Sara Rylander in AI-generated and image-processed digital art.

(see Figure 2) art-based activities to widen the knowledge building in visual forms and connect the group before face-to-face meetings.

Building a course with several universities, local communities and 3rd sector partners puts forth the challenge of just how to utilise, in a profound and ideal way, all the expertise that is brought together for a short time and in such a multicultural and multidisciplinary setting. At the same time, it offers an authentic setting for dialogical learning. The students already have various backgrounds and come from different fields. When operating in the ecocultural settings of Northern areas, the connections between science and arts are vital for a sustainable approach (Stoll et al., 2022; Trott et al., 2020). Including partners and different cultural and educational actors besides the schools connects the activities to

the communities and local settings (Jokela et al., 2022) and yet again widens the expertise and experience to lean into and offer the multitude of expertise and participants that situational learning is known for.

Art-based activities throughout the course aimed to offer a space for participation in the dialogue with more personal comments and distancing frames to express reflections (Figures 3 and 4).

While the digital equipment needed for sharing videos and photos is available for all and there are platforms to choose from to support the dialogue online (figure 5), the pilot course is there to develop hybrid learning pedagogy, functional dialogue for collaboration and art-based activities that contribute to dialogical learning on Arctic art education. •



Figure 5. A Flamingo board for collecting feedback on the course for the discussion.

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IN PRACTICE



Figures 1. Greenland is a gateway to encountering Arctic nature, water, snow, and ice. Photos: Timo Jokela, 2024.

Nuuk as a Gateway to the Arctic of Today

Timo Jokela¹ and Peter Berliner²

¹University of Lapland, Finland and ²Association Siunissaq, Greenland

We had a conference in rapidly urbanising Nuuk at the foot of Quassussuaq, the large mountain ridge, and the Ukkusissat, the soapstone mountain. The name of the conference was Art, Community, and Identities in the Arctic – Best Practices for Children, Young People, and Families. The four partners in the AAE UArctic project met there and met artists, students, and researchers from Greenland, the Arctic, and other parts of the world.

The conference was a two-day event on how art can contribute to creating communities and well-being in the Arctic – with special reference to children, young people, and families. The overall goal of the conference was to provide knowledge about art-based initiatives that work to strengthen well-being, democratic participation, social sustainability, and access to rights for all children, young people, and families. The idea is that art can create communities, and communities can create art.

The overall goal of the conference was to link Arctic sociocultural landscapes and ecologies through knowledge that strengthens a shared sense of belonging across the diverse regions, languages, and cultures of the living Arctic. The conference opened lasting collaborations between artists, practitioners, and researchers to meet the challenges in the Arctic through megatrends such as urbanisation, globalisation, and climate change, which are changing the eco-social and cultural life. Art has proven to be a way to express feelings and understanding of the changes and build socially and culturally sustainable communities by connecting and bridging diverse groups and populations and ensuring freedom of expression and access to

“It is good with dialogue. We learn together. We should learn from this conference to supplement the centric form of conference, in a lecture hall, with a central speaker and an audience with a more decentralized format, like sitting in a huge circle, walking together, and make exhibitions together as community art.”

– local artist.

cultural activities for all people in the Arctic.

In addition to the congress, we had the first joint AAE seminar for partners to plan the coming cooperation and to share knowledge and art, among partners and local artists. For us, in addition to the conference and the first joint seminar, a significant experience was encountering the rapidly growing and urbanising city of Nuuk. At the same time, we reflected on developing various art-based working methods for starting work in new places with new people. We carried out some experiments. At first, each participant had brought an object from their home country that they believed was related to the Arctic.

Figures 2. Nuuk is a showcase of Arctic urbanisation. Photos: Timo Jokela, 2024.



Through these objects, we introduced ourselves to each other. Then we examined our preconceptions of what we mean by Arctic and Art, what we associate with their intra-action, and which values we emphasise. The dialogue was guided by a 'learning cafe' method using images of different visual manifestations of the phenomena in photographs, advertisements, magazines, artworks, etc., as stimulants for discussion and icebreakers for language barriers.

We carried out art-based tasks on a city walk, during which each participant chose their own observation method and the phenomenon that caught their attention. Based on these tasks, we planned and curated a pop-up exhibition that relates us to the urbanising Arctic. The

Siunissaq partner curated an exhibition of social and sustainability portraits at the venue.

The final part of the conference was a drum dance performed by Josef Joelsen, a book launch for Untold Stories from Fieldwork and a concert by the songwriter and singer Katsi Kleist. Finally, each partner got the art book Eriagisaq. This word translates to 'something one does not want to lose'. It is about the artist Kim Kleist-Eriksen and his artwork.

The seminar and conference followed up on online meetings between partners, including researchers and students, and continued with seminars and workshops online and in Umeå, Karasjok, and Bodö. ●

INFO

The first New genre Arctic art education seminar, workshop and exhibition took place in Nuuk at Ilisimatusarfik – University of Greenland from the 6th to the 9th of May 2023 in connection to congress Art, Community, and Identities in the Arctic – Best Practices for Children, Young People, and Families.

"We became aware of that through the activities and should elaborate on that, especially in the Arctic, with small communities and local and contextual knowledge."

– local artist.

"We should stand together in supporting the artists when they express both suffering and the but also joy of living in the Arctic. Art is a gift given to us, and we must all protect the gift. The conference made that visible and open, which I appreciate"

– local artist.

Figures 3. The congress and integrated art-based workshops brought together participants and AAE themes in discussion. Photos: Timo Jokela, 2023.



"It was good that we addressed the pain that art sometimes may cost the artist, especially when art addresses social challenges in the Arctic. Art dares to express what may be difficult to say openly"

– local artist.

► **Figures 1-3.** *Water and Elements* installation, photocollage, shoe laces. Umeå, Sweden, Photos: Mirja Hiltunen, 2023.

Random Encounters with Locals and a Glacial Stream in Greenland

Mirja Hiltunen

University of Lapland, Finland

After participating in an enriching AAE seminar in Nuuk, Greenland, we were wondering how to approach the place and its people through art and how to transfer the experiences into art education. My artistic works usually deal with equality and interaction between generations as well as between humans and non-human nature. The focus is often on physicality, embodied meaning-making, and encounters with the environment and people. Based on this, two artworks emerged that explored the characteristics of AAE.

I walked along the streets in the city centre of Nuuk with my camera and talked to people I met. I asked if they would like to participate in my tiny art project, where the purpose is simply to chat while I take a photo of our feet – our shoes. I took a series of photos of random encounters. My way of working as an artist and art educator can be characterized as community art. The focus of my work is often physicality – meeting the environment and people. I met elderly people, families, school children, and workers at their work.

As a researcher and artist, I have participated in numerous congresses, exhibitions, and projects

dealing with the art and culture of the Arctic region over decades. Instead of parting ways, I've ended up thinking about what unites us. Do I represent the original? Am I an outsider? How do we shut our fellow travellers in or out of the community? Do we care about diversity in culture and nature? Do we view diversity as wealth or a threat?

I named my artwork *Water and Elements*, since 70% of human tissue is water, consisting of oxygen and hydrogen. Carbon, on the other hand, is a key ingredient in all molecules of living things. Friendly people, legs, hydrogen, and coal. We also have nitrogen, phosphorus,



and calcium in significant quantities. On the other hand, the scarce elements in the body can be important for vital functions. We are one with our environment when we breathe or take a sip of water. In society, art is often seen on the margins. However, art has an important meaning. I see New Genre Arctic Art education and Arctic art as an opportunity to act as a vital element in building a hopeful, sustainable future.

On another encounter in Greenland – in Nuuk in May 2023, and the most physical memories from this trip – was a sip of crystal-clear, vel-

vety-soft, sensory-pleasing water that is millions of years old, captured directly from a glacial stream. The experience connects me to the eternal cycle of water in the earth's ecosystem. I wondered how the momentary nature of human time compares to that. Continental ice has been here for about 2.6 million years. We humans have upset the balance of the earth in the blink of an eye. Glaciers are melting at an unprecedented rate. While creating the *Water* installation out of photos, glass, water, and video at the Galleria Valo in Rovaniemi, I wondered if art could at least remind us that we are part of an ecosystem that we must take care of. •



Figure 4. Under the glacier. Photo: Mirja Hiltunen, 2023.

INFO

Mirja Hiltunen collected material for two artworks during the AAE seminar and workshop in Nuuk (2023). The installation *Water and Elements* (photocollage, shoelaces) was presented in Umeå, Sweden at the Relate North Symposium, Beyond Borders in November 2023. The other installation, *Water* (8 photos, video, crystal glass, water), was displayed at Gallery Valo in Rovaniemi, Finland in 2024.

Figures 5–6. *Water* installation by Mirja Hiltunen, Gallery Valo, Rovaniemi 2024. Photos: Mirja Hiltunen, 2024.

“Even though we didn’t often share a common language, taking pictures of our feet surprised and amused them. They were happy to participate and stop for a moment to talk to a stranger.”

– artist





◀ **Figure 1.** In encounters such as museum visits, Sámi parliament gatherings, and visits to the *lávvu*, the ecological-cultural dimensions and plurality of life in Karasjok were explored. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2024.

“Working with communities is valuable because it helps to understand ways of knowing in Northern eco-cultural contexts, whereby encounters can lead to new understandings not only in art, but also in the pursuit of sustainability sustainability transformation.”

- project leader

Hybrid Course and Fieldwork Pilot in Karasjok Sápmi, Norway

Timo Jokela
University of Lapland, Finland

For the researchers, artists, and teachers from the participating Karasjok activities serves as a platform for the development of new genre Arctic art education (AAE). For the university students, it is an international course that begins with distance learning and culminates in on-site fieldwork as art education practice. In addition to the participating universities, local cross-sectoral partners contribute their expertise to support the academic collaboration. This adaptable event, tailored to situations and community needs, is expected to be held annually in different locations across the Arctic and northern regions.

The central goal of the activities is Karasjok was integrate diverse and creative working methods of contemporary art with the tradition of Northern knowledge and skills in a sustainable manner in the spirit of AAE. At first, an online planning meeting was arranged between partners and coordinators to make detailed plans to realize and facilitate the course and workshop in Karasjok. The local Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art (Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš) and the Karasjok School were involved in the planning, and university students were selected for the courses.

Students receive introductory reading materials to prepare for the challenges and possibilities of art education in the Arctic communities, including the perspectives and voices of children and youth as well as artists and others in the local communities. The development and implementation of digital online educational methods and learning were central at this stage to get the workshop started and enhance communal and collaborative learning. In the online course, not only was information shared, but art-based methods aimed at inspiring social collaboration were developed, applying community art education practices to digital

online learning. Student teams, with the help of supervisors, planned the contacts for the field workshop for local school pupils and the community for the Karasjok pilot.

Students and supervisors gathered in Rovaniemi and travelled by minibus to visit Sámi Museum Siida in Inari first and then Karasjok. The workshop was arranged so that teachers from each university and local stakeholders worked as teams with students. They also met local people that are living in close contact with nature and Sámi culture, politics, and art.

The people of Karasjok suggested that the workshop’s theme be the river, to be approached in accordance with the AAE agenda through contemporary Arctic art, integrating visual arts, design, crafts, and digital work in the spirit of Arctic art. This created a communal and performative activity that began with a visit to the Sámi Contemporary Art Centre’s exhibition and continued with a collective group painting workshop focused on experiences of the river. At the same time, work was done with materials closely linked to Sámi culture, such as colorful yarns and reindeer antler carvings.

Northern eco-culture, Northern knowledge, and new materialism are central starting points in AAE thinking. But based on situational learning, it respects the experiences and perspectives of all participants. In the digital photography workshop, pupils shared their own perceptions of Karasjok and the places they considered important to the river – this way, the ‘urbanizing Arctic’ was also given a chance to emerge through the young people’s ‘environmental portrait’ photos.

Finally, the artistic work extended from indoor spaces to the outdoors, with long paintings on fabric becoming the centerpiece of a performance on the ice of the Karasjok River. The events offered local residents the opportunity to experience contemporary art methods and participate in creating works and pop-up exhibitions resulting from the events. ●



Figure 2. The group paintings inspired by the paintings of the artist Per Adde, displayed at the Art Centre, and the meanings, rhythms, and seasonal colours of the important river to the local community, are carried onto the ice of the Karasjok River for a snowmobile painting performance. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2024.



◀ **Figure 3.** Encounters between northern eco-culture and contemporary art. Personal reindeer earmarks and youngsters’ climate thoughts are carved on a reindeer horn, which become a part of the shared artwork – the Lawvu installation. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2024.



▲ **Figure 4.** Borderlines between traditional craftsmanship and contemporary art. Multilingual future hopes are embroidered onto a tablecloth with colorful threads. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2024.



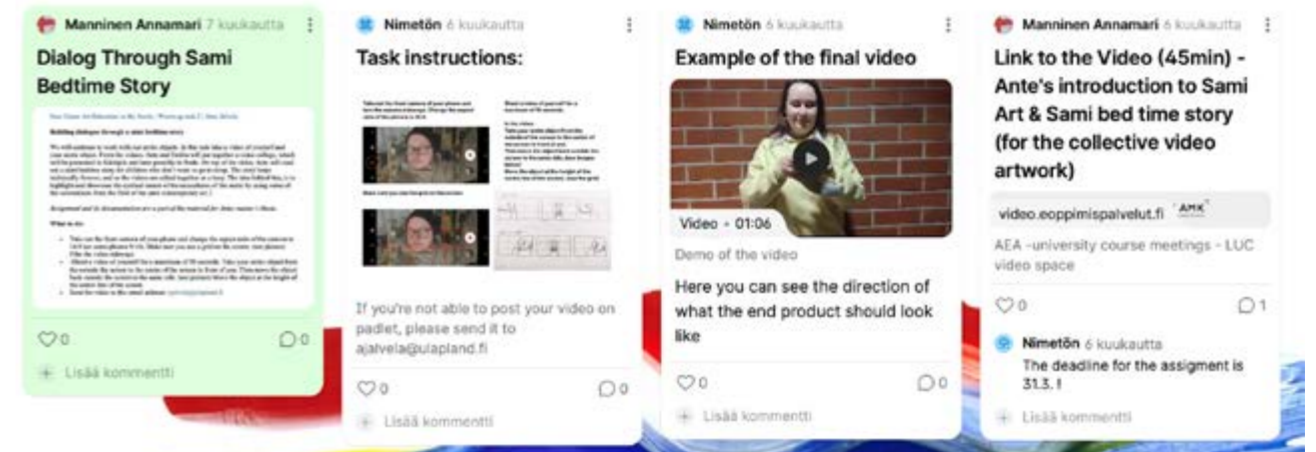
▲ **Figure 5.** Results of photography workshop seeking pupils’ important places in Karasjok. The pupils photographed their own ‘environmental portraits’ in the fishing gear section of the market. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2024.

INFO

In Karasjok, in the Sámi region of Norway, the key local partners for the AAE were the Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art (Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš) and the Karasjok School. Besides the University of Lapland, the event was also supported by Umeå University in Sweden, Nord University in Norway, and the University of Greenland. External partners included the multidisciplinary arts association Piste from Rovaniemi and the artist and social psychology association Siunissag from Greenland. The Karasjok course was made possible through funding by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the University of the Arctic’s research and education network fund, supported by the Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science.



Prepare for 21st March - Materials & preliminary assignment on contemporary Sami Art / Indigenous art



◀ Figure 1. Screenshot from the video artwork. From left to right: As Korinna Korsström-Magga hands her object to Mette Gårdvik, it turns into Mette's object. Screenshot: Ante Jalvela, 2024.

▲ Figure 2. Screenshot from the Padlet platform. Assignment instructions. Screenshot: Ante Jalvela, 2024.

Collaborative Video Collage: Building Dialogue through a Sámi Bedtime Story

Ante Jalvela and Emilia Tuononen
University of Lapland, Finland

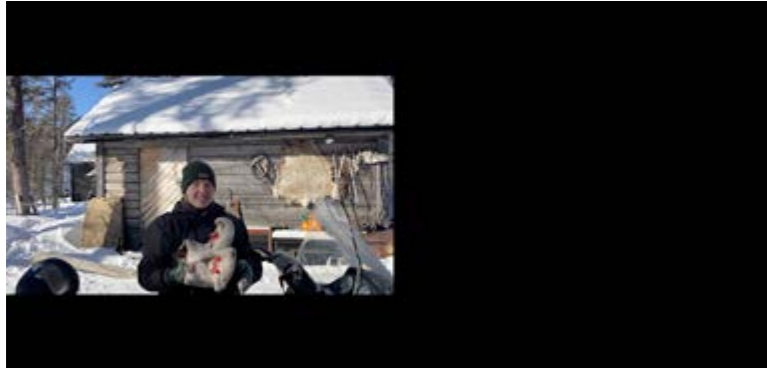
The video collage was a warm-up task aimed at promoting dialogue among participants in the online phase of the AAE course for university students. The goal for the participants was to present their perspectives on the Arctic using Arctic objects of their choice and the stories related to them. At the same time, the aim was to concretely illustrate the cyclical nature of Arctic ecocultures (particularly Sámi culture in this case) through contemporary art-based action.

At the beginning of the online phase of the AAE course, each participant was tasked with selecting an object, large or small, that represented their experience of the Arctic. This Arctic object was presented to everyone and later used in this video collage assignment. We wanted to bring the participants from different countries, universities, and disciplines together in a way that aligned with the core values and goals of the AAE project, enabled by the online platform. The idea of a conceptually interactive video collage emerged, and we began preparing the task. We wrote brief instructions for all participants on how to make a short video of themselves with their Arctic object. Afterwards, we would collect all the submitted videos and edit them into a

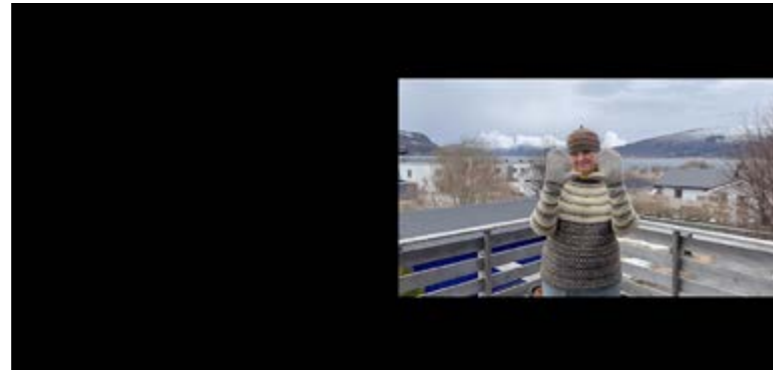
cohesive video, which could technically loop forever. In the video, the participants appear to be passing their Arctic objects to another participant, from one side to the other. A story is heard over the video, which repeats along with the visuals.

At the heart of the video collage was a Sámi bedtime story Ante originally heard from his cousin. The story is usually told to children who don't want to go to sleep and keep asking for a new story. It goes like this:

I was walking on top of the Njállavárri. I walked for some time, and after a while, I came across a black house. Once I reached the house, a person came outside.



▲ **Figure 3.** Screenshot from the video artwork. Korinna Korsström-Magga's Arctic object is her nuhtogat (winter shoes made from reindeer skin), which are traditionally worn by the Sámi people. Screenshot: Ante Jalvela, 2024.

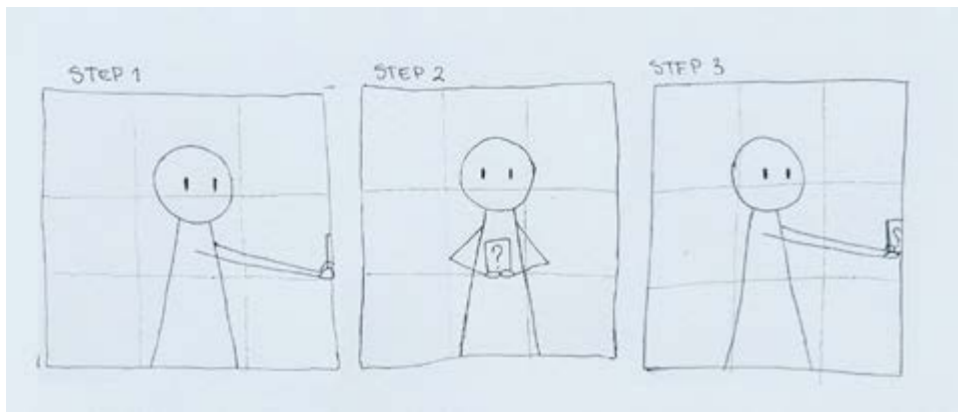


▼ **Figure 4.** Screenshot from the video artwork. Mette Gårdrvik's Arctic object is her mittens. Screenshot: Ante Jalvela, 2024.

"There's the late Biret!" the person yelled. I opened the door and saw the late Biret lying on the floor. I started to resuscitate her, and she woke up. After that, she stood up and showed me a door, which she entered and gestured for me to follow her. After I entered through the door, I realized...

And the story starts again. After a few repetitions, the child will likely ask to stop. Njállavárri is a familiar fell near Ante's family's home place in Njuorggán, but the story does not have a fixed setting as it is always told from the storyteller's perspective.

Many course participants were confused by the warm-up task, and not everyone was entirely sure about the idea of the story and collage. However, as a technical digital implementation of participants recording and sending their videos, the task was successful. Creating community art to build a sense of belonging is a challenge in an online environment. All participants have different levels of skills and tools to engage in meaningful dialogue. One possible solution could be a platform where each participant can contribute and modify the shared work while interacting during the process. ●



▲ **Figure 5.** Illustrative guide for the task assignment. Picture: Emilia Tuononen, 2024.

INFO

Collective video artwork assignment was part of the New Genre Arctic Art Education -course, which was a hybrid collaborative course connecting participants from Umeå University (Sweden), University of Lapland (Finland), Nord University (Norway) and Greenland University (Denmark). The making of collaborative artwork aimed to explore the possibilities of digital tools to engage the participants in a shared art process over distances.



Figures 1–2. The painting was based on the words that pupils came up with about the river.
Photos: Emilia Tuononen (left) and Timo Jokela (right) 2024

River – Painting Workshop and Performance

Silja Peltola and Emilia Tuononen

University of Lapland, Finland

*The theme of the workshop was **river** which flows through the Karasjok village. The topic was connected to northern nature and relevant to the participants, eighth-grade pupils, and to their everyday lives. In the workshop, we focused on what kind of words, images, colours, and movements the river brought to mind. The subject was started with a gallery visit, then explored through painting, which expanded into a performance on the frozen Karasjok River. Afterwards, the video of the performance was presented to the participants at the opening of a pop-up exhibition.*

The aim was to create an opportunity for local eighth graders and our project group to work together on Arctic themes using the techniques of expressionist contemporary art. We wanted to forge a connection between the local people, our project group, nature, and art. The workshop aimed to use methods of Arctic contemporary art in education to strengthen and preserve northern knowledge, respect eco-cultural continuity, and improve cultural resilience and sustainability. We sought to place the students' connection to their local nature and community at the heart of the project.

Before the workshop, a guide at the Sámi Contemporary Art Centre introduced the pupils to the exhibition of the artist Per Adde. This artist depicts northern nature and animals in an expressionist and abstract way in his paintings. After the exhibition visit, the pupils were instructed to write down on paper some words that they associated with the Karasjok River. The river as a topic was chosen beforehand by the class and suggested by their teacher. The pupils were then encouraged to use these words as inspiration for their paintings, and they were urged to incorporate a lot of movement, expression, and colour – rhythms of the nature of the river.

The paintings were created collaboratively on long strips of gauze fabric with a mixture of acrylic and gouache paint. The pupils were set around the tables, and every three minutes, they were supposed to change places (see Figure 1), allowing them to create the artwork together. By the end of the workshop, the pieces of fabric were filled with vibrant paintings.

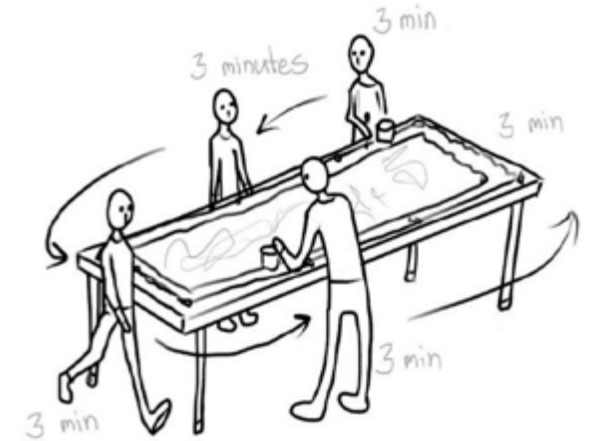


Figure 3. Detail from the workshop teaching material.
Drawing: Riitta Sirkiä, 2024.

The workshop continued with a performance on the ice of the Karasjok River. Participation in the performance was voluntary, but it was delightful to see many pupils take part. The performance included choreography where pupils held and moved the fabric strips while a drone filmed the event. In the finale, the fabrics were tied to a snowmobile, which drove around the ice, displaying the fluttering paintings. The performance was filmed. The documenting material was quickly edited, and the performance video was shown the next evening in the pop-up exhibition we held after all the workshops at the Sámi Contemporary Art Centre.

The pupils were motivated to participate, and they seemed enthusiastic about painting on large fabrics. The quick tempo of the painting workshop seemed to suit the energetic eighth graders. Unfortunately, the weather was grey and rainy during the performance, and it didn't look quite as we had envisioned. Based on the participants' feedback, we



Figure 4-5. Pupils painted symbols, rhythms and colors that represent their idea of the river. In the end the paintings were on display in the exhibition with other workshop final products. Photos: Emilia Tuononen, 2024.

realized that the contemporary art-related idea of the performance remained somewhat unclear to the pupils. Nevertheless, the pupils were very brave to take part in the performance, especially considering the bad weather. The pupils were also excited to see the finished video of the performance, which shows that

it is important for them to see the result of their work. The filming with a drone from above also got them interested in seeing the footage. Perhaps one of the accomplishments of the workshop was to show the pupils that art doesn't always have to be serious and that there is room for play and spontaneity. ●

INFO

The workshop was in Norway, Karasjok, where we worked together with the Sámi Contemporary Art Centre (SDG) and a local school in early April 2024. The University of Lapland workshop team was the master students Silja Peltola, Riitta Sirkiä, and Emilia Tuononen, supervised by lecturer of art education Annamari Manninen, professors Timo Jokela and Mirja Hiltunen, in collaboration with Hanna-Leena Metsävainio from cross-art collective Piste, Rovaniemi. The main documentation and editing of the video was done by art education master student Ante Jalvela.

"Can I really throw paint on the fabric?!"
 – participating pupil at the start of the painting process

"The pupils felt this was very important; you could tell by the fact that they brought their grandparents to the pop-up exhibition."
 – art center employee

Figures 6-9. The paintings were taken to the landscape with the participants. On the river ice the performance ended with snowmobile pulling the paintings flying as flags in the air. Photos: Annamari Manninen (left), Ante Jalvela (top right), Timo Jokela (bottom right), 2024.





Figure 1. Clay sculptures getting ready to dry. Photos: Sara Rylander, 2024.

Exploring Ecosystem and Cultural Interconnectedness through Clay, Craft, and Rivers

Dylan Steigemeier and Sara Rylander
Umeå University, Sweden

The workshop introduced Year 8 pupils from Karasjok to working with clay and making small sculptures. The main purpose was to teach them about ecosystems and how all living things are connected. The pupils used the Karasjok River as inspiration to create clay pieces that show what lives or thrives because of the river.

The theme of the workshop was ecosystems and the interconnectedness of all living things. Using the local Karasjok River as a starting point, pupils were asked to create something in clay that is sustained or flourishes from the Karasjok River. Pupils were introduced to environmental paradigms of anthropocentric, or human-centred, and ecocentric, which asserts that all living things are

an integral part of an interconnected system. Ecocentrism, or the idea that all living things are a connected system and nature should be valued for nature's sake, was the pillar of the lesson.

Rivers are the lifeblood of ecosystems and communities around the world. The workshop strived to connect pupils to important natural resources in their Arctic community. New Genre Arctic Art Education was incorporated into the lesson by focusing on the Karasjok River. Having the students think about what the Karasjok means to life and the community were used to explore the idea of interconnectedness. How did their river (Karasjok River) connect life and community? A discussion about the Sámi language was

used to introduce ecoculture. Sámi place names often denote what the geographical or physical place looks like. Sámi language was used to note how culture and ecosystems are intertwined and connected.

This workshop aimed to help pupils appreciate a significant natural resource in their Arctic community by incorporating New Genre Arctic Art Education focused on the Karasjok River. Discussions about what the river means to life and the community helped explore this interconnectedness. We also introduced the concept of ecoculture through the Sámi language, explaining how Sámi place names often describe the physical appearance of a location. This shows how culture and ecosystems are linked.

Figure 1. Introduction of the workshop by Dylan Steigemeier in Karasjok. Photo: Sara Rylander 2024



During the workshop, we spent time discussing what activities the pupils do near or on the river in different seasons. Although it was challenging to keep everyone focused, and clay is tough to work with initially, the pupils eventually made sculptures they were proud of. They had fun sculpting and learned basic techniques like rolling the clay and making shapes, which will be useful for more complex projects in the future. Some pupils felt overwhelmed at first when asked to start their projects right away.

Feedback from the pupils was very positive. They were thrilled to hear their sculptures would be displayed at the Arctic Congress in Bodø, Norway, in May 2024 and that their finished pieces would be fired and returned to them later. Overall, the workshop was enjoyable and effectively introduced the pupils to the concept of ecocentrism and the interconnectedness of all living things. By understanding that all things are connected, hopefully students learn that actions they take can have positive and negative effects on their environments and communities. ●



Figure 3. Pupils working with different tools. Photo: Sara Rylander, 2024.

“The pupils used their hands and different tools made of wood or materials from nature to form the clay”

– Dylan Stiegemeier, teacher.



Image 4. Poster of a map over the area with the Sámi names, in Karasjok. Photo: Anna Tiselius, 2024.

INFO

Karasjok, April 2024
Clay work, 2 hours
Year 8 pupils

Team:
Dylan Steigemeier
Sara Rylander
Lotta Lundstedt
Anna Tiselius

Umeå University



Figure 1. Collaborative tablecloth from embroidery workshop. Photo: Sara Rylander, 2024.

Using Craft to Express Identity

Lotta Lundstedt
Umeå University, Sweden

This workshop introduced year 8 pupils from Karasjok to working with collaborative embroidery and painting in watercolours. The main purpose was to explore identity through craft. The pupils used their history and themselves as inspiration to create power cards and contribute to the collaborative embroidery.

The overarching theme of the Embroidery workshop was “hope”, a concept chosen to inspire pupils to reflect on their environment and envision new possibilities for the future. One of the workshops centred around an embroidered tablecloth designed to invite participants to sit together around a table, create and share their thoughts and dreams. Embroidery, as a medium, was cho-

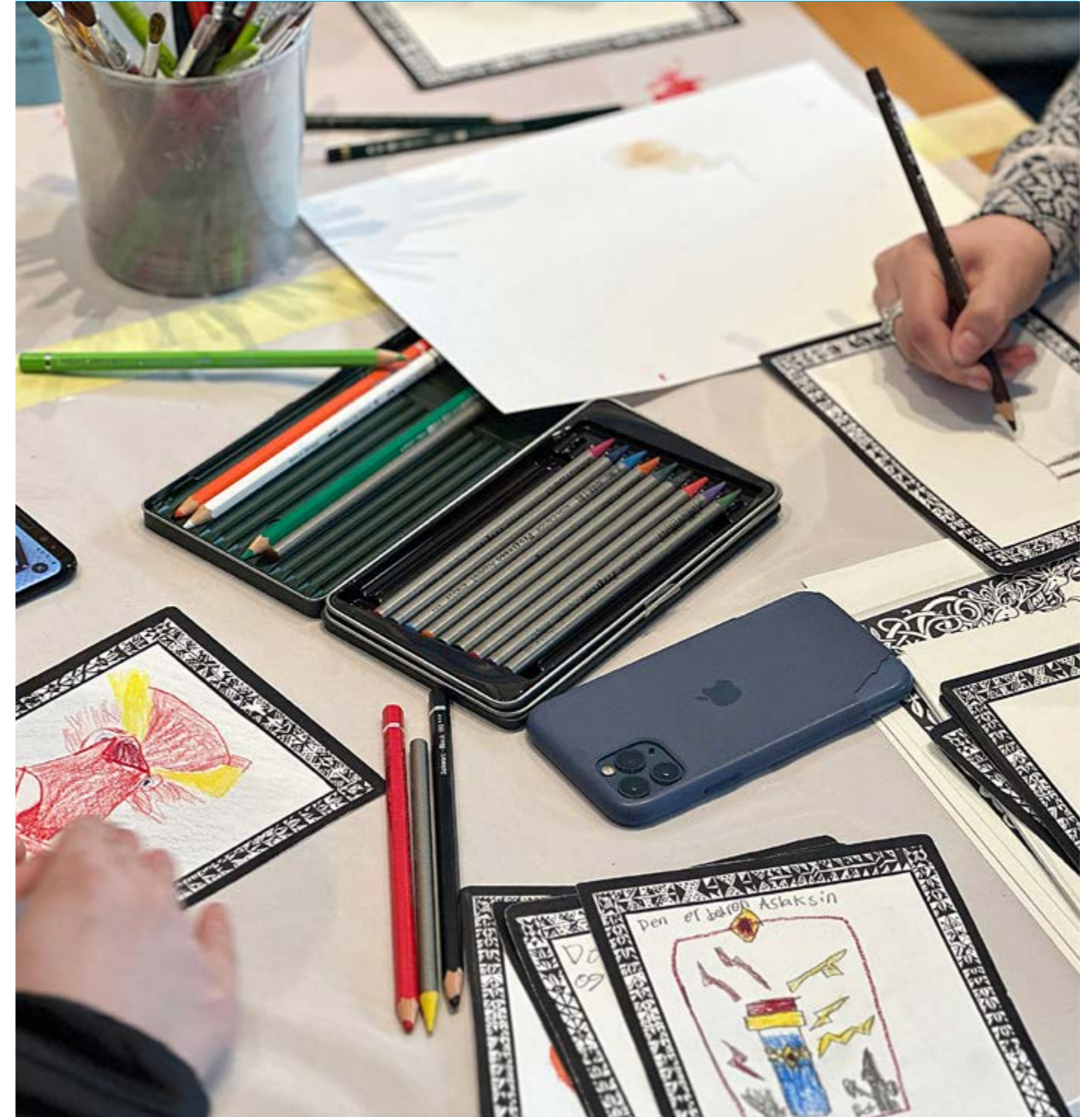


Figure 2. Pupils working on their power cards with watercolour pencils. Photo: Sara Rylander, 2024.

“We see great potential in developing these workshops as we observe that students become highly engaged when they get the opportunity to express what surrounds them in the present”

*– Sara Rylander,
teacher at Umeå University.*

sen for its slow, deliberate nature, requiring both time and patience—a stark contrast to the often fast-paced, digital environment in which many young people operate today. At the heart of the cloth, the word “hope” was embroidered in various languages, serving as a powerful symbol of inclusivity and unity. This central motif emphasized that, regardless of cultural background or origin, the concept of hope is universally understood and shared. It also reinforced the workshop’s aim to build bridges between diverse individuals, fostering a sense of community and belonging among the pupils.

In the Power Card workshop, the pupils drew inspiration from their personal histories and identities to create “power cards”—artworks reflecting their strengths, values, and dreams. These cards were sometimes inspired by games played on mobile phones and video games,

linking the creative process to the children’s own digital world. By blending personal symbols, meaningful words, and imagery, the pupils expressed their unique stories and aspirations. This activity encouraged them to explore their backgrounds and share their experiences, fostering a sense of empowerment and connection. The power cards ultimately became a bridge between their real and virtual lives.

Power cards created by some of the pupils featured motifs of animals and nature, deeply rooted in their connection to place and indigenous perspectives. These elements reflected the pupils’ cultural heritage and reverence for the land, where nature is seen as a living entity with which they coexist. By incorporating images of local wildlife and natural landscapes, the cards embodied the pupils’ understanding of their environment as a source of strength, wisdom, and identity. ●



Figure 3. Power cards in the making. Photo: Sara Rylander, 2024.

INFO

Karasjok, April 2024.
Watercolour & collaborative embroidery,
2 hours. Year 8 pupils

Team: Anna Tiselius, Dylan Steigemeier,
Sara Rylander and Lotta Lundstedt.
Umeå University



Figure 1. The Antlers' Lávvu is an installation symbolising the Sámi lávvu in front of the Sámi parliament building in Inari, Finland. A lávvu is a Sámi traditional dwelling, a cone-shaped tent. Photo: Korinna Korsström-Magga, 2023.

The Antlers' Lávvu – A Nomadic Workshop for a Shared Future

Korinna Korsström-Magga
University of Lapland, Finland

A nomadic, nonstop workshop for Arctic youth has been held in a few places and events in Sápmi. The goal has been to offer young people an opportunity to express their climate concerns and thoughts about the future of their home region by combining two objects related to Sápmi's ecocultures.

Reindeer antlers are familiar to most participants. However, in the workshop, they are used as art material, bringing place-specific, environmental, and eco-cultural perspectives to the creative work. The final installation, symbolizing the Sámi lávvu, is a statement for the Sámi Indigenous people and their concerns for their traditional

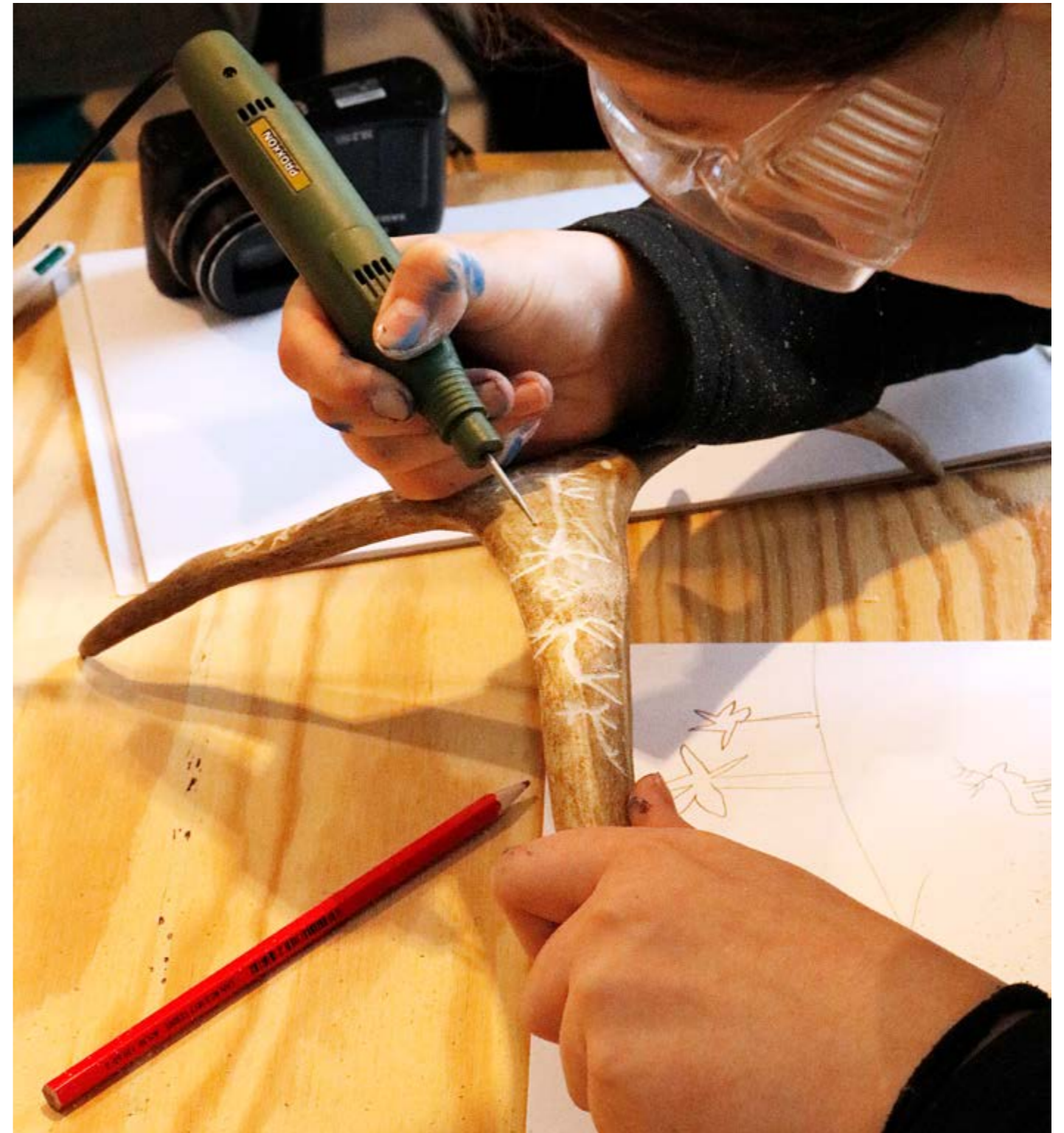


Figure 2. Pupils carving their thought and symbols on reindeer antlers in Karasjok at Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš. Photo: Ante Jalvela, 2024.

livelihoods, environment, and culture. A lávvu is a traditional Sámi dwelling, a cone-shaped tent. Young people have carved their thoughts and concerns about the future Arctic, on reindeer antlers and placed them in a joint installation, the Antlers' Lávvu. The Lávvu is placed in the front of the Sámi Parliament's building in Inari. This way, it also serves as the youth's voice to local influencers and decision-makers.

The workshops have reflected a shared concern for the Arctic, the home of the young participants – their inherited and future living environment. The *Antlers' Lávvu* workshop has achieved varying degrees of success. The climate crisis and the future of the Arctic can be distressing topics for young people. It can also feel too abstract for them to grasp. They have encountered the themes of the climate crisis and future imagination so often in their education that they may feel tired of the topic. This serious theme requires sufficient time for discussion and planning, which is

challenging in ongoing workshops where participants just drop in.

Carving is done using a drill, which requires a steady hand and focus. Surprisingly, this has not been related to age. Quite young participants, even children under ten, have managed to carve precise designs into the antlers. On the other hand, young teenagers have struggled to focus on the intricate handwork. However, young adults have enjoyed carving and have fully immersed themselves in the craft.

The workshop was most successful for participants who had planned and focused on the carving. In general, workshops require sufficient time for participants to become familiar with the objectives, materials, and tools, and particularly enough time to work on their ideas. *The Antlers' Lávvu* workshops have worked well as pop-up workshops for young adults, but a fixed time frame might be more suitable for teenagers. ●

INFO

The *Antlers' Lávvu* workshop has previously been held in Rovaniemi at the Barents Regional Youth Council's annual meeting on 25–26 February 2023. In Inari at the Sámenuoraiddáiddadáhpáhus event on 26–27 April 2023. At the Ijahis Idja music festival on 18–19 August 2023 and in the Nomadic Hub of Arctic Art Education in Karasjok at Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš. The Antlers' Lávvu workshop and installation are designed and instructed by Korinna Korsström-Magga. The workshop is part of the *On the Frontline of Climate Crisis* project, funded by the Kone Foundation.



Figure 3. Pile of reindeer antlers waiting for carving. Photo: Ante Jalvela, 2024.



Figure 4. The Antlers' Lávvu in wintery landscape in front of the Sámi parliament building in Inari. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2024.



Figure 1. Finding a place for the art installation at Aspa-koti Goahti. Photo: Mirja Hiltunen, 2024.

Intergenerational Encounters – Exploring Ándaras Kittí’s Heritage in Utsjoki

Mirja Hiltunen

University of Lapland, Finland

*In the **Footsteps of Andaras Kittí** project, dialogical and participatory art-based methods were implemented, with the core idea of ‘knowing the past and acting proactively today’ driving the initiative. Our aim was to foster intergenerational encounters, knowledge creation, and exchange in the experiment carried out in Sápmi, Utsjoki, Finland, with local kindergarten and elderly care home residents. Together we commemorated and celebrated the 180th birthday of Tenon’s star navigator Ándaras Kittí, exploring themes of the starry sky through art, studying constellations and the stories hidden in the celestial canopy.*



Figures 2–3. Art installation *Be the comet of your own life* in daycare. The comets were left at the kindergarten hanging from the ceiling and later for the kids to take home. Photos: Heidi Lähtevänoja (left) and Mirja Hiltunen (right), 2024.

Ándaras Kittí (1844–1926) was a Sámi knowledge owner who specialized in the fishing culture, oral traditions of the Teno River, and astronomy in Utsjoki. He combined traditional knowledge with his own experiences to gain new insights. Our project in Utsjoki 2024 discusses the nature and role of critically and socially engaged approaches in art education in the Arctic.

The theme of our workshops in Utsjoki was the starry sky and the constellations found there, in honour of Ándaras Kittí’s memory. We got to create a joint art installation ‘Ursa Major’ with the residents at the elderly care home, Aspa-koti Goahti, and the children in the Utsjoki daycare centre.

At the daycare, the purpose of the workshops was to awaken the children’s own internal com-

et. The children got to know about Kittí, stars, and comets through storytelling and play. Our workshop topic was ‘*Be the comet of your own life*’. Together, we made comet mobiles, using wooden frames, colourful yarn, and stars felted by the children themselves. In the wooden frames, the children drew self-portraits on a transparent film attached with yarn.

At Aspa-koti Goahti, we focused on the Ursa Major constellation because it was familiar to many of the residents due to Otava found within the constellation. Along with the workshops, the life of the residents at Utsjoki and Teno was remembered and discussed. We also talked about Kittí’s life – who he was and what he did.

We built the Ursa Major installation together with the residents. We used thick sticks, iron



"Thank you, it was really valuable to be able to meet and do something this great and unique together."
 – Jenni

Figure 4. In Aspa-Koti Goahti, residents together created the constellation of Ursa Major and integrated their own stars into the pattern. Photo: Mirja Hiltunen, 2024.

wire, colourful wool and leather yarn, as well as various decorative elements, small circular frames, and fishing lines. From these materials, we built an installation where every resident of Aspa-koti Goahti could bring themselves into the installation with their own pictures and words and statements that were important to them. We also attached some felted stars made by the children for the installation.

Creating a collaborative artwork between the daycare centre and Aspa-koti Goahti went well.

At the daycare, the children eagerly started crafting comet stars, and the wet felting of stars the following day was also a meaningful activity. At Aspa-koti Goahti, getting into the theme of Ándaras Kittí took a little more time. Through calm introductions and work, everyone eventually got into the spirit of creating. The Ursa Major installation gradually took shape with each participant's contribution. However, we value encounters more than the completion of the artwork, both at the daycare and at Aspa-koti Goahti.

The University of Lapland's applied visual art students group, led by lecturer Antti Stöckell, also participated by sculpting snow. Their workshop produced a big snow sculpture installation in the spirit of Ándaras Kittí in the yard of Utsjokisuu Primary School, together with the schoolchildren. The atmosphere was lively during the work, and the completion of the snow sculpture was celebrated with all the schoolchildren and local residents.

In the final workshop of the week at Utsjoki Hotel, the celebrants crafted umbrellas representing the celestial canopy, where each person's star could shine. The workshop at the hotel turned out to be a great activity. Crafting stars and strings of pearls engaged participants midway through the event. Many participants were inspired to craft several stars.

Figure 2. Snow sculptures made by the University of Lapland's applied visual arts group, led by lecturer Antti Stöckell. Photo: Mirja Hiltunen, 2024.



In organizing the workshops, it was especially important to have a good understanding of the basis of the work. In this case, we had read about Ándaras Kittí and his life's work. Along the way, we learned a lot about planning and implementing community projects with various organizations and people. We learned collaborative planning, which inevitably involved making compromises. ●

"Oh, you're from Rovaniemi!"
 – Workshop participant

Figure 5. In the final event at the hotel, the 'skies' were set up in the hotel lobby, and guests enjoyed admiring them for the rest of the evening. Photo: Heidi Lähtevänoja, 2024.



INFO

Community art workshops in Utsjoki 14–17.2.2024.
 Facilitators: Master Students of Art Education Elli Jokitulppo, Jenni Lehto, Anna-Sofia Nurmela, Heidi Lähtevänoja, and Professor Mirja Hiltunen.
 Partners: Aspa-koti Goahti, Utsjoki daycare, Utsjokisuu School / Ochejohnjälmmi skuvla, Ohcejoga Utsjoen Ursa.
 Winter art workshop, students of Applied Visual Arts Teresa Pahkala, Linnea Moen, Jesse Hänninen, Paula Ahonen, Anna Pyhtilä, Marika Palomäki, Ines Knaster, and lecturer Antti Stöckell.

"I remember because we got to work physically, build and collaborate!"
– Workshop Participant

"I thought it was interesting, so the story was memorable".
– Workshop Participant

Sámi Mythology as a Theme for Interdisciplinary Workshops in Educational Institutions

Mette Gårdvik, Karin Stoll and Wenche Sørmo.
Nord University, Norway

In this interdisciplinary workshop we used artistic and inquiry-based methods to engage participants in the Sámi mythology of the starry sky. Despite that the Sámi story about a cosmic hunt is closely connected to our way of living as Northerners, it is less known than the Greek mythology. An authentic setting contributed to connect people and communities under our common starry sky.

Our common cultural heritage in Sápmi has developed throughout history and must be managed from a socio-cultural sustainability perspective by both living and future generations. Sámi cultural heritage is part of Norwegian cultural heritage (UN's ILO-Convention 169, 1989). Educational systems must integrate Sámi perspectives in all teaching to contribute to the development of identity in an inclusive community (KD, 2017).

Teaching about Sámi culture and tradition is a natural part of the curriculum in Norwegian teacher education.

We have developed, carried out and evaluated interdisciplinary teaching activities about the Sámi mythologies of the starry sky to decolonize from Western culture and implement the activity in educational systems in the Arctic region (Sørmo, et al., 2019).

Figure 1.

► a. Workshop masterclass held at Pitirim Sorokyn Syktyvkar State University, Russia during the Relate North Conference in Syktyvkar in November 2019. Photo: Wenche Sørmo, 2019.

▼ b. Workshop in the project Cultural Traces in the Landscape, with participating teachers from Norwegian and Swedish schools at Samevistet in Vilhelmina, Sweden, 2018. Photo: Wenche Sørmo, 2018.



► c. A cross-country ski tour in Sámi locations starting from Sijti Jarng, a Sámi language and cultural center in Hattfjelldal in North Norway. We had a workshop at Krutvatnet, a lake, making a light installation with teacher students in April 2013. Photo: FarOutFocus, H.P. Sørensen, 2013.



The Sámi mythology describes a hunting scene, where several hunters and other actors, represented in different star constellations, participate in a cosmic hunt after a moose/reindeer (Sarvves). The big ungulate grazes peacefully across the sky and avoids being killed due to the position of the North star (Stella Polaris), which according to the myth, holds the sky in place. If it is destroyed, the sky will fall (Sergejeva, 2011; Nord-Norsk Vitensenter u.d.). The hunters can therefore not get a good aim at their prey, and the hunt continues infinitely.

In the art-science integrated workshop, the theme opens for teaching in natural science about the history of the universe, what a star is, and about the planets in our solar system. In a cultural setting, the story helps to recognize the position of the different hunters and Sarvves in relation to each other and to Stella Polaris. In this way, the participants get an understanding of how Sámi and northern people could navigate and hold track of time in the dark season without modern technology. Participants learn how to make and use a star

map, to learn and recognize the names and the shapes of Sámi star constellations and how to navigate with the starry sky. We use Sámi myths about star constellations but are open to participants' stories and knowledge of other myths connected to star constellations in the north. Participants get to know the Sámi constellations by practical-esthetical exploratory working methods, using drawing, dramatization, making their own "star gazers" with one or several of the actors in the hunt, and by using stamp printing by carving out star shapes in vegetables to print the constellation on cloth or reindeer skin. We invite participants to engage in Land Art by working together using available natural materials or lights to recreate the hunting scene from the mythology using the star map. The activity seems to engage pupils, students, and teachers, especially in

the outdoor activities when participants are challenged to project the hunting scene from the star map onto the ground. A holistic and authentic setting and being outdoors is important for the activity to engage and to be remembered.

The myth about the Sámi starry sky is deeply rooted in our northern way of life and the participants get the opportunity to reconnect to this part of our common cultural identity through artistic expression. The workshop is clearly rooted in the Arctic since we Northerners experience the same seasons and the same star constellations and could bring people from different cultures together to share their stories and mythologies. In this way, the workshop contributes to a New Genre Art Education in the Arctic. ●

"Making the constellation outdoors was being the most active in relation to what one should learn. The most educational thing was to recreate what we had done on paper and leather."
 – Workshop Participant

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INFO

The Workshop team consisted of Mette Gårdvik, Karin Stoll and Wenche Sørmo at Nord University, Faculty of Education and Arts.

Participants were teachers (Norwegian and Swedish), teacher students, pupils aged 11-16 in northern Norway and Alaska, and Russian art students.

The place and setting for the workshops varied, but we strived to arrange a holistic and authentic setting outside with a bonfire, storytelling, tasting of reindeer meat and using the star map to navigate the sky to find the location of the constellations.

The workshops were arranged from 2023-2024.

Together with Professor Gary Hoffman we made a short film, showing how we have been arranging workshops with the Sámi myth of the starry sky as a theme (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M62swt2BOzE>).

"I thought it was fun in a way to live almost like a Sámi that day, - how they lived."
 – Workshop Participant

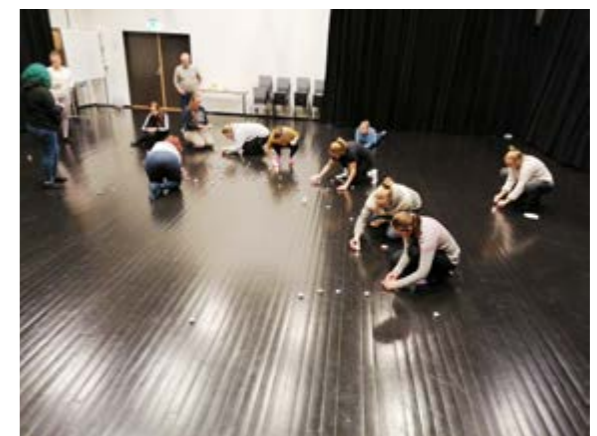
Figure 2.

► **a.** The installation is part of the teaching activity at Campus Nesna, where teacher students from kindergarten teacher education project the constellations from the cosmic hunting scene on the ground. Students used branches that had blown from the trees after a storm to make their land art, 2019. Photo: Jo Leander Paulsen, 2019.

▼ **b.** Pupils get to know the different star constellations and actors in the cosmic hunt. They draw, write the Sami names of the actors, and make their own vegetable stamps to print the star constellations onto cloth or skin, 2018. Photo: Wenche Sørmo, 2018.



► **c.** The last picture shows how it also is possible to do the installation inside, here using small candles in the Black-box at Nesna Campus, 2023. Photo: Wenche Sørmo, 2023.



"I must stop swimming in the sea! I get them in my mouth!"

– Participant

"Are they in the water all the time??"

– Participant

Planktonic Organisms in the Arctic Sea

Wenche Sørmo, Karin Stoll and Mette Gårdvik

Nord University, Norway

This essay explores the possibilities and challenges of art-science integration in facilitating collaborative sustainability action in local settings with a spotlight on plankton. Planktonic organisms are very small, but some of the most important organisms in the oceans' food chain.

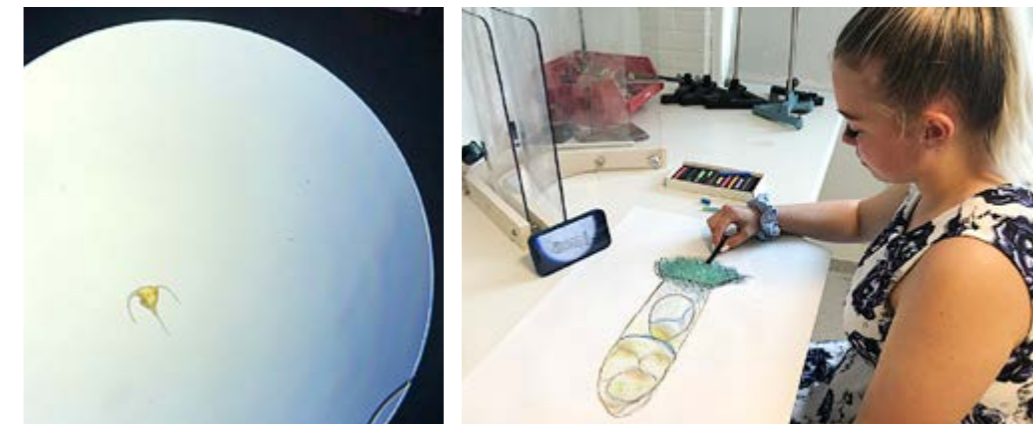
Planktonic organisms are invisible to us and are therefore abstract. We wanted the participants to become familiarized with plankton by studying them in microscopes, then drawing them and creating large examples on the beach using community art.

Sustainability challenges are simultaneously scientific and cultural. Through the integration of the arts in action-oriented education for sustainable development, arts play a vital role in social transformation, mobilizing for social change, strengthening affective ties between people and places, and developing emotional binds that motivate action (Trott et al., 2020).

The goal of this community art workshop was to learn about the importance of planktonic organisms in the Arctic Sea, which have a huge importance for human settlements in Arctic coastal communities.

Figures 1–4. Students collected their own samples of planktonic organisms from their local environment and gained experience in how to make microscopical preparations from the samples.

Photos: Mette Gårdvik, 2023.



Activities involved harvesting plankton, exploring microscope samples, and recreating their shapes and colours in large formats to make the invisible organisms visible to the community through drawings and Land Art on the local beach. Arranging for the participants to express themselves visually in an artistic setting and lifting plankton from an invisible microscopic object to a large and colourful pastel drawing, creates interaction and motivation to understand connections in nature in their regions. The project provides room for multidisciplinary approach methods, research-based learning and contact with the local environment using community art to

show sustainable portraits of the planktonic organisms.

Visual expressions like drawing and Land Art are about making traces and about communication including visualization, reflection, explanation, description, and observation (Frisch, 2011). Artistic expressions contribute to learning in all subjects (Cromley et al., 2019; Skjelbred, 2021) and help us to understand complex concepts and subject matter (Fan, 2015; Wu & Rau, 2019).

The participants' creative work shows how learning takes place in the movement between

the subjects. The working methods promote in-depth learning not only cognitively but with the entire sensory apparatus. Using exploratory and practical aesthetic methods, participants become acquainted with plankton from their regions.

The teaching project stimulated the participants' curiosity and gave them experience and knowledge about the ocean as an ecosystem. It contributed to developing positive attitudes to the ocean and a better understanding of its ecological relationships. ●

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Figures 5–6. The drawings were exhibited, and the oceans' food chains were dramatized to get to know the importance of the tiny planktons. Photos: Wenche Sørmo, 2023.



Figures 7–8. The students were introduced to Land Art as an art form through rebuilding their organisms in the tidal zone. Photo: Karin Stoll, 2023.

"It was fun to see plankton in the microscope, but it was difficult. But I got help from the supervisors."

– Participant

INFO

The Workshop team consisted of Wenche Sørmo, Karin Stoll and Mette Gårdvik at Nord University, Faculty of Education and Arts. Participants were teacher students from Ilisimatusarfik, Nuuk, Greenland, Nord University, Nesna Campus, and from the University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland. The workshop was in Nuuk at the teacher education faculty and the local beach in the town centre and was arranged in May 2023.



"Campfire coffee: the calm, the coziness, the joy, the expectations, the warmth, the community, the good feelings, mastery, the feeling of being".

- participant

"The best place to meet people, old and new, sense the place and nature-coexist and create and share memories".

- participant

◀ **Figure 1.** The art of making Campfire Coffee, Saltfjellet, Northern Norway. Photo: Mette Gårdvik, 2023.

Campfire Coffee in the Arctic

Karin Stoll, Wenche Sørmo and Mette Gårdvik

Nord University, Norway

For more than a hundred thousand years, people have made fires as it makes one feel safe and warm. The activity is deeply rooted as tacit knowledge in both our shared arctic culture and landscape. In our performance, we use the tradition of making coffee on a bonfire to connect people and give a sense of belonging to our Arctic region. In this art-based investigation, we exchanged knowledge with each other, local people and visitors in the Arctic.

One aim of the cooperative project, New Genre Art Education in the Arctic, is to create a platform for new collaborations in Art-based support of sustainability, social justice, and well-being for all citizens in communities in the Arctic, through dialogical and participatory art-based methods. Campfire coffee is a beloved and timeless tradition among the people of the North and provides a unique, warming, and social experience in nature (Ryd, 2018). In social settings around a warm fire with a black pot in the centre,

people often start talking and telling stories. In this way, campfire coffee helps create an atmosphere and framework for sharing stories, knowledge and exploring one's own identity. In this performance, we wanted to share this tradition to embrace and promote respect and cultural sensitivity for the Northern way of living and invited participants to exchange experiences and gain insight into each other's lives by the fire.

The performance was carried out in different places and settings, first on Saltfjellet in Northern Norway in May 2023, beneath the Arctic Circle at the beginning of our journey to Greenland, where we would meet our partners in New Gender Arctic Art Education for the first time (Gårdvik, et al., 2023). By the fire, we reflected on our understanding of "North" and "the Arctic" and elaborated on the meaning

and importance for us while enjoying campfire coffee in our traditional wooden cups (koksa). When we met our colleagues in the AEA-project in Nuuk, we picked up the thread and lit a new campfire on a stroll in the mountain Lille Malene, Quassussuaq. By doing this, we wanted to facilitate sharing stories about our common Arctic landscapes, cultures, identities and traditions. The performance was part of the New Genre Arctic Art and Art Education exhibition in Bodø, 2024, with a live performance outside the gallery for people passing by the busy street in the city centre. In the social setting around a warm fire with a black pot in the centre, people spontaneously stopped and joined the campfire event. They got a cup of coffee in a "koksa" and shared their good stories from experiences with bonfires and campfire coffee with the campfire community.

Our performance was based on the tradition of making coffee on a bonfire, an activity that embraces and promotes respect and cultural sensitivity, as well as cultural, environmental, and social sustainability in the Arctic landscape. The concept refers to our way of being and dwelling, and the tasks we perform in our daily landscapes (Ingold, 1993). This is deeply rooted as tacit knowledge in our shared culture in the arctic landscape. ●

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INFO

The performance team consisted of Karin Stoll, Wenche Sørmo and Mette Gårdvik at Nord University, Faculty of Education and Arts. Participants were the writers, colleagues in AEA and people who stopped and sat down with a cup of coffee by the fire on the main street in Bodø at the UArctic Congress 2024. The workshops were arranged from 2023-2024, and the place and setting for the performance varied.

"It feels amazing to be outside by the fire. You can feel by all senses the smell of the fire, the taste of the coffee with smoke, nice reindeer rug. The Arctic brings all senses & gets you closer to nature."

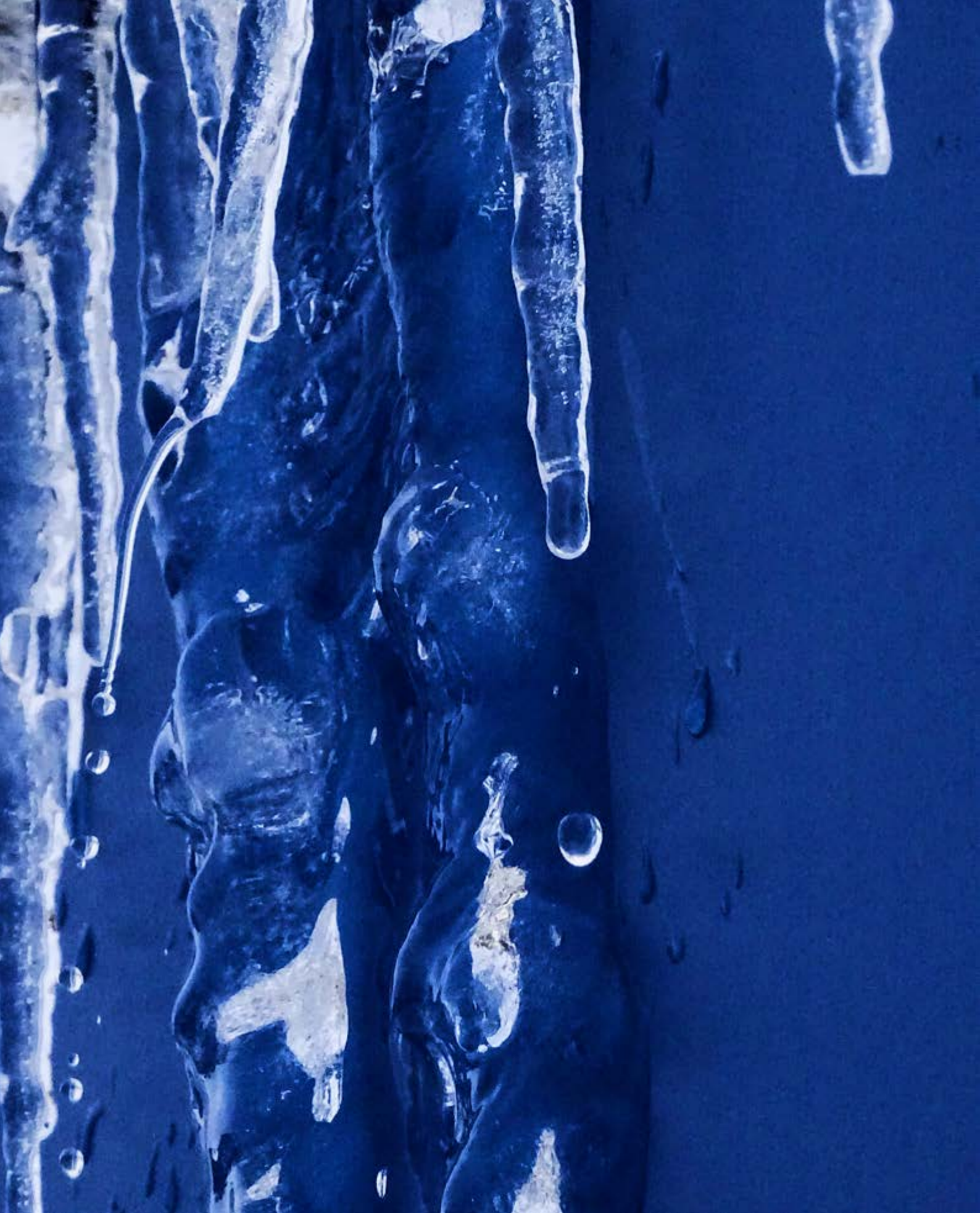
- participant

"Eating wood and air, giving company & share, stories old & stories cold, imaging a future far & strong, one should fear it's not that clear but coffee & wood brings more than anything could!"

- participant

Figure 2. Campfire Coffee on the main street of Bodø City. Photo: Wenche Sørmo, 2024.





Figures 1–3. Photos taken by the participants in the workshop. Maniitsoq, February 2023. © Siunissaq.

“The young participants communicated that the workshop opened pathways of creativity and for becoming promoters of community-art events and of aesthetical expressions to build social, cultural, and environmental sustainability.”

– tutor

The Sound of Walking in Melting Snow

Peter Berliner and Elena de Casas

Association Siunissaq, Greenland

When we think of the Arctic, many images and sounds come to our minds. One of these is the sound of a snowstorm howling round the corners of the house deep in a winter’s night. We sense how the wind shakes the house on its way further on into the darkness. You hear the snowflakes rustling against the window. Another memory is the cadence of trickling water in the spring, dripping from icicles, running in small streams down the street and the sides of the hills. When you walk, you hear a slushing noise, step by step, and your own breathing, interlaced with the susurrus and plopping sounds of the water. You are part of that splash, splosh concert. You are enmeshed in the melting ice and snow, present in the transformation of the snow into small streams of water.

The participants created a video on walking in snow. Then, the young people planned, curated, and implemented the community art event where they showed the video to the local community. It was well received by the audience as a gift and a shared experience.

It was early spring, the sun shone, and the snow began to melt, first one little drop, then another. The video shows close-ups of melting snow and ice and the reverberance of rhythmic footsteps through the slush.

In the workshop, participants gradually became more attuned to the snow, the ice, the sounds of dripping meltwater, and of footsteps in the melting snow as a means of aesthetic expression. The video transmits the perspectives of the videographers, and as we walk with them through this wondrous landscape, it becomes



evident that we are inextricably entwined with the material world. This experience conveys a sense of identity rooted in the world of melting snow. The video not only depicts this environment but also illustrates how we perceive, engage with, and shape our identity in our surroundings.

As an audience, you feel absorbed into the sounds, the images, and the slow rhythm of walking through a landscape of melting snow and ice. The video transmits a deep sensation of the beauty of the often-unnoticed nuances such as a drop falling from an icicle, the patterns of the porous snow, the slushing sound of footsteps, the symphony of sounds. For instance, suddenly you see the icicles as

"The workshop, its process, and its outcome exemplify New Genre Art Education by demonstrating how deeply we, as humans, are immersed in our environment. This immersion underscores the necessity of fostering eco-cultural and social sustainability to protect the unity between humanity and our surroundings. The environment is within us, and we are within the environment."

- tutor

INFO

Soeren Zeuth, Tina Enghoff, Peter Josefsen, and a group of eight young people at the Majoriaq Centre in Maniitsoq did a creativity workshop on snow. In March 2023. The workshop was part of the Centre's creativity course and was implemented in collaboration with Siunissaq and the New Genre Art Education UArctic project. Its goal was to learn how to create community art by using natural materials for aesthetic expressions, curating an exhibit of the artwork and organizing a community art event.



sculptures made by the environment, all of them with its distinctive shape and all part of the melting.

Seeing the video is an adventurous discovery of the world anew with its wonders. You are captivated and amazed by observing, listening to and identifying with the rich details of the landscape you belong to. You become part of it, and it becomes part of you. ●



◀ Figures 1–4. Art teacher student and international exchange students of the University of Lapland in Finland and Sami University of Applied Sciences in Norway familiarize themselves with the Sámi handicrafts, duodji, to create a visual identity for the venue of the Indigenous Film Congress in Kautokeino using snow. Photos 1–2: Timo Jokela, 3–4 Antti Stöckell, 2018.

With Snow: Winter Art as an Intra-action with Northern Ecoculture and Northern Knowledge

Antti Stöckell and Timo Jokela
University of Lapland, Finland

The artworks created in the snow sculpting workshop at the village centres can be understood as public art that represents a new genre of Arctic art. In this context, the foundation of the art is Northern ecocultural knowledge about the cycle of the seasons as well as the essence and impact of winter, snow, and ice on Northern and Arctic life.

The *With Snow* winter art workshop was held in Sámi village Kautokeino, Norway, in collaboration between the Sámi University of Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland. The workshop explored the possibilities of combining the snow sculpting tradition with Indigenous craftsmanship, in this case, the Sámi duodji tradition, which holds special significance for Sámi culture and identity.

The themes for the snow sculptures were drawn from the Sámi duodji and practical items and tools related to reindeer herding, fishing, and other ways of life in Northern ecoculture and were developed through the studies and ideas of Sámi University students. Finnish and international students from the University of Lapland were divided into different workgroups, where the sculptures were created together with Sámi experts on the theme. Everyone involved in the snow sculpting process was learning something new from each other.

In this way, the encounter with Northern ecoculture also functioned as a space and situation for intercultural learning. The interaction between the students enabled the Sámi students to identify their own strengths and revitalize their ecocultural traditions as contemporary public art. Northern knowledge and the relationship with the winter

"I see the workshop as an intra-action where contemporary art and Sámi handicraft, as well as the roles of teachers and learners, blend into a fruitful space and situation for learning"

- tutor

environment played a key role in both the subjects of the artworks and the skills needed for their creation.

The workshop's working methods were felt to respect the vital traditions of the Indigenous people, while also enabling a rich interaction between all participants

through shared activities. Both the process and the final results indicate that situational and place-based activities foster a sense of inclusion, which, in turn, promotes revitalization, decolonization, strong identity, and cultural pride.

After a few days of work, the courtyard of a hotel in Kautokeino was transformed by the collective of sculptures into a field that conveyed the living cultural heritage of the village. The sculptures also had a functional purpose, serving as visual symbols of local

culture during the International Indigenous Broadcasting Congress.

When viewed from an art education perspective, winter art in villages, schools, and schoolyard projects has served as a tool for inspiring teachers, pupils, parents, and grandparents to engage and participate in wintery environments. Winter art should be seen in its entirety as a method of new genre Arctic art education as well as a social activity that can strengthen cultural vitality and Arctic sustainability. ●

INFO

Snow sculpting workshop in Sámi village Kautokeino, Norway, in collaboration between the Sámi University of Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland. More information of winter art and AAE: Jokela, T. & Huhmarniemi, M. (2022). Arctic art education in changing nature and culture. *Education in the North*, 29(2), 4–27. <https://doi.org/10.26203/55f2-1c04>

► **Figures 5–6.** The Sámi man's traditional hat as a subject of study and a model for the composition of a sculpture. Photos: Antti Stöckell, 2018.





Figure 1. Planting workshop, Group 1.
Photo: Annika Kokko, 2023.

"The plants were our babies. We gave them names, and we were super and strong."

"We are used to plant for people. It felt good to be able to give something back."

Knowing through Soil, Care, and Community

Saara Lappeteläinen

University of Lapland, Finland

In this workshop, we used planting as an art-based tool to find a connection to a local sociocultural landscape and each other. As art educators, we questioned our contribution to our community and a better future. In this workshop, I wanted to approach this question from an ecosocial point of view, aiming to bring local knowledge and action together with global thinking – believing, of course, in art-based practice as a tool for reaching our goal.

As part of the Living in the Landscape (LiLa) summer school 2023, I organized this workshop with two fellow students from the University of Lapland. The workshop was working partly as art education and partly as an art-based method for landscape research, which is at the core of the LiLa summer school. The workshop's goal was to evoke thinking and knowledge about ecosystems and the intertwined connections that we are a part of along with everything else, and feelings of community, hope, and the capability to make a difference.

This workshop was theoretically based on 'ecosocial civilization', which is a concept that aims to find a more sustainable order of living through questioning the Western concept of a good life, finding togetherness, and adopting a larger circle of care. Also important for this theory is to look at the hierarchy upon which we have built our society and change it so that we start honouring the limitations ecology sets for our actions (Salonen & Bardy, 2015). In the workshop, we approached this with performative, communal, and environmental art-based practice. For the workshop,

we had acquired plans that benefit the local ecosystems and agreed with our contact person from Västerbotten Museum that we could do the planting in the area connected to their outdoor museum.

To reach our aim to think differently about our place in the ecosystems and the possibilities in our actions, we wanted to do the planting a little differently from what we are used to. We often plant to make our surroundings look pretty, which can often be harmful to the ecosystem. In the workshop, we wanted to change the approach and reasons behind the planting. In this workshop, we planted for the ecosystem where people cannot always see the plants. Another important angle to the workshop was strengthening the sense of community and sharing knowledge with each other.

During the planting, the majority of participants did not want to use the gloves we provided because they wanted to feel the soil with their hands. The bodily knowing with the use of all the senses, care, and nurturing were

very present at the workshop. We also had a lot of feedback from participants who felt empowered, a joy of giving back, enjoyment of interacting with the ground and nature, and a sense of togetherness and teamwork. People also said that planting like this was a new experience, and it felt strange but good.

Because of practical reasons and restrictions, the surroundings and the vegetation at the workshop location were unknown to us organizers. Even with local contacts, we must consider whether future workshops should

only be held in familiar locations to prevent unintentional harm to the ecosystem. Having the opportunity to give back to a place we were visiting was seen as very valuable. This is definitely something to apply in future educational situations and within the daily landscapes of communities. ●

Reference

Salonen, A. & Bardy, M. (2015). Ekososiaalinen sivistys herättää luottamusta tulevaisuuteen. *Aikuiskasvatus*, 35 (1). [Ecosocial civilization evokes trust towards the future. *Adult Education*, 35 (1).] <https://doi.org/10.33336/aik.94118>

"The secret was in working together."



Figure 2. Planting workshop, Group 2. Photo: Katri Pyy, 2023.



Figure 3. Teamwork, interacting with nature and each other. Photo: Katri Pyy, 2023.



Figure 5. Caring and nurturing. Photo: Katri Pyy, 2023.

Figure 6. Watering was an important ritual for many. Photo: Katri Pyy, 2023.



INFO

Living in the Landscape workshop team: Annika Kokko, Saara Lappeteläinen, and Katri Pyy.

University of Lapland. Participants: LiLa community 2023. Collaboration: ASAD network, Västerbotten museum. Umeå, Sweden, May 2023.



Figure 1. Listening and sensing the landscape during the warm up of co-knowing -assignment. Photo: Emmi Kairenius, 2022.



Figure 2. Found materials as algae was studied and understood as an active partner in intra-action. Photo: Runa Meidell, 2022.

Knowing with Other-Than-Human Landscapes

Emmi Kairenius

University of Lapland, Finland

With the aim of sustainability, Living in the Landscape (LiLa) summer school in 2022 fostered a posthumanistic approach to art-based landscape research. The art-based activities were introduced in online seminars and implemented during the hybrid fieldwork week in Norway and Scotland. The posthumanistic methodologies were carried out with reflections on material culture, shared dinners, and co-knowing with other-than-human landscapes. The art-based activities created new knowledge, as the landscape was studied as an active partner through a new materialistic approach. Processes of co-knowing strengthened relations with other participants and deepened an understanding of local ecocultures.

LiLa developed ecologically, socially, and culturally sustainable practices through posthuman methodologies. The paradigm shift from humanism to posthumanism generated art-based activities that offered a new approach to art-based landscape research. Activities were directed to create a deeper understanding of local ecocultures, which can also be described as intertwining local ecosystems and culture (Pretty, 2011). In LiLa's context, landscape is understood socio-culturally, and the knowledge created through art-based landscape research is presented through artworks and visual essays.

Combining current affairs related to northern ecocultures with fine art expression is also discussed as new genre Arctic art that brings artistic methods and materials into political debate (Jokela et al., 2021).

The art-based activities were introduced and implemented in online seminars and accomplished during the fieldwork week. The first activity, *An Object Task*, guided participants to introduce themselves through an object from their daily lives. The activity was based on the *taskscape* defined by Ingold (1993), and it was created to reflect the material culture

Figure 3. Found material from the warm up of co-knowing -assignment. Photo: Liisa Ahola, 2022.



and the term. The online task brought participants together as they shared stories and memories about their culture hidden in daily activities and tools.

The second activity, *Around a Common Table*, invited participants to share dinners. Each country team prepared a meal reflecting cultural traditions and nature connectedness. The assignment brought up stories about activities (such as mushroom picking and fishing) that are linked to living in nature. Such traditions are typically strong in Indigenous and northern cultures and knowledge systems that evolved together with local ecosystems and seasonal changes (Huhmarniemi et al., 2021, p. 5–7). Sharing a meal that lifts local food traditions could also be a way of fostering cultural revitalisation. In Træna, we enjoyed a vegan version of the traditional Swedish dish *palt*, demonstrating an example of renewing traditions more sustainably.

The third activity, *Co-knowing*, invited the participants to challenge the processes of knowledge formation. The idea behind *co-knowing* was to broaden the understanding of commu-

"Algae, stones, wood pieces, and found wool were topics that generated discussion, yet active partners of intra-action that guided artistic processes."

nity from human-centred to posthumanistic by studying the ways of other-than-human entities. The gathered information was shifted into artistic expression, and the result was presented either as spontaneous happenings during the fieldwork week or exhibited as final artworks in the summer school exhibition. The co-knowing task was guided in Træna with an introduction where the participants worked in pairs in the spirit of the game called Follow the Leader. The leader started exploring the landscape guided by their senses, and the other one started to follow and study the leader's ways of perception.

Co-knowing deepened relations with local ecocultures as well as with other participants. Paying close attention to other-than-human landscapes created situations where the material environment was explored and understood bodily. Algae, stones, wood pieces, and found wool were topics that generated discussion, yet active partners of intra-action that guided artistic processes. As participants summarised the co-knowing task, 'We carried each other in our pockets', meaning that we carried each other's ideas and ways of perceiving and studying the landscape with us, even from distances. Co-knowing with landscapes created interaction and intra-action between the participants, but it also raised ethical questions about involving other species for our own purposes.

The posthumanistic approach to art-based landscape research required participants to

be open to the unpredictable processes of co-knowing. The methods resulted in new knowledge and concrete acts for sustainability, which were presented as artworks, visual essays, art-based acts, and discussions during the summer school. ●

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Figure 4. Shared dinners and cooking in the Træna landscape brought up stories of traditions connected to local ecocultures. Photocollage: Emmi Kairenius. Photos: Emmi Kairenius and Elina Härkönen, 2022.



INFO

Living in the Landscape Summer School 2022 workshop team Emmi Kairenius and Liisa Ahola (planning of the art-based activities). Participants: Researchers, Master's, and doctoral students from the University of Lapland in Finland, Nord University in Norway, Umeå University in Sweden, and University of West of Scotland. Online seminars in March 2022, Fieldschool in Norway and Scotland in May 2022. Exhibition in gallery Kilo, Rovaniemi in November–December 2022.



Figure 1. Carding wool by hand to align the fibres into fine felt.
Photo: Lola Cervantes, 2024.



Figure 2. Katariina Angeria shows how to use a wool carding mill.
Photo: Dorsa Abolfazli, 2024.

Bike Felting Experiment for Wool Innovation

Maria Huhmarniemi and Lola Cervantes

University of Lapland, Finland

A team of researchers, local knowledge holders, and university students came together to experiment with transforming the ancient method of horse-aided felting into bike felting. Horse-aided felting has been used in many countries to create shelters. The goal of the bike felting experiment was to revitalise the tradition of large-scale felting of raw wool in contemporary society, thereby supporting the use of local wool in rural Finland.

Small-scale sheep farming supports biodiversity: grazing meadows are rich in diverse grasses and insects. In Lapland, sheep farms are often connected to cultural tourism and are scattered far apart. Due to the limited wool production and long distances, the wool is not collected for industrial use and is often considered waste rather than a resource.

Indigenous people traditionally used unwashed raw wool for felting. A traditional shelter *yurt* is covered with a thick wool blanket felted with a horse. The wool was laid out in a sheet, wrapped around a log, and pulled by a horse until it felted. Unwashed wool is naturally greasy, which makes it ideal for felting, but these techniques have largely been forgotten.

In the bike felting workshop, we wrapped a sheet of wool around a plastic pipe and pulled it behind a bicycle through the country landscape near the Navetta Gallery cafeteria in the village of Äkäslompolo. Two local wool craft experts, Hanna-Maija Sandqvist and Katariina Angeria, guided us and shared valuable insight of wool as material.

We successfully felted the wool and are working on developing this method further. Our vision is to create a felted blanket for an existing shelter currently covered in plastic and to design new contemporary architecture that blends with the cultural landscape and supports the sustainability of nature tourism. This development is part of the “Felted Futures” concept

Figure 3. Preparing raw wool into felting.
Photo: Lola Cervantes, 2024.



“Wool felting is a craft of connection, as witnessed in the Felted Futures workshop. It is a collaborative endeavour that fosters connection.”

– Lola Cervantes, doctoral candidate in methodology for collaborating through wool crafts

by doctoral researchers Lola Cervantes and architect Hanieh Ahmadi.

Domestic wool in Finland has a positive ecological impact on natural diversity. However, the global wool economy, such as merino wool production, is linked to soil erosion. The ecological footprint of merino wool is significant, especially when it is not a byproduct of meat production. The Wool Innovation project at the Faculty of Art and Design, University of Lapland aims to support small and medium-sized companies in Lapland by revitalising and utilising wool craft heritage for the contemporary craft, design, and tourism sectors by approached of new genre Arctic art education.

We strive to develop new wool-based products and services sustainably, enhancing growth and innovation in crafts and cultural tourism by sharing and renewing the cultural heritage of wool crafts. The project contributes to the growth and profitability of the craft and textile sectors, as well as rural tourism in Lapland. Indirectly, it also seeks to help preserve biodiversity, maintain cultural landscapes, and promote the sustainability of the tourism industry. The Wool Innovation project is co-funded by the European Union. ●

"It is valuable to be able to share the experience and know-how accumulated over the decades with young researchers."

- Hanna-Maija Sandqvist, knowledge holder of wool and crafting

INFO

The *Felted Futures: From Fleece to Felt* workshop was held in Äkäslompola in 2024. Artists and designers Lola Cervantes, Maria Huhmarniemi, Hanieh Ahmadi, Fian Arrafiani and Dorsa Abolfazli collaborated with locals. The cafeteria Navetta Gallery hosted the event. The Wool Innovation project, co-funded by the European Union, funded it.

▼ Figure 4. Bike felting experiment. Photo: Dorsa Abolfazli, 2024.



▲ Figure 5. Felted wool. Photo: Dorsa Abolfazli, 2024.



Figure 1. Plant- and hand-dyed wool to be shared by the collective members. Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi, 2023.



Figure 2. Collective member Tanya Kravtsov crafting outdoors. Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi, 2023.

Embroidered Stances as Craftivism and Ecoculture

Maria Huhmarniemi, Lola Cervantes, Tanya Kravtsov, Minna Kovero and Elina Luiro
University of Lapland, Finland

The Embroidered Stances art collective revitalised traditional Nordic wool embroidery through the lens of craftivism. A collective of 14 artists, crafters, activists, and artist-researchers used wool fabric and naturally hand-dyed wool yarn and showed the embroideries as an exhibition.

The *Embroidered Stances* exhibition at the Craft Museum of Finland in Jyväskylä breathed new life into the tradition of wool blanket embroidery, situating it within a contemporary societal context. The exhibition explored the aesthetics of traditional materials, such as plant and mushroom-dyed wool yarn, while reinterpreting the visual language of

blanket embroidery to express personal and political themes through patterns and designs.

Though all 14 collective members met in Rovaniemi, they came from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Finland, Russia, Eastern and Southern Europe, and Latin America. Embroidery was embraced as a dialogue-driven practice, providing a platform for sharing and debating social and political issues rooted in the diverse experiences of participants. The gatherings and embroideries by the collective served as a form of activism, using the medium to engage in societal dialogues. Their work addressed topics such as queer rights, biodiversity loss, land use conflicts, and the essence of craftsmanship.

The collective's title in Finnish, *Kirjotut kannat*, linguistically referred to embroidery as arguments and statements. This initiative was deeply rooted in activist approaches within contemporary art, encompassing both craftivism and activism. The Finnish word "kannat"

also embodied cultural origins and ancestral connections.

Collective members also did plant and mushroom dyes for wool yarn. They picked plants and mushrooms, guiding them to follow the year's seasonal cycle. The process with natural dyes, from hand-picked materials to local wool and embroidered figures and patterns, was typical to Arctic art in which making art is interwoven into an ecocultural lifestyle.

Exhibition visitors were invited to experiment with wool embroidery. Visitors of various ages and cultural backgrounds made their patterns on small woollen patches and sensed wool as a material.

The Wool Innovation project collaborated with the collective. The project revitalises the wool crafting traditions for sustainability in the craft and design field and promotes the economic viability of rural regions in Lapland, Finland. Wool Innovation facilitates craft revitalisation

"I can hear my mother's laughs and vague stories and anecdotes about my family. I associate yarn as a family memory that nowadays resonates and feels familiar again through our shared artistic project. Yarn can also become a love language."

– Lola Cervantes,
doctoral candidate



Figure 3. Elina Luiro, *Camouflaw*, 2023. The embroidery portrays the plight of northern animal species visibly impacted by global warming and the decreasing duration of the snow-covered season in the Arctic region. The snowless early winter is fatal for many of these animals, as their white winter coat can now easily be spotted from the dark, snowless background. Photo: Marko Junttila, 2023.



Figure 4. Minna Kovero during the setting up of the exhibition. Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi, 2023.

Figures 5–6. Exhibition visitors embroidered their patterns onto smaller pieces of wool in the Craft Museum of Finland. Photos: Fabiola Cervantes, 2024.

to meet the needs of crafters, the tourism sector, and broader society. The project team documented all aspects of the revitalisation and will produce learning materials for craft revitalisation. The project develops new wool-based products and services. It improves the growth and innovation capacity in the context of crafts and cultural tourism by sharing and renewing the cultural heritage of crafts.

The research contributes to three doctoral studies, while Cervantes, Kovero and Kravtsov work on their dissertations. Cervantes focuses on the sustainability and innovation of wool crafts, Kovero on revitalising traditional patterns for contemporary textile and jewellery design and Kravtsov on two-way integration of long-term locals and newcomers through arts and crafts workshops with natural materials. Dissertations are based on a series of solo- and co-written articles and artistic parts. ●

Read more about the project

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 Huhmarniemi, M. (Ed.) (2024). *Kirjotut kannat / Embroidered Stances*. Lapin yliopisto. <http://www.urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-337-417-1>

INFO

The Embroidered Stances exhibition featured artists Lola Cervantes, Maria Huhmarniemi, Elina Härkönen, Tenka Issakainen, Tanya Kravtsov, Alina Korotovskaia, Minna Kovero, Elina Luiro, Miia Mäkinen, Niina Oinas, Petra Raudaskoski, Misia Siennicka, Ezgi Tanriverdi, and Sannu Vaarala.

The exhibition was shown in the Craft Museum of Finland 13.1. –7.4.2024. The exhibition was supported by the Finnish Heritage Agency, Kansan sivistysrahasto, University of Lapland and WoolInnovation-project co-funded by European Union.



Figure 1. A device by Tommi Yläjoki was used for a performance to initiate reflection on forest restoration. Photo by Maria Huhmarniemi, 2023.

Observation of Change

Maria Huhmarniemi

University of Lapland, Finland

The Observation of Change reflects and communicates ecological restoration that helps nature to become more natural: decolonise birch forests from planted spruce trees. Artists engage in residencies in the national park and work with park managers to explore ecological restoration, raising questions about environmental ethics and the human role. The project includes art workshops for school pupils, further enhancing its educational aspect.

In Norway and other parts of Europe, planting spruce trees has disrupted ecosystems, contributing to biodiversity loss. In Nordland's Junkerdal Nature Reserve, Northern Norway, native mountain birch forests are threatened by the spread of spruce trees, initially planted from the 1920s to the 1960s to promote forestry. These spruces take space from native species. Restoration efforts are underway to recover birch forests, including logging and tree veteranisation in 2018–2021. The long-term biodiversity research aims to identify effective restoration methods.

The artistic response *Observation of Change* (OOC) is a Nordic collaboration that harnesses the power of art and art education interventions to reflect on the ethics of ecological restoration and communicate biodiversity research. This approach allows participants to document nature, conceptualise environmental changes, and broaden their understanding of conservation in the Arctic. The project, with its several artistic productions serves as an example of art's inspiring role in addressing environmental issues.

During the first OOC residency at National Park, a participatory performance facilitated by Tommi Yläjoki took place in the Arboretum of the National Park Centre. Participants had the opportunity to engage with light art and explore the themes of ongoing nature restoration within the nature reserve. Through light, attendees could observe the space, feel the atmosphere, and contemplate the ever-changing nature. The performance led participants to consider generations of trees, humans, and science as human interventions in a more-than-human nature. This performance followed a pedagogical turn in art, using

"The feeling was strong, I'm not sure if I felt sadness or if the sight just gave me so much to think about."

– participant's feedback given for Yläjoki

performative public art to evoke reflection on forest restoration and forest science.

Anja Kath Lande explored traditional ecological knowledge to find sustainable uses for spruce that could help control its spread. The spruce root weaving practices of the Tlingit people of southeast Alaska inspired her. Indigenous Arctic peoples used spruce roots for practical items and ornaments, making dense, finely woven containers that could serve as water cups or cooking vessels. Root harvesting was traditionally done with care to avoid damaging tree growth. Lande harvested spruce roots and learned the ancient method. Living by the seashore, she also collected polypropylene ropes washed up on the beach. She then led a workshop for the OOC project, teaching spruce root weaving and using these ropes as practice material for beginners. This workshop initiated the revitalisation of root-binding craft with the help of modern materials. It also reflects on the sustainable use of crafting materials and human-nature interactions.

Two art workshops were held for school pupils during the second OOC residency. These ses-



Figure 2. A Light tunnel in the participatory performance by Tommi Yläjoki. Photos: Laila Ingvaldsen, 2023.



sions introduced 14-year-old students to tackle environmental issues through art. The pupils were divided into groups and tasked with creating art pieces, reflecting their connection to the more-than-human world. Some pupils were

enthusiastic about experimenting with natural materials, while others wanted to play and chill in nature. Presenting their artworks to the group sparked new insights as the pupils observed how each group approached the same task uniquely. ●

INFO

The OOC (2023–2025) collaborates with forest restoration efforts in Junkerdal National Park and serves as an educational platform. Artists Birgitta Linhart, Laila Ingvaldsen, Maria Huhmarniemi, Esa-Pekka Isomursu, Tommi Yläjoki and Johannes Pekkonen, collective Mette Gårdvik–Karin Stoll–Wenche Sørmo, artist-curator Anja Kath Lande and national part manager Johan Rova participate in it. Institutional collaborators are the Adde Zetterquist art gallery, (Mid Nordland National Park Board, Nordland National Park Centre, Norwegian Institute of Nature Research, the Norwegian University of Life Sciences, the University of Lapland, Nord University, and the ASAD network. Art exhibitions tour in the Adde Zetterquist Art Gallery, Havremagasinet and University of Lapland. Project is funded by the Nordic Culture Fund.

Figure 3–4. Spruce root and plastic binding workshop to learn traditional craft methods and consider sustainability. Photo on left: Birgitta Linhart, 2023. Photo on the right: Anja Kath Lande, 2024.



► Figure 5. Birgitta Linhart facilitated school pupil's production in the workshop as part of the project. Photo: Birgitta Linhart, 2024.



"The workshops left a lasting impact on the participating school pupils – energetic and eager to experiment with building from natural materials."

– Anja Kath Lande, curator at the Adde Zetterquist art gallery.

Read more about the project

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Figure 1. Photography students took a creative stand on climate change. Photos from left: Svetlana Larina, Nea Karhunen and Seila Haaga, 2023.

Photography Promotes Young People's Resilience to Climate Change

Aki Lintumäki

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In the winter of 2023, with the help of my friends, I lifted two hundred kilos of ice from Kallavesi, a local lake in Kuopio, Finland. We buried it in a pile of snow below the Puijo ski jumps. Every year, the City of Kuopio uses this huge mass of snow to create the first cross-country ski trail in the winter, to the delight of the most enthusiastic skiers. There, the ice was safe until the end of May, when it was needed once again.

I wanted to use ice in this study. It was just an artistic intuition. Ice is a challenging material to work with. It is sensitive to air temperature. It cracks easily in severe frost and turns to water in hot conditions. Ice allowed me to illustrate the effects of climate change to the photography students in a concrete way. It also helped me to inspire them to participate in the research process.

This art-based action research process was carried out in collaboration with the *On the*

Frontline of the Climate Crisis research project and Ingmanedu Vocational College for Cultural Studies in the late winter and early spring of 2023. Young photography students participated in the study.

The Study aimed to explore students' feelings and thoughts about climate change through art-based work, and to develop methods to help young people improve their resilience to climate change.

At the end of the process, the research team opened an exhibition called *IT'S MELTING - Photographs on Climate Change (SULAA - Valokuvia ilmastonmuutoksesta)* on 25 May 2023. The exhibition was open for four months.

The study consisted of five artistic tasks in which students explored climate change using different photographic techniques. We connected the artistic work with a place-based approach because we thought this would help students understand a broader phenomenon

"It will be easier for me to share my thoughts and feelings about climate change in the future."

– photography student

(Lintumäki 2023). In addition, we took the influences from New Genre Arctic Art, which combines socially engaged art practices with sustainable development (Jokela 2021 et al.).

In the first task, students shared their favourite places through photography. In the second, they created provocative advertisements on social media. The third task was a socially

Figure 2. Ice inspired us throughout the whole art-based action research process. Photos: Aki Lintumäki, 2023.



engaged art process that culminated in the creation of photograms on natural materials (Collage 2). In the fourth task, the students created a digital photo series on climate change (Collage 3). On the exhibition's opening day, we brought the ice hidden in the snow close to the gallery. The fifth task for the students was an ice sculpture performance, which we combined with the creation of photograms (Collage 4). We invited local politicians to discuss climate change with the students and audience at the opening.

At the end of the day, we crushed the ice. For some of the students, it was a very empowering moment. These students felt that they could influence their lives through art. We organised a reflective discussion for the students at the

end of the study. Some of them said that the study had given them new perspectives to face climate change. At the end of the discussion, I interpreted that perhaps these young people will be able to promote their resilience in dealing with climate change in the future. I also thought that the artist-researchers should listen to their intuition, as I did at the beginning of this research. It may lead to interesting research results. ●

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Figure 3. The students experimented with different photographic techniques. Photos: Aki Lintumäki, 2023.

Figure 4. The Sculpting of the ice captured captured the public's attention. Photos: Aki Lintumäki, 2023.



"There should have been more of these tasks."
– photography student

"Best course ever."
– photography student

INFO

The research was organised by artist-researcher Aki Lintumäki and senior researcher Jarmo Rinne from South-East Finland University of Applied Sciences and photography teacher Tuire Kurikka from Ingmanedu. It was a part of *On the Frontline of the Climate Crisis* research project, coordinated by the Youth Research and Development Centre Juvenia of South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences and the University of Lapland. The project started in 2022 and will continue until the end of 2025. The project is funded by the Kone Foundation, and it is carried out in Lapland, Eastern Finland, and the Tampere region.



Figure 1. Shielin-laavu. Photo: Gina Wall, 2024.

"The hands on learning gained by everyone during the build stage was unique, especially the focus on using locally sourced timber and experiments using heather as a contemporary material. For these reasons the project has been a privilege to work on."

Kathy Li, Stage 2 Leader
Mackintosh School of Architecture

A Northern Shelter for Shared Learning

Gina Wall¹ and Timo Jokela²

¹Glasgow School of Art, Scotland, ²University of Lapland, Finland

The shielin-bough project was a collaborative process which shared and celebrated the intangible cultural heritage of shelters, making and building and storytelling in Scottish and Finnish rural culture. The project developed innovative, multidisciplinary, place-based creative education for rural locations, prototyping new ways of doing and working together in northern places.

The *shieling* in Scotland and *laavu* in Finland are temporary shelters or dwellings built from natural materials, used by those working in nature away from permanent settlements. The thematic scope of the project allowed for the examination of Arctic and Near Arctic ecocultures in the spirit and values of the Arctic University: bridging the past and present, traditional knowledge and contemporary practices together to foster revitalisation. *Shielin-bough* is a good example of the Arctic Sustainable Art and Design Thematic Network's approach to bringing sustainability-focused research, art, and educa-

tion into practice across various Northern and Arctic regions. The project also demonstrates the porous boundaries between contemporary art, architecture, and craftsmanship discovered through new genre Arctic art education.

This project began with field trips and workshops which took place in each location, investigating the respective culture of the *shieling* and *laavu* in Scotland and Finland. The participants were brought together online to share their findings and research in a virtual symposium. A crucial part of the project was the student-led design and build of the

laavu, delivered through a two day co-design workshop and the week long FieldSchool, a live build at The Glasgow School of Art's Highlands & Islands campus. The structure has been created in collaboration, based on sharing participants' skills and diverse inter-cultural experiences. Notably, the project is interdisciplinary, with students joining from a range of educational programmes at various levels in Fine Art, Art Education, Design Innovation, and Architecture in Finland and Scotland.

The project has a deep focus on the relation between people and place, and the participating students have been concerned to ensure that the building is as sustainable as possible. In response to this, the project has used untreated wood which was locally sourced from Logie Timber, a sawmill only a handful of miles from GSA H&I. The trees that were milled were grown within a 60 mile radius of the sawmill, the students also explored the innovative use of traditional materials such as wooden shingles and thatch made from heather, sustainably sourced from the Cairngorms.

The brief for the co-design suggested that the *laavu* should sit lightly in its surroundings, and the decision not to use concrete footings or dug foundations necessitated an innovative response to this. The resulting

foundation feet, or Tenon logs, were designed by staff at the Mackintosh School of Architecture and made in collaboration with Logie Timber using large Douglas Fir logs milled to include a tenon onto which the portal frame could be attached.

It was apparent throughout the project that regardless of discipline, students thrive when engaged in experiential learning with high quality materials. Crucial to this project is learning through doing and the development of material literacies via practical handling. By engaging the students in live learning, FieldSchool responds to contemporary estrangements from tacit, embodied knowledge, exacerbated by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. For the students of architecture and fine art, handling materials at scale was especially important in coming to understand the realities of the construction. For students more used to working on screens in a design studio, the

"The collaboration between the architecture students, the environmental design students and the art education students was fantastic. They worked together, communicating well to choose the best solutions and when it came to attaching the structures their teamwork was phenomenal."

– Brodie Birss, Technician
GSA Highlands & Islands

INFO BOX

Shielin-bough was a collaborative, inter-institutional project between The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) and the University of Lapland (UoL), supported financially by the Scottish Government and the Finnish Institute UK + Ireland.

For further information please visit: www.shielinbough.co.uk

"The significance of the intercultural collaborative and practical learning developed by the shielin-bough project should not be understated. Not only has it been an invaluable opportunity for students and tutors alike to engage in the profound pursuit of cultivation and contribution as opposed to consumption but offers something much greater than the design of architectural artefacts. It is a model of process-based practical learning that considers a far broader attitude towards our occupation of the landscape and modes of collaborative engagement."

– Rob Colvin, Lecturer
Mackintosh School of Architecture



opportunity to learn new skills with materials was transformative. For teachers and students of art and education, the opportunity to work across flattened hierarchies in a genuinely engaged way was liberating and generative in terms of learning *with* and *together*. ●



Figure 2. Joining the uprights. Photo: Gina Wall, 2023.

Figure 3. Measuring. Photo: Gina Wall, 2023.

Figure 4. A Place to gather. Photo: Gina Wall, 2023.



◀ **Figure 1.** Projectile. Hjaltland Housing Association. Text is excerpt from writing by a member of the #SHETLANDCREW. Lerwick, Shetland. 2021. Photo copyright: #SHETLANDCREW and Home and Belonging.

▶ **Figure 2.** Projectile. The Gas Tanks. Text is excerpt from writing by a member of the #SHETLANDCREW. Lerwick, Shetland. 2021. Photo copyright: #SHETLANDCREW and Home and Belonging.

▼ **Figure 3.** Swap Shots Mobile Film Exchange. Walkabout #2, project members experiment with projection of an excerpt from writing by a member of the #SHETLANDCREW in writing workshop with Jen Hadfield. Lerwick, Shetland. 2020. Photo copyright: #SHETLANDCREW and Home and Belonging.



Swap Shots Mobile Film Exchange

Roxane Permar

UHI Shetland, University of the Highlands and Islands, Scotland, UK

The mobile film exchange, Swap Shots, offered a new way for care experienced young people in Shetland to creatively engage with each other during lockdown restrictions in the coronavirus pandemic. Project participants made 6-second films over a three week period, shared and chatted about them on WhatsApp, and then came together in 'walkabouts' to project them onto buildings in Lerwick, Shetland's main town, experimenting with scale, surface and context by using a portable projector.

Swap Shots aimed to engage care experienced young people in a visual arts-based activity which would develop visual language and filmmaking skills in relation to their home, and locale. It provided a way to gently introduce a public dimension to personal work while encouraging ongoing exploration of issues around ideas of home and belonging.

The films revealed a strong expression of individual identity through personal glimpses into people's everyday lives, such as riding a bus or making a hot drink, to moments of



deep reflection, joy or peaceful contemplation. Shetland formed a consistently vivid backdrop with its varied weather, landscape, seascape and built environment.

In their own time participants used their mobile phones to create films which could be shared easily, then discussed on Zoom or in WhatsApp chat. They came together in walkabouts to use a portable digital projector to experiment with projections outdoors. Health and safety issues were addressed by providing 'high-viz' clothing and head torches for walkabouts.

The project promoted exploration and expression of identity and facilitated greater understanding of place. Through the larger project, Home and Belonging (2019-2022), of which Swap Shots was a part, care experienced young people developed a stronger sense of what it means to be 'at home' in private, public

and community spaces through active participation and leadership in community-building and creative exploration. Home and Belonging offered a transformational experience which has continued to impact participants' lives and those of other care experienced young people.

Two walkabouts not only enabled the group to test their work in the public sphere but also to use projected light as a way to build on the 'lighthouse' theme embedded within Home and Belonging. Equally important, walkabouts formed a way for the group to get together while also complying with the requirement to meet outdoors during the coronavirus pandemic continuing into autumn 2020 and winter 2021.

New ideas emerged as momentum increased over time; some participants experimented with conveying particular emotions and worked to develop their filmmaking skills. Engagement, experimentation and collective learning deepened during walkabouts as participants took turns directing the projector, constantly identifying new places to project, testing different surfaces and considering the meaning of images in relation to the sites where they were projected

Experimentation expanded to include projections of participants' words created through their writing activities with Jen Hadfield. These evolved into Projectiles, a series of public projections of extracts from the young people's writings that had been carefully selected through Zoom discussions. These texts were



▼ **Figure 4.** Swap Shots Mobile Film Exchange. Walkabout #2, experimental projection of an excerpt from writing by a member of the #SHETLANDCREW in writing workshop with Jen Hadfield. Lerwick, Shetland. 2020. Photo copyright: #SHETLANDCREW and Home and Belonging.

projected onto Lerwick buildings during the Festivals of Care in 2021 and 2022.

The #SHETLANDCREW "loved being a part of the Home and Belonging project" of which Swap Shots was a part. The project supported them to be able to grow in confidence and become close as a group. Sharing deeply personal parts of themselves, as in the Projectiles, with strangers and peers, was an eye opening but scary experience. The public dissemination enabled them to make a connection with others, and help share their vision and perspectives publicly (Carden et al., 2022).

The project is flexible, and can be adapted for virtual or real-life situations, short or longer

workshops. It enables successful development of new creative skills, promotes collaborative working, and enhances confidence. The working process contributes to building increased trust, and is effective whether group members are new to each other or already well known. The films can be disseminated in various ways. A compilation film was made of all participants' films and exhibited in the final Home and Belonging exhibition at the Shetland Museum and Archives in 2022. ●

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Figure 5. Swap Shots Mobile Film Exchange. Walkabout #2, experimental projection of an excerpt from writing by a member of the #SHETLANDCREW in writing workshop with Jen Hadfield. Lerwick, Shetland. 2020. Photo copyright: #SHETLANDCREW and Home and Belonging.



INFO

Swap Shots Mobile Film Exchange took place in Shetland during Autumn 2020 as part of the Home and Belonging project, a 3-year arts-based research project led by the Centre for Island Creativity (UHI Shetland) and Who Cares? Scotland in collaboration with the #SHETLANDCREW, care experienced young people in Shetland. Roxane Permar, a member of the core team for Home and Belonging, led Swap Shots; the other core team members included Dr Siún Carden, the project's Principal Investigator (UHI Shetland) and Sian Wild, advocacy and engagement worker at Who Cares? Scotland, a Scottish membership organisation for care experienced people.

Mapping our Landscapes of Practice: Visualizing Situated Learning for Social Art Practitioners

Siún Carden

UHI Shetland, University of the Highlands and Islands, Scotland, UK

This piece examines the utility of an individual social artist mapping their 'Landscape of Practice', proposing this exercise as a beneficial activity for individuals working in new genre Arctic art and a tool for mapping routes towards new collaborations and ways of working.

A Landscape of Practice (Wenger-Trayner et al 2014) is the combination of multiple Communities of Practice, Social Learning Spaces (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2020) and other modes of situated learning through which a person travels as they gain knowledge and skills, move between identities and participate in different social contexts.

Mapping this landscape is one way in which social art practitioners and students can analyse

and represent their knowledge and aspirations, using situated learning theory plus creative approaches. This example is relevant to New Genre Arctic Art education because it enables a dispersed cohort, including participants in island and rural places, to engage with their contexts while benefitting from a cohort of peers. This activity aims to encourage students to apply theoretical ideas to their own experience, pay attention to situated learning opportunities and act more like a Community of Practice with each other.

Work must be submitted digitally. Students are advised to include some writing. However writing does not need to be in essay format and materials and techniques used vary, reflecting elements of students' own creative practice. The clarity and analytical sophistication with which students represent their Landscape of Practice is more important than the 'map' as a standalone piece of creative work. Approaches are informed by the unique qualities of each landscape, and feedback within the seminar group.

Submissions have included paper puzzles, digital games, collages, photographs of textile and sculptural pieces, many genres and formats of writing, photographic and film content, geographical maps and diagrammatic forms using a variety of overarching metaphors to express relationships between different elements of the landscape. Where non-textual material is central to the 'map', a written element often acts as a 'key'. In other cases, there is no such division.

"The tutor must take care to avoid students feeling pressure to include things they are not comfortable sharing in this context. The choice of what to include and exclude is theirs. Referring to ancient maps, we sometimes use the phrase 'here be dragons!'"



Figure 1. Photo by Polly Blake (2024), who explains that 'driving around in circles on the A888 around [the Scottish island] Barra it feels, at times, like one does have to be mindful not to go around in circles...888...reads the same right-side up and upsidedown.'

The nonprescriptive format results in thoughtful work which social artists from varied backgrounds can use to think through challenges and dilemmas in their creative and professional practice. The 'practice' in 'Communities of Practice' and 'Landscape of Practice' (ibid.) does not refer to art practice, but the broadest conceptualization of human practices. Students are encouraged to include activities, skills and networks which they may not have considered connected to their identities as social artists. Holistic thinking generates new ideas for future work, consolidates an evolving sense of professional identity and enables students to better communicate their 'knowledgeability' (Wenger-Trayner et al. 2014) to collaborators,



▲ **Figure 2.** Still from film made by Kerriane Flett (2023) on her island in Orkney. Flett describes her film as 'a moving representation of the colour wheel...inspired by Sophie Hope's... 'Colour wheel of practice-research' (Hope, 2016).'



▼ **Figure 3.** Film still by Georgina Bolton (2022). Bolton emphasized 'thinking whilst moving... embracing the inhabiting of the landscape as I moved through it as the destination itself.'



Figure 4. Photo by Emily Nicholl (2022), who made a zine with 'torn edges and paper folds', using 'Amin and Robert's idea that "what determines the texture of ties or trust is...contact, intermediation, and communicative complexity." – Amin and Roberts (2008, p. 366).'

participants and employers. Sharing maps-in-progress in seminars helps a dispersed cohort connect.

In forums and survey, participants emphasize the importance of this assignment in understanding themselves as social art practitioners. This is important for students who feel a division between a 'personal' art practice and a 'social' one. While many become engrossed in the 'mapping' process, feedback also reflects the difficulty of the task. The submitted 'map' is a snapshot of an ongoing journey through

an evolving landscape, but students and alumni mention it in relation to their work long afterwards.

Through individual maps students discover areas of shared interest. This could be developed into an exercise exploring routes towards collaborative work. By bringing areas of practice beyond the obviously artistic or professional into the conversation, this mapping process shakes up expectations about what experience is relevant or valuable, building inclusive and ambitious connections. ●

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INFO

MA Art and Social Practice 'Communities of Practice' module, UHI Shetland. This module takes place through fortnightly videoconference seminars across a whole academic year and independent coursework including the final Landscape of Practice submission.

"Stop Single Use Plastic!"

"I only use one plastic bottle today!"

Creative Practice of Sustainable Art

Herminia Din

University of Alaska Anchorage, USA

The goals of the projects illustrated in this visual essay aim at participatory engagement. All participants must have direct involvement, engagement, observation, reflection, and results through art making. During my 21-year tenure at UAA, I've taught nearly 4,500 students, both art and non-art majors. My teaching engages all students in hands-on learning experiences to address challenging issues and global significance. Projects highlighted here follow the footprint of the New Genre Arctic Art Education Initiative, which focuses on the community, environment, sustainability, difficult dialogue, resilience, innovation, and creativity.

Grounded in educational theory and practice, I believe hands-on and participatory learning allows students to apply their skill sets in practical settings. The most meaningful outcome of these projects is engaging students in a strong foundation of "best practice" and reinforcing the benefits of collaborative effort directly related to artistic expression and applying art as an agent of change.

Junk to Funk – a community-based art series that uses recycled materials to design artistically inspired functional artwork, began in motion in 2008. I firmly believe everyone (students of all majors) can be creative in producing original art using recycled materials so that one piece of "junk" – conceptualized with creativity – can become a fun, imaginative, and functional upcycled object.

In 2013, I partnered with the *UAA/APU Books of the Year program* and curated nine art exhibits with senior art students using each year's theme as a stimulus for an art exhibit. These exhibits catalyzed discussing complex issues such as Building Community Resilience, Negotiating Identity in America, Responding to Climate Change, and Shaping One's Reality, locally and internationally. Art exhibits can be an influential medium by making the invisible "visible" especially art can translate scientific data, facts, environmental concerns, inequalities, and social injustices into high-impact pedagogical practice.

When the international community became increasingly aware of the growing crisis of plastic pollution in the Arctic, I began investigating plastic pollution in the Arctic. An informed

and educated community is fundamental in establishing resiliency. Published in 2019, *Our Plastic Ocean, Our Clean Ocean*, a reversible pop-up book, explains not only how our ocean plastic pollution crisis came to be but why we must find solutions as quickly as possible. The illustrations and pop-ups in the *Our Plastic Ocean* part make clear the connection between a polluting act and the widespread harm it causes. The *Our Clean Ocean* part guides the reader in ways to reduce plastic consumption to keep the ocean clean and healthy.

In 2018, I had a cross-disciplinary opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from UAA's Outdoor Leadership and Environmental Studies programs to co-design a sustainable tourism module that included (1) citizen-engaged environmental observation, (2) place-based sustainable art,

and (3) eco-friendly outdoor recreation program reimagined. This project focused on creating a place-based art called *Tourist Memento* that brought visitors closer to places through positive memories and creative artmaking using local materials. It aims to raise awareness about the sensitivity of the Arctic environment and the speed with which it is changing.

When COVID-19 started in early 2020, I felt an urgent need to use facemasks as an artistic form of individual expression in response to the pandemic. Via distance delivery, I began working with students to co-curate an online exhibit titled *The Art of Face Masks Seawolf Style*. After three years, six semesters, ten classes, 120 student artists of all majors, and 144 artistic facemasks, personal stories about frustration and endurance were reflected, human endurance



Figure 1. Creative Practice of Sustainable Art in the Arctic: A summary of different projects initiated in the context of New Genre Arctic Art Education. Photos: Herminia Din, 2008-2024.



Figure 2. *Junk to Funk* (2008-2024): A community-based art series focuses on using recycled materials to design artistically inspired functional artwork. Photos: Herminia Din, 2008-2024.



Figure 4. *The Art of Face Masks* *Seawolf Style*: An online exhibit used facemasks as an artistic form of individual expression in response to the pandemic. Photos: Herminia Din, 2020-2023.

"I did not do it! Why do I need to clean up other's trash? It is not my fault!"

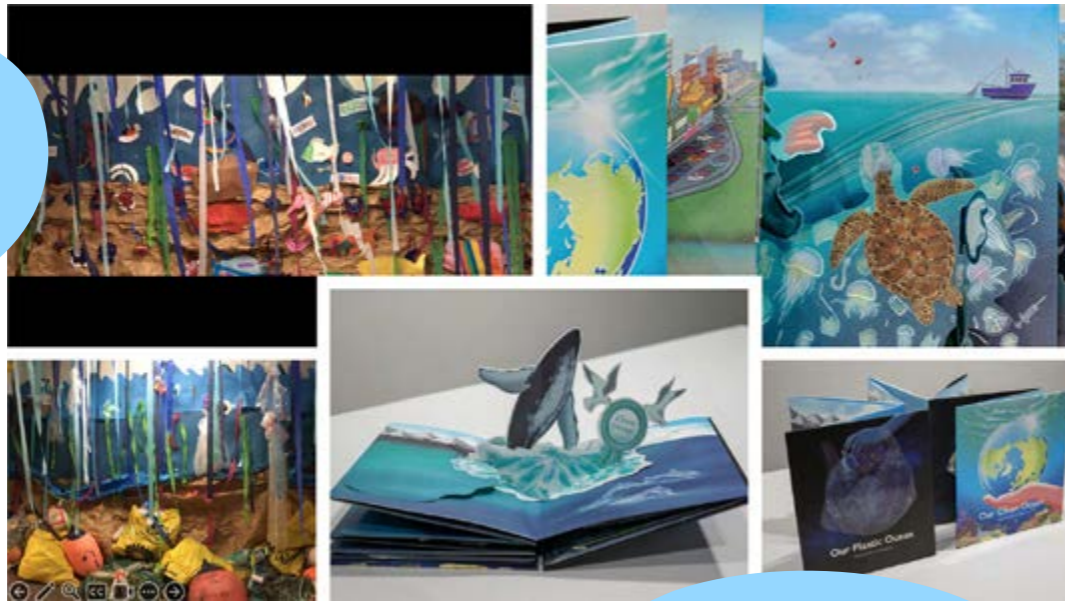


Figure 3. *Our Plastic Ocean, Our Clean Ocean*: A creatively reversible popup book explaining not only how our ocean plastic pollution crisis came to be, but why we must find solutions as quickly as possible. Photos: Herminia Din, 2019.

INFO

This reflective essay focuses on how art can be a bridge and connector and validates integrated and collaborative practices with other disciplines are essential methodology. Please visit my ePortfolio to learn more about these projects:

<https://alaska.digication.com/herminiadin/home>

"Along with the air we breathe, our oceans are essential to sustain life on our planet."

"Our Plastic Ocean, Our Clean Ocean explains ocean pollution, and why we must urgently find solutions."



Figure 5. *Tourist Memento*: A place-based art project that brought visitors closer to places through positive memories and creative art making using local materials. Photos: Herminia Din, 2018.

expressed, and these artworks represented a collective memory of time and place and how we rose to handle chaos and uncertainty.

Inspired by colleagues through the ASAD Network, my teaching, community engagement,

and creative efforts indeed followed the new Arctic Art Education Initiative that used art as a universal medium to serve as a catalyst in building an understanding of human issues and to encourage artistic expression in a wide range of mediums that is relevant in today's world. ●

CONCLUSION

Setup Lessons Learnt for the Nomadic Hub of New Genre Arctic Art Education

Timo Jokela¹, Annamari Manninen¹ and Peter Berliner²

¹University of Lapland, Finland and ²Association Siunissaq, Greenland

New Genre Art Education in the Arctic is a development project aimed at creating a hybrid implementation model (both digital and on-site) for international seminars and workshops targeted to art educators, researchers, and master's and doctoral students in art education at four universities. The network is organised as a collaboration between the University of Lapland, Nord University, Umeå University, and Siunissaq, at the beginning of the project a part of the Ilisimatusarfik–University of Greenland, and is now an independent research and art-and-community association. The development project kicked off a broader New Genre Arctic Art Education (AAE) initiative among the partners. The goals and methods of the AAE collaboration were guided from the outset by the fact that the initiative was a partnership between two thematic networks of the University of the Arctic: Arctic Sustainable Art and Design (ASAD) and Children of the Arctic. These thematic networks joined their disciplines, interests and forces.

The project's goal was to develop preliminary content and an approach for long-term interdisciplinary partnerships between Arctic universities and organisations in the fields of education, the arts, the humanities and the social sciences to meet the emerging challenges of changes in the Arctic caused by megatrends such as urbanisation, globalisation and consequences of climate and environmental changes for the social and cultural life in the local communities.

Our approach involved applying dialogical and participatory methods in the workshops and seminars. Our approach aimed to support networking, knowledge sharing and collaboration in Arctic art education by establishing a network structure that benefitted our long-term goals: fostering connections, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and ideas, and promoting collaboration in practice. Through this type of network, we aimed to support sustainability, social justice and wellbeing for all

citizens, including children and young people in local communities in the North and the Arctic.

In this publication, we have outlined the theoretical background of the project and presented the activities we have developed in a manner that is visually natural for our field. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a summary of what we have realised and learnt and how our insights will guide the next steps of the AAE initiative. The development of AAE activities can be described, examined and evaluated on many different layers, as there are numerous encounters – spaces and situations of co-formatio – that occur with children, young people, teachers, communities and various organisations. However, the time for impact studies will come later. In this chapter, we focus on reviewing the results of the first two-year AAE development project. In this case, the development work was carried out from the higher education perspective of universities by applying methodologies from arts-based action research.

Art-based action research (ABAR) is a research methodology that combines the principles of action research with creative, artistic practices. It is used to address real-world problems or issues while simultaneously generating new knowledge through the creative process. In our AAE project and our academic field of art education, the ABAR methodology can itself be seen as an area of development, as students have undertaken extensive study projects, master's theses, and texts integrated into doctoral research within the project. A crucial part of developing the ABAR methodology is also the agile, democratic planning and implementation of exhibitions that engage various participants and audiences.

Our AAE project has undergone continuous evaluation and development, from its inception through all stages of implementation – meetings, workshops, field schools, art works, exhibitions, academic writing, visual essays and publication layouts. Based on dialogues, reflective discussion and collected reflective data, we can make the following recommendations from the perspective of universities' research missions and the guidance of research-based teaching.

Universities and Curriculum-Integration of Art and Research

We need to work more to integrate art and research into university curricula, at least in art and craft teacher education programmes. Both university staff and students should learn how to adopt methodologies, such as ABAR, to merge artistic processes with traditional research methods to develop their work. Academic education should encourage students to use artistic expression as a legitimate form of inquiry that can provide unique insights into complex social, cultural and educational typical in rapidly changing Arctic.

Within art education at universities, we should design art-based research projects that involve participants as co-researchers, fostering collaboration between students, researchers, communities and other stakeholders. To make learning more engaging and impactful, we need to emphasise a participatory process that aims at collective problem-solving and empowerment.

We see ABAR as an effective method for emphasising change and transformation. We need to encourage action-oriented research that seeks to bring about improvements in educational settings, communities and or-

ganisations. We must focus on transforming practices, behaviours or conditions by integrating both research findings and artistic processes, ensuring that outcomes are relevant and applicable to real-world contexts in the North and the Arctic.

We need to encourage reflective practice and incorporate art-based reflection as a central element of research and learning. We must facilitate ongoing reflection on the artistic processes, actions taken and outcomes achieved, allowing students to refine research questions, artistic practices and methods throughout their projects.

We need to value multiple forms of knowledge and recognise and legitimise different ways of expressing knowledge. We must encourage students to produce artworks, performances or other creative outputs as part of their research contributions, valuing these as meaningful ways to address and understand research questions.

We need to adopt context- and situation-specific methods to encourage flexibility in art-research approaches, allowing methods and processes to adapt to the specific contexts and needs of research settings. We must support the evolution of research strategies based on interactions and outcomes that emerge during the project.

All the development areas and recommendations that we have presented for the further development of AAE have already been highlighted during our actions presented in this publication, and we see how these actions make academic education more dynamic and creative by integrating artistic practices into research. This approach fosters change,

generates new insights and engages students and participants in meaningful ways. We see that AAE has successfully bridged the gap between art making, research and social action, making learning more relevant and impactful.

We have, however, experienced a significant challenge with the apparent incompatibility between a flexible study module, such as AAE, and standard university curricula complicates students' study pathways and limits tutors' ability to allocate their working hours to participation. Currently, AAE studies have only been available in a flexible way to students at the University of Lapland, as their curriculum includes credits and a dedicated course for community project studies, which allows AAE activities to fit within students' study programmes. For this reason, we recommend that the university, perhaps with the support of the University of the Arctic, explores ways to facilitate their students' engagement in the study of skills and content that are important for the North and the Arctic. The first step could be to establish a common study model for AAE in partner universities' curricula.

Further Development of New Genre Arctic Art Education as a Subject Matter

The concept of AAE was created as a tool to approach the encounters between contemporary art and the Arctic in a new way. In our project, the theoretical and artistic foundations of AAE have been clarified, and discussion has been connected to the paradigmatic changes, new ontologies and epistemologies influenced by posthumanism in art, education and the sciences. The essence of AAE has been ex-

amined particularly in relation to research on Arctic sustainability and wellbeing.

Based on our reflections and analysis, we can outline some guidelines for the further development of AAE to ensure that the subject matter remains deeply connected to the lives, cultures and environments of Northern and Arctic communities.

In Arctic regions, collaboration should involve working with and further developing partnerships with local Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Since Northern communities are typically multicultural, it is important to avoid segregation. Preliminary knowledge of Northern ecoculture and material traditions should be ensured in collaboration with knowledge holders. AAE activities should involve elders, artists, craft makers, cultural leaders and local organisations to ensure that learning reflects community values and addresses significant issues, such as climate change, land rights and cultural preservation. This approach not only fosters active citizenship but also strengthens cultural identity and the transfer of knowledge between generations, ultimately supporting sustainability transformation.

We consider it essential to integrate social and cultural issues into AAE activities. The North and the Arctic faces specific social, environmental and cultural challenges, such as the impacts of climate change, cultural erosion and the exploitation of natural resources. Therefore, AAE should address these urgent issues, focusing on local and Indigenous rights, cultural diversity and sustainable development. Addressing these topics can help students understand the complexities of life in the Arctic while making awareness of social justice and

environmental protection central components of their education.

AAE should emphasise open learning processes (co-formation and intra-action) over predetermined learning outcomes. Given the diverse cultural backgrounds and varying needs in the Arctic, a flexible approach to learning is essential. Education should prioritise practical experiences, traditional skills and local knowledge rather than content based solely on conventional academic disciplines. This requires project-based learning, which allows students to immerse themselves in the subject while acquiring new skills relevant to their contexts.

A key starting point for AAE is the use of public spaces as learning environments. In the North and the Arctic, the land itself is an essential part of cultural identity and learning. Education can take place in natural settings – such as forests, riverbanks, coastal areas, tundra and mountains – where students can learn traditional ways of life and cultural practices through first-hand experience alongside art-based environmental studies. Community centres, cultural festivals and other public events can also serve as dynamic learning spaces that blend traditional and contemporary art and knowledge, reinforcing a sense of place and belonging.

Developing the AAE Field Course

The approach for the AAE field course was tested in two communities: Nuuk, Greenland and Karasjok, Norway. The Karasjok field course was preceded by a remote learning phase, which included familiarisation with the topic and co-design activities. Based on our experiences, some conclusions and recommendations can be

made for the AAE field course to be conducted in Indigenous, non-Indigenous, or multi-ethnic communities, ensuring that the activities are culturally respectful, educationally enriching, creativity-supporting and suitable for the Northern and Arctic context. During the Karasjok field course, we gave a name to our activities: Nomadic Hub of New Genre Arctic Art Education.

When planning a field course, collaboration with the community where it will take place is essential from the beginning. It is important to involve local stakeholders, Indigenous representatives, cultural representatives and elders in both the planning and implementation phases. This ensures that the course aligns with the community's cultural values, ecocultural traditions, needs and customs. It is crucial to prioritise co-design, in which the community actively participates in shaping the course content and objectives, leading to a more authentic and meaningful experience for all participants.

AAE integrates traditional Northern knowledge and material culture with contemporary art practices, and the course can include traditional art forms, such as carving, weaving and storytelling. These practices can serve as entry points for students to learn about cultural values and ecocultural traditions. This can be achieved by inviting local artists and craftspeople to serve as part-time instructors, allowing students to learn directly from knowledge holders and skilled practitioners. This approach also supports cultural preservation and revitalisation while recognising expertise within the community.

AAE emphasises place-based and experiential learning, using the Arctic environment as a living classroom where students can interact

with the land, water, plants, animals, seasonal features, weather and climate. AAE encourages outdoor activities, such as art-making, site-specific art installations and excursions that highlight the cultural significance of the landscape. Art-based learning can include experiential techniques, such as participatory art sessions or community-based performances, in which students collaborate with local residents on shared creative projects.

When working with Northern and Arctic (often Indigenous) communities, it is always important to respect cultural protocols and sensitivities. When travelling and working in other countries, as AAE does, guiding students beforehand to understand local customs, cultural protocols or the significance of possible sacred sites or practices can be challenging. It is crucial to ensure that artistic activities are culturally appropriate and do not distort or exploit Indigenous traditions. Ethically, it is also important to ensure that all documentation (e.g. photos, videos and artworks) is done with permission and used respectfully.

It is important to remember that Northern and Arctic communities are not museums, and there is a need to address contemporary social and environmental issues. This requires focusing discussions and integrating art projects on topics that are significant to the community, such as climate change, cultural revitalisation, resilience and land rights. This approach helps students understand the broader sociopolitical context in which Arctic people live in today. In line with its principles, AAE aims to use art as a tool for activism and dialogue, enabling participants to address these issues creatively while promoting shared responsibility and advocacy.

In the implementation of the AAE field school, it is crucial to create opportunities for reflection and dialogue, including with the host community. During the field course, it is essential to foster group discussions and reflective exercises that encourage students to critically consider their experiences and share their insights. This can help build bridges between different worldviews and promote intercultural understanding while also providing space for community members to share their perspectives on the course, offering valuable feedback and fostering ongoing dialogue.

Hybrid Course for Situational and Dialogical Learning

The AAE aimed to pilot a hybrid learning setting, and the first experiences already show the possibilities for learning that open when bringing into the dialogue participants from different Arctic universities, stakeholders and communities. We can recommend developing in the future the means to communicate, structure and organise shared events even further to deepen participation in art-based dialogues.

Today, the needed technology and connections are already available. The time zone differences that often challenge live online collaboration are still manageable from Greenland to Scandinavia and Finland. When the aim is to collaborate in field course activities in certain locations to create workshops and exhibitions, it offers a concrete need and topic for dialogue. Connecting the different stakeholders and actors is not easy to organise but is the only way to offer learning in real situations.

The digital equipment needed for sharing videos and photos is available for all, and there is a choice of platforms that support the dia-

logue online. In the feedback from the pilot, the visual tasks during the online teaching were seen as challenging, fun and motivating. Art-based summaries at the end of the course offered more personal comments and distancing frames to express reflections that were not said out loud but could be conveyed in the images. Experiments and work are still needed to develop a hybrid learning pedagogy for functional dialogue for collaboration with art-based activities. Based on the experiences from the project, we see the making of artwork as vital for offering a place to express emotions and different views, to give information in different ways and to become acquainted with the participants behind the screens. Thus, we can encourage the use and further research of visual tasks in online and hybrid courses.

The hybrid course in collaboration with University of the Arctic members, third sector partners and locals offers an authentic situation and environment in which to learn AAE as subject and method. Bringing together participants from different locations and backgrounds creates a fruitful starting point for dialogue to share expertise and experiences. In the Arctic areas, it is common to work in the liminal spaces between languages, cultures and different goals of collaboration. This mixture of backgrounds, also bringing participants from different fields for a multidisciplinary approach, initiates the dialogue for learning, to share and understand different viewpoints around the place, community and topic of the work. Thus, a shared hybrid course in the UArctic network would offer all participants a valuable experience of acting in those liminal spaces with art-based activities that aim to give space for everyone's voice.

Intra-action Calls for Rethinking Pedagogy

We have outlined a course structure consisting of preparatory online course and a field course conducted in a selected Northern community. The development project involved a multidisciplinary team, including art educators, design and craft educators, natural science teachers, social psychologists, museum staff, craftsmen and multidisciplinary artists. The range of subjects studied by the participating students was also broad. Traditionally, it has been thought that the strength of collaboration across different fields lies in integration, where each field contributes its expertise to a shared task.

During the AAE project, we adopted the term 'intra-action', which better describes the pedagogical nature of our activities. The concept, created by Barad (2007), goes beyond the traditional notion of interaction. It refers to the idea that entities do not exist prior to their relations but emerge through their relationships and continuous entanglements. Intra-action emphasises that components (such as students, teachers, materials or the environment) do not function as independent agents in a linear cause-and-effect relationship; instead, they mutually constitute each other through dynamic and reciprocal engagement. In Northern ways of acquiring eco-cultural knowledge, intra-action within an ecosystem is a central element. However, the same applies to the collaboration of the different academic and art disciplines represented in the project.

When we adopt intra-action as the pedagogical foundation of AAE, it means that learners, teachers, course content and disciplines are not separate, predefined fixed entities; rather, they come into existence through their entangled relationships and further interweaving with the

community and location where each course is conducted. The way the participants engage intra-actively creates a learning experience in which the roles and boundaries of the learner, teacher and content continuously change and evolve. Unlike traditional learning models, which see knowledge as something transferred from teacher to student, intra-action views knowledge as a phenomenon that emerges from the entangled relationships between different components. The AAE approach, based on the intertwining of Northern eco-cultural knowledge with subjects and art, is at the core of AAE pedagogy. It emphasises the idea that the educational experience is shaped by the intertwining of social, cultural and material factors.

Intra-action challenges the human-centred perspective in education by recognising the importance of non-human elements in the learning process. This dimension is particularly prominent in the AAE learning environments in relation to northern nature. However, it is also important to note that cameras, digital devices and spaces participate in the intra-actions that shape learning outcomes. Moreover, the digital learning platforms we use online are not merely tools used by students; they intra-actively interact with students, shaping the educational experience in real time.

The concept of intra-action reveals the multidimensionality of entanglements that must be considered pedagogically when setting up the Nomadic Hub of New Genre Arctic Art Education. ●

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This book opens a window to the enchanting world of the New Genre Arctic Art Education initiative, where creativity meets sustainability. Through the collaboration of two Thematic Networks of the University of the Arctic – Arctic Sustainable Art and Design, and Children in the Arctic – this endeavour intertwines art, education, and psychosocial activities to foster a vibrant and enduring Arctic.

Inhabitants of the North, especially the youth, are at the heart of this initiative, as they are the architects of tomorrow's Arctic. Through five illuminating chapters and 24 evocative visual essays, this book celebrates and ponders how New Genre Art Education in the Arctic nurtures local ecocultures, ensures cultural continuity, promotes well-being, and strengthens social identities. By doing so, it contributes to building social resilience and sustainability for a thriving Arctic future.

Embracing a hopeful perspective, this approach underscores the transformative power of art education in crafting sustainable societies and communities in the North and the Arctic.

