



Figure 1. Students played with the interaction of lights and colours. Photo: Tomi R., 2024.

The workshop, held in the Lapland Education Centre REDU in Rovaniemi on the premises of the University of Lapland, was a subproject of the Sustainability Portraits initiative. This workshop aimed to engage the participating students in exploring their identities and life in the Arctic environment through photography and discussions. The workshop focused on themes of identity, the Arctic environment, sustainability, and community. It is directly connected to the goals of promoting artistic expression and identity, ensuring youth well-being, sustainability, and understanding of the socio-cultural context of youth in the Arctic.

The preparatory education is organized for young people who have finished basic education and need more time to develop their academic and language skills to continue their studies or haven't been able to choose

"Thank you for this opportunity; this was a very nice course, and I'm happy that I was a part of it."

– participant.

a field, a study program, or a profession to apply for when graduating from secondary school. Thus, an art project around the portrait aimed to give them space to explore their identity. The project aimed to create a participatory art experience for the students and cultivate an art education that emphasizes

Light Painting and Northern Portraits

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The Sustainable Portrait workshop aimed to explore Arctic identities through photography, focusing on themes of the Arctic environment and sustainability. Over six sessions, preparatory education students participated in creative exercises, discussions, and hands-on photography tasks, culminating in an exhibition. The project emphasized artistic expression and well-being, aligning with its goals of understanding and supporting the local identities of the Arctic youth.

Figure 2. Photographs were also taken outside. Photo: Ville Lahtinen, 2024.



Figure 3. In the last workshop, the participants set up a pop-up exhibition in the university's hall and gave each other positive feedback. Photo: Md Faysal Amin, 2024.



youth voices and fostering their well-being within rapidly evolving Arctic communities. Through a series of participatory activities, photography exercises, and discussions, students explored their connection to the Arctic and expressed themselves creatively. DSLR cameras, tripods, and other equipment were used for the photography exercises. Through a blend of theoretical discussions, technical demonstrations, and hands-on activities, the workshop aimed to empower participants to engage thoroughly with their surroundings while improving their artistic skills.

The workshop covered five sessions, each designed to stimulate creativity with various activities. Students participated in introductions through photo selections where they shared photos reflecting their identities and perceptions of Rovaniemi. Group discussions helped analyse chosen photos to explore common themes and interpretations of portraits. Photo puzzles and camera experiments allowed students to engage in hands-on photography exercises. Practical exercises, including camera experimentation and portrait missions,

provided opportunities for participants to apply discover skills while going deeper into the workshop's themes. Talking about Arctic objects and photo planning involved students discussing personal items and planning photos to represent themselves and the Arctic. Photo editing with Adobe Photoshop introduced basic image editing techniques to refine the photographs. The workshop culminated in preparing an exhibition where students named their artwork, wrote captions, and displayed photos for the final exhibition titled 'Pimeä maailma/ Dark world'. Finally, the feedback session allowed participants to offer opinions about their workshop experiences and thoughts.

Feedback from the participants offered valuable insights into the workshop's efficacy and areas for improvement. Students felt safe expressing themselves and learned new photography skills during the limited time. Many expressed appreciation for the opportunity to express themselves creatively and deepen their understanding of Arctic identity. Some of them highlighted their interest in photographic

lighting techniques and editing. Students found light painting to be an especially fascinating exercise. These insights will inform future iterations of the workshop, guiding refinements to the curriculum and instructional approach to better meet the needs and expectations of participants.

The workshop provides a valuable model for future art education projects. By providing participants with the tools and guidance to express themselves creatively, the workshop

not only empowered youth voices but also promoted a deeper connection to their identity and surroundings. The workshop provided a platform for students to explore their identities and connect with their Arctic environment through participatory art education where photography was performed as a medium of expression. Through enabling self-expression and throughout the process interactions, the project aligned with the AAE's vision of promoting youth well-being and artistic engagement within the Arctic context. ●

Figure 4. Students explored the possibilities of light painting. Photo: Zuhail Hassani, 2024.

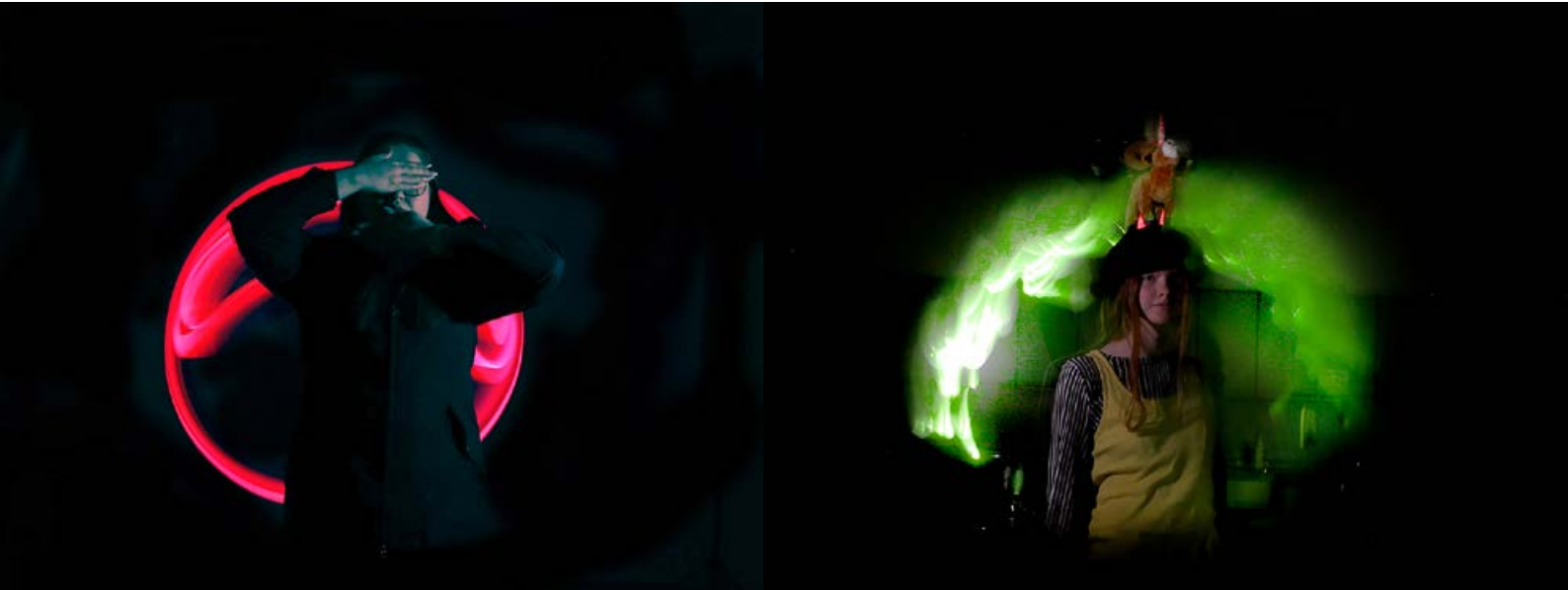


Figure 5. Participants brought objects that represent something about Rovaniemi and Arctic. Photo: H. A., 2024.



Figure 6. Kuvateksti: Figure 6: Students experimented with double-exposed photographs. Photo: H. A., 2024.

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"I succeeded in daring to do things and being in the photos, too."

– participant

The Light Painting and Northern Portraits workshop, part of the Sustainability Portraits project, was held in Rovaniemi for preparatory education students from Lapland Education Centre REDU. Workshop was conducted by art education students Inka Matilainen, Ville Lahtinen, and Arctic Art and Design student Amin Md Faysal with Supervising teacher Tea Tuiskuvaara.