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PLAYGROUNDS OF THE MIND:

Exploring the Uncanny Landscape Through Participatory Art and Self Expression

Master's Thesis

Sustainable Art and Design

Spring 2024

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Degree Program: Sustainable Art and Design

Type of Work: Master's Degree Thesis

Term and Year: Spring 2024

Abstract:

This master thesis investigates the experience and expression of the uncanny in artistic practice and its connection to self-identity. Addressing a gap in the literature regarding the practical application of the uncanny in participatory art, the study applies a qualitative approach, utilising workshops and artistic practice to collect data. Participants from Living in the Landscape project engage in immersive experiences designed to evoke uncanny feelings and reflect on their mind and perception. Integrating participants' objects and thoughts into the researcher's artwork facilitates introspection and exploration of personal identity. Analysis reveals the subjective nature of the uncanny, highlighting its multifaceted expression within artistic contexts. Findings contribute to understanding the role of the uncanny in artistic practice and its impact on self-expression, with implications for artistic practice, emphasising the intricate relationship between artistic identity, the uncanny, and self-discovery.

Keywords: uncanny, perception, self identity, place, participatory art, arts-based action research

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study aims to explore the interplay between uncanny and self expression through the use of artistic practice. The research investigates the creative processes that arise from the unconscious mind while exploring the uncanny as a context for self expression. The aim is to explore how the uncanny influences the formation of our artistic expressions and shapes our interactions with the world around us, revealing its intricate impact on both creative processes and perceptions of reality. This is not an overview of the uncanny, but a selected framework.

Artistic expression has long been intertwined with the exploration of psychological concepts, among which the uncanny holds a particularly intriguing place. The uncanny, as theorised by Sigmund Freud (1919/2001) as a psychoanalysis and later expanded upon across various disciplines, indicate the unsettling or eerie feeling evoked by something strangely familiar yet foreign. According to Royle (2003) uncanny involves feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is and what is being experienced (p.1). Moreover, he proposes that the uncanny involves the feeling of a hidden encounter; it is likely tied to the brief perception of something that was meant to stay concealed but has been revealed. (Royle, 2003, p.2).

In connection to the process of uncanny developing from being a theory to becoming a concept, Masschelein (2011) suggests that conceptualisation is never just the work of one or more persons. It entails a kind of creative energy that circulates and momentarily unites over various decades and national tradition. (p.7)

The uncanny has infused artistic expression throughout history in literature, visual arts, film, and performance. Artists have utilised this concept to evoke a sense of unease or ambiguity in their audiences, inviting reflection of the mysterious and the unknown. From gothic literature to surrealist paintings, the uncanny has served as a source of inspiration, challenging conventions and pushing the boundaries of artistic representation. Wolny asserts “bringing together multiple perspectives on what the weird, the strange, the odd is, on the things which cannot be explained in rational terms and on what, for long, has been the focus of attention and interest of generations of writers, philosophers, thinkers and, in more contemporary times, also film directors”. (Wolny, 2016, p.10)

As part of the Living in the Landscape (LiLa) project, I organised the Uncanny Landscape/ Uncanny Self workshop, integrating it into the project's interdisciplinary exploration of Northern

and Arctic communities. The workshop served as a platform to investigate the intersection of the uncanny with personal experience and artistic expression within natural landscapes. Through a series of structured activities, including forest immersive exploration and wax sculpting sessions, participants engaged with the concept of the uncanny and its emotional resonance in outdoor environments. These activities were designed to obtain subjective responses and insights, grasping the participants' experiences and interpretations of the uncanny. Trigg cohesively explains the uncanny as an experience within the place and states "we are drawn to the fact that the uncanny is to be understood fundamentally as an effect, a felt experience that disturbs the body, resulting in a departure from the everyday. Yet no less a displacement from the everyday, the uncanny simultaneously places us in the midst of the familiar." (Trigg, 2012, p.27) It is some sort of mixture of an experience that occurs in the boundaries of everyday life. By documenting participants' experiences and artistic expressions during the workshop, I collected qualitative data to analyse and utilise in my research and artistic process.

This research primarily centres on Applied Visual Arts (AVA) within the framework of the Sustainable Art and Design master's degree program. It plays a crucial role in my research by shaping the methodology and influencing every step of the process. AVA emphasises engagement, participation, and place-specificity (Härkönen and Vuontisjärvi, 2018, p.27), which align with the objectives of my study, especially through the Uncanny Landscape/Uncanny Self workshop. Grounded in AVA principles, this workshop introduced the element of "participation" and aimed to explore the concept of the uncanny in both artistic self-expression and immersive landscapes. Incorporating AVA principles, my research ensures a comprehensive and participatory approach, fostering collaboration and inclusion within artistic tasks, thereby fulfilling the overall investigation into the uncanny.

Research Questions and Objectives

In this study, two key research questions support the exploration of the uncanny's influence on artistic expression and self-discovery:

Research Questions:

1. What emotional responses are evoked from participants when encountering the uncanny in artistic self-expression and immersive landscapes?

2. Does exploring the uncanny as a context for my artistic practice have a true connection to my self-expression?

To address these questions effectively, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

Objectives:

1. To assess participants' emotional responses to the uncanny: This objective involves conducting qualitative interviews and surveys with workshop participants to gather insights into their emotional reactions when encountering the uncanny in artistic contexts.
2. To analyse the relationship between the uncanny and artistic self-expression: This objective requires conducting a comprehensive review of literature and case studies to understand how the uncanny influences artistic creation and self-expression.
3. To evaluate the impact of the uncanny on participants' perceptions and experiences: This objective involves analysing qualitative data collected from workshop participants to explore how the uncanny shapes their understanding of art and the world around them.
4. To examine the personal resonance of the uncanny in the researcher's artistic practice: This objective involves conducting reflective exercises and artistic experiments to explore the researcher's own experiences with the uncanny and its influence on their creative process.

Main Sources:

The theoretical exploration of the uncanny traces back to Sigmund Freud's (1919/2001) seminal essay "The Uncanny," in which he examines the psychological groundwork of this phenomenon (pp.11–12). Drawing upon psychoanalytic theory, cognitive psychology, and cultural studies, researchers have explored the multifaceted nature of the uncanny, examining its role in shaping perceptions of reality and identity.

Additionally, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's "Phenomenology of Perception" and Dylan Trigg's "The Memory of Place: a Phenomenology of the Uncanny" offer significant insights into the phenomenological aspects of the uncanny. Merleau-Ponty's exploration of perception provides a framework for understanding how we experience the world through our bodies, while Trigg's work focuses on the haunting aspects of places and their impact on our sense of self.

Furthermore, the dialogical self theory through Jones and Morioka (2011) provides valuable insights into the intersection of Jungian psychology and dialogical self theory, offering a rich source of perspectives on the uncanny. Jones's individual work, "'Talking Brought Me Here' Affordances of Fiction for the Narrative Self" (2010) published in *Theory & Psychology*, contributes to our understanding of narrative identity and its relationship to the uncanny. Lastly, Arnold Berleant's study on embodiment in landscape perception provides a detailed perspective on the connection between the body, the mind, and the landscape.

Research Methodology

This research implements a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative analysis with artistic practice to offer a comprehensive examination of the uncanny concept. The primary methodological tools applied include:

-Workshop Design and Implementation: A curated workshop immerses participants in a forest environment, encouraging reflections on feelings of safety and the uncanny. The workshop methodology incorporates Art-Based Action Research (ABAR) aimed at activating the body and enhancing awareness, as well as Art-Based Research (ABR). These methodologies have been fundamental in deepening participants' engagement with their bodily experiences in relation to the uncanny.

-Interviews and Questionnaires: Participants engaged in open discussions and provided written responses, allowing for an exploration of their experiences and perceptions.

-Artistic Process: The researcher began on a creative journey, integrating participants' objects and experiences into the artwork, facilitating self-reflection and exploration of the uncanny.

Moreover, the workshop methodology has been heavily influenced by the ideas of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, particularly his phenomenological approach to perception and embodiment. This influence is evident in the emphasis on bodily experiences and the environment's impact on participants' perceptions during the workshop steps.

Structure of the Thesis:

The thesis is structured to provide a comprehensive exploration of the uncanny and its implications for artistic expression. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 examines theoretical background study with key concepts and frameworks surrounding the uncanny through an artistic point of view. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology employed in the research, detailing the design and implementation of the workshop, data collection methods, and artistic process. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of data collected from the workshop and artistic process, providing perspective into participants' reactions and the researcher's artistic exploration. Chapter 5 showcases the visual essay from publication of LiLa and highlights the exhibitions. Finally, Chapter 6 merges findings, discusses implications, and concludes reflections on the intersection of the themes. Through this structured approach, the thesis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding the uncanny and its profound impact on artistic practice and self-discovery.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In this chapter, I present the foundational theoretical studies that support the entirety of my research, forming its essential core. These studies are categorised into two main concepts as “Uncanny Through an Artistic Point of View” and “Embodiment of the Body in the Landscape”. The uncanny concept is broken down into two subchapters; Exploration of the Self, and “Consciousness and Unconsciousness”.

2.1 Uncanny Through an Artistic Point of View

Although this research analyses and utilises the uncanny from an artistic point of view, I also explored the genealogy of the concept. In this chapter, I will present a few key sources and ideologies. It is important to note that the uncanny is a vast concept, which makes it challenging to conclude additional studies outside of the artistic framework. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge that the theory of uncanny extends to many other disciplines, and there are also numerous critical reviews on the first formation and conceptualisation of the uncanny experience.

The concept of the uncanny relies on human comprehension; without a conscious mind to perceive it, uncanniness would remain hidden. As Hubner (2018) notes, the uncanny cannot be guaranteed by specific set items but instead needs to be shaped or invoked by those who create or consume it (p.7). Therefore, it's not possible to locate a singular thing as uncanny; rather, it's a complex outcome of the mind and body experiencing a certain occurrence.

Statement of Windsor (2019) underlines that the uncanny does not usually cause ‘danger’ but challenges our understanding of reality, causing psychological unease. While uncertainty about reality is common, the uncanny introduces a deeper sense of unease by challenging what we perceive as possible. Consequently, it often features in narratives exploring themes of madness and delusion, reflecting its unsettling nature (p.62).

The mind that constructs the self is capable of being deconstructed and reconstructed, and so too is perception. This research investigates the experiences and perceptions of the self evoked by encountering the uncanny in artistic self-expression and immersive landscapes. The study focuses on the uncanny and psychoanalysis of mind, body and self through psychology, philosophy and aesthetics. Ingold (2000) emphasises the inseparable relationship between the

mind and the body, highlighting how they depend on each other for existence. It suggests that minds, which encompass consciousness, thoughts, and perceptions, require physical bodies to contain them. Conversely, bodies, with their physical form and sensory capabilities, rely on constant interaction with the environment to sustain themselves (p.41). At the start of this study, the body was not considered as a significant factor. The focus was only on the mind, as the uncanny was perceived as a product of our mental processes. However, through deeper exploration, it became evident that the mind and body are inseparable entities; they coexist, experience, and interact harmoniously.

In relation to mind and perception, Merleau-Ponty (2005) claims that our understanding of the world is not based on abstract definitions but on our immediate experiences and interactions with it. These experiences shape our perception of reality, which cannot be reduced to a mere summary or schematic outline. Instead, our perception of the world is dynamic and continuous, with spatial and temporal dimensions constantly shifting and evolving. Merleau-Ponty rejects the idea of discrete perspectives or points of view, suggesting that our experiences are seamlessly integrated into a single, unified world. He emphasises that our perception of the world is not limited to what is directly presented to us but encompasses a broader sense of space and possibility, extending beyond the boundaries of our immediate sensory experiences (p.384).

The uncanny in theory of Freud (1919/2001) is described as “the class of frightening things that leads us back to what is known and familiar”. On one hand, “heimlich” conveys a sense of familiarity, comfort, and congeniality, representing things that are known, safe, and homely. On the other hand, “heimlich” also denotes that which is concealed, hidden, or kept out of sight (Freud, 1919/2001, p.219). Freud's examination of the uncanny begins by acknowledging the elusive nature of the concept. He notes that while the term “uncanny” is often used to describe things that provoke fear and dread, its precise definition is not always clear-cut. He expresses curiosity about this distinctive quality and its role in defining what is considered “uncanny” within the boundaries of what is “fearful” (p.217).

The uncanny emerges when something long forgotten and suppressed resurfaces for the first time, something that has been surpassed in our psychological existence. At the same time his resolution does not stand alone as a fact since this proposition is not interchangeable. Not all elements that satisfy this criterion, which are linked to suppressed desires and ancient thought patterns from an individual's past are automatically classified as uncanny. In the essay, Freud(1919/2001) examines a crucial characteristic of the uncanny, emphasising its absence in fictional realms. This lack of uncanny in fiction is a fundamental difference between the concepts of repression and overcoming and their application to the uncanny in fiction. While

repression involves the unconscious exclusion of distressing thoughts or memories, these concepts cannot be directly transposed onto the fantasy found in fiction. In fiction, the content of the imagination is not subject to 'reality-testing', allowing for the exploration of ideas unrestricted by real-world limitations. (p.235). In other words, while reading a fiction, the reader is aware of the possibilities of that universe. The reader no longer has the limitation of the real world, therefore anything can happen in the fiction which makes it less surprising, hence impossible for uncanny to exist. For the uncanny to happen, the presence of reality is essential for challenging one's mind and perception.

Windsor (2019) argues that fictional worlds that openly embrace a fantastical perspective often lack the capacity to evoke the uncanny. This is because what might seem strange or unsettling in the real world is often not perceived as such within the context of these fictional worlds, where different rules and possibilities apply. Positively stated, for a fictional world to trigger feelings of the uncanny, it needs to align closely with the real world. Additionally, it's generally observed that the more lifelike a portrayal is, the greater its potential to evoke the uncanny. This principle is referred to as "uncanny realism," suggesting that realistic representations hold a stronger capacity to evoke eerie or unsettling sensations (p.61).

As an example, fairy tales frequently depict eerie events that the reader may not find eerie. This is due to readers' modification to perception of the imaginary environment. Furthermore Freud (1919/2001) explains that In fairy tales, reality is abandoned from the start, and beliefs in animism are embraced. Elements like wish-fulfillments, secret powers, and animation of lifeless objects, common in fairy stories, lack the ability to evoke the uncanny here. This is because the conflict of judgement necessary for the uncanny feeling to arise is eliminated by the premises of the fairy tale world. Thus, fairy tales, which present conflicts to the theory of the uncanny, confirm that many things in fiction are not uncanny, unlike in real life (p.250).

Now, I am shifting the focus to the genealogy of uncanny, to understand the formation of the concept which would make the uncanny more recognisable, concrete and founded. The genealogy will draw upon the findings of Anneleen Masschelein (2011) from her book 'The Unconcept: The Freudian Uncanny in Late-Twentieth-Century Theory'. The book stresses the importance of understanding the uncanny not as a fixed or fully comprehensible concept, but as a dynamic and multifaceted phenomenon that continues to provoke questions. By using a genealogical perspective, Masschelein traces its evolution across disciplines and time periods, recognising its inherent uncertainty. Her analysis aims to understand why the uncanny remains elusive, offering a broader understanding of its position and function across different contexts and decades. (p.3)

Between critiques of Freud's uncanny theory, Kokoli (2016) also states that the concept of the uncanny is complex and elusive, with flaws and inconsistencies. It evolves across different interpretations, including Freud's writings, which do not fully acknowledge earlier attempts to define it. As theorists and artists engage with the uncanny, its meaning continues to shift and resist easy categorisation (p.4). Despite efforts by scholars to trace the origins of the uncanny concept to earlier thinkers such as Ernst Jentsch and Friedrich Schelling (both cited by Freud), Sigmund Freud's essay "The Uncanny" continues to sustain importance. While these earlier studies have been acknowledged, Freud's work remains the primary point of interest in the ongoing exploration of the uncanny within both cultural discourse and theoretical frameworks (p.4).

Masschelein (2011) clarifies that following Freud's introduction of the uncanny in 1919, there was a period of little conceptual development until the 1970s and 1980s. During this time, scholars explored the metaphorical nature of psychoanalytic concepts, leading to a reevaluation of texts like Freud's essay. The uncanny became intertwined with related aesthetic and philosophical notions and addressed contemporary socio-political concerns, reflecting the anxieties of a rapidly evolving society. Furthermore, as the 20th century concluded and the 21st century began, the Freudian uncanny returned to art from criticism, influencing visual arts and fiction (pp.5–6).

Another concept, though described using different terminology, holds a similar theoretical framework, at least within the context of my artistic practice. Julia Kristeva (1982), philosopher and psychoanalyst, introduced the concept of the "abject" in her work on psychoanalysis and literary theory. The term "abject" refers to the state of being cast off, rejected, or expelled from society. It encompasses those things or experiences that are considered taboo, repulsive, or disturbing, leading to a sense of discomfort or unease (p.6).

Kristeva(1982) demonstrates that encountering the abject disrupts our sense of identity and boundaries, as it blurs the distinction between subject (self) and object (other). The abject is often associated with bodily functions, decay, death, and other aspects of human existence that society typically views as repulsive or unacceptable. Examples include corpses, excrement, and other forms of physical or psychological waste. According to Kristeva, encountering the abject triggers a complex psychological response, involving both fascination and revulsion. It evokes a sense of horror and fascination simultaneously, challenging our sense of self and confronting us with the fragility and instability of our identities (pp.3–4). This separate theory is relatively similar to the concept behind my creative work which makes it logically to include for further future

studies. It also addresses my exploration of creativity in relation to eerie events. By connecting these unsettling experiences with our identities, it deepens the understanding of how such phenomena influence and shape our sense of self.

Traditionally associated with literature, arts, and philosophy, the uncanny has expanded its influence into fields such as film studies, architectural theory, and sociology. Moreover, in recent times, the concept has transcended disciplinary boundaries, particularly in robotics and artificial intelligence (Masschelein, 2011, p.1). "Since Freud published his now famous essay on the topic, the uncanny has attracted much attention in the humanities, and become a popular trope in cultural practices and art criticism" (Windsor, 2019, p.51). One of these fields is the gothic.

Troy and Wijkmark (2017) argues that the gothic and the uncanny are challenging to define and have changed over time. Initially referring to a specific literary period, the gothic now includes various cultural expressions. Similarly, the uncanny, once described by Freud, now has broader interpretations. Despite their complexity, both concepts continue to interest scholars and artists, exploring human experience and imagination (p.108). "Although the uncanny is not the only core trope of the Gothic, it is one that often drives the genre and its various apparitions and spectral presences in other areas of study." (Bacon, 2018, p.2)

In the study of Noël Carroll's book *The Philosophy of Horror Or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (2003), horror theorised in a way that is resembling the uncanny experience. Carroll's concepts of "art-dread" and "art-horror" are central to his exploration of the horror genre. While art-horror stories evoke a sense of disgust, art-dread does not. "The uncanny event which tops off such stories causes a sense of unease and awe, perhaps of momentary anxiety and foreboding." These events lead the audience to contemplate the possibility that there are forces at work in the universe that are undisclosed, mysterious, and perhaps hidden. Carroll proposes that art-dread needs a separate theory. However, he acknowledges that some narratives may blend both art-horror and art-dread, albeit in varying degrees. Despite their relatedness, Carroll asserts that the two emotions remain distinct (Carroll, 2003,p.42).

Building upon the discussion surrounding horror and gothic literature, the review will continue with unfolding the *Coraline* as a relevant study. "Coraline" originated as a dark fantasy horror children's novella written by Neil Gaiman, published in 2002. The story was later adapted into a stop-motion animated film by Studio LAIKA. The story follows Coraline Jones, a young girl who moves into a new house with her distracted and preoccupied parents. Exploring her new home, Coraline discovers a hidden door that leads to a parallel world that initially seems perfect, with attentive "Other" parents and colourful wonders. However, she soon realises that this other

world is more eerie than it appears, with doppelgangers of her neighbours and a mysterious entity known as the Other Mother, who wants to keep Coraline trapped forever. As Coraline navigates this dangerous world, she must evoke her courage and cleverness to confront the Other Mother and save herself and her real parents.

Mihailova(2021) analysing the film with its every aspect. What this text focus is on the exploration the portrayal of "otherness" in "Coraline" through various means, including puppetry and failed attempts at identification within familial relationships. These elements allow for psychoanalytic interpretations, suggesting that Coraline's experiences of failed identification may evoke earlier moments of misrecognition that influence her sense of self. Misrecognition, while potentially unpleasant, encourages introspection, leading to questions about identity and self-awareness (p.201).

Later on, Mihailova(2021) focuses on Freudian theory to explain the unsettling experiences depicted in "Coraline," particularly Coraline's encounters with her new neighbours and her growing suspicion of her Other Mother. It implies that these experiences evoke feelings of uncanniness, which Freud described as causing individuals to question their fundamental understanding of the world when repressed fears or beliefs resurface. In Coraline's case, these uncanny experiences trigger a sense of an inaccessible yet influential past, often blurring the distinction between mechanical and biological entities due to a childlike perception. This sense of misrecognition leads Coraline to regress psychologically, becoming unstable and fearful as her sense of solid knowledge is undermined. Through failed attempts at identification and the symbolism of the puppet, Coraline embodies this uncanny subjectivity, experiencing a loss of self-awareness and a fear of regression from her supposed position of control and self-possession (p.202).

Royle (2003) reveals the dark aspect of the uncanny through Freud's essay, he explains this as the uncanny evokes by moving in the dark without showing it taking place in the dark. Then he continues it with Schellings definition of uncanny in Freuds' essay; "unheimlich is the name for everything that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light." (Royle, 2003, p.2) Following Royle's (2003) explanation, the uncanny is not the pure darkness but in fact it is something that goes through the phase of darkness to the light, the phase of ending the darkness and coming to light. Additionally, the play between light and shadow, both literal and metaphorical, contributes to the eerie atmosphere associated with the uncanny. Overall, the darkness of the uncanny is intertwined with its capacity to disclose hidden aspects of the psyche and question the foundations of what we perceive as normal or known (p.108).

The concept of the uncanny in gothic literature is extensive and multifaceted. Whereas, this thesis will not investigate deeply into its theoretical analysis to avoid expanding the discussion too much. Considering time and content limitations, the focus will remain on the primary subject matter.

2.1.1 Exploration of the Self

As an artist, my creative exploration extends beyond just my imagination; it takes the role of opening a space for self-exploration and development. Creating complex worlds and narratives allows me to discover the various angles of my identity. The uncanny concept inherent in these constructed imaginative narratives act as a supporting frame, encouraging a detailed process of self-construction. It is through these uncanny landscapes that I unravel layers of my inner self, gaining profound insights. Dialogical self theory resembles a connection to this objective of artistic practice. Smythe (2013) observes dialogical self theory through Hubert Hermans and colleagues' definition as a dynamic multiplicity of voiced positions within a complex mental landscape. This landscape includes both actual social interactions and imagined dialogues with others, shaping our self-concept and identity. This perspective emphasises the continuous interplay between the self and its social context, offering valuable insights into the complexities of human identity (p.635).

In the book 'Jungian and Dialogical Self Perspective' (2011), Jones and Morioka analyse the two theories. According to them, Dialogical Self Theory (DST) is a framework that focuses on the multifaceted aspects of one's identity, represented by different "I-positions," within the inner workings of the mind. These "I-positions" are not isolated entities but rather interconnected elements within an individual's consciousness. Additionally, DST acknowledges the influence of external factors, suggesting that these "I-positions" are also intertwined with the consciousness of others, reflecting the social dimension of identity formation (p.12). "In both Jungian theory and DST, the imaginal is positioned between the conscious and unconscious. Nevertheless, there are variations in how each theory conceptualises the unconscious." (Jones & Morioka, 2011, p.17) This definition aligns with the final artwork discussed in the 4.4 "Results from My Artistic Practice" chapter, incorporating subjective and realistic elements from both the conscious and unconscious mind.

Furthermore, Jones and Morioka (2011) asserts that in alignment with Jungian concepts of complexes, Dialogical Self Theory (DST) proposes the existence of unconscious positions within the psyche. This concept suggests that the unconscious can undergo a process called

"dialogicization," where suppressed or disrupted positions are given expression and integrated through dialogue, establishing a more balanced relationship between conscious and unconscious aspects of the self (p.22).

Dialogical self theory becomes a mirror reflecting the symbiotic relationship between artistic exploration and the complexities of identity. In the process of constructing these uncanny landscapes, I engage in a profound dialogue with the multiple I-positions within my consciousness and unconsciousness. The dynamic multiplicity of selves comes alive, each contributing to the rich narrative that embodies the essence of the dialogical self. Jones and Morika present a set of propositions for assessing creativity within the framework of Dialogical Self Theory (DST), all of which manifest during the planning, execution, and final stages of the research methodology and data collection process in the Uncanny Landscape/Uncanny Self workshop;

- Due to its open boundaries, the dialogical self readily welcomes new I-positions into its self space.
- I-positions exhibit a degree of independence in their thought processes, actions, and perceptions of both themselves and the external environment.
- Each I-position displays distinct emotional and potentially cognitive traits, setting them apart from one another.
- Engaging in dialogical exchanges, I-positions interact with one another, creating new meanings.

(Jones and Morika, 2011, p.87)

Examples of these propositions within the data collection method include involving participants in the art-making process, enabling multiple I-positions to contribute to the artistic space. These I-positions collaborate, influencing one another while maintaining their independence to express and immerse themselves fully.

Moreover, Jones and Morika(2011) declare that the concept of the unconscious, which emerged to explain the multiplicity within individuals, was historically needed but is now surpassed by the improved framework of the Dialogical Self. The Dialogical Self Theory claims that the inherent complexity of the self is not unusual or requires special explanation; instead, it is regarded as a natural and fundamental aspect of human existence (p.162).

Previously, in the article Talking Brought Me Here, Jones (2010) highlights this perspective, explaining how when we engage with a story, especially one that contains uncanny or unsettling

elements, it's not just a passive act of imagining ourselves within the narrative. Instead, the story has a meaningful impact on us – it reflects aspects of our inner selves that we might prefer to keep hidden or are unaware of. Freud's proposal on feelings of repulsion and distress in the context of the uncanny serves as a contrast to the usual sentimental and nostalgic aspects of storytelling. Rather than providing comfort and familiarity, these uncanny narratives act as a mirror, forcing us to confront unsettling elements within ourselves, challenging the typical comforting and soothing nature of stories (p.560).

In exploring the impact of narratives, Jones (2010) asserts that stories can evoke diverse reactions, ranging from attraction to hatred, and can evoke a range of emotions without necessarily holding specific significance for an individual's "selfing" processes. It's rare for someone to come across something written or spoken that feels intensely personally meaningful without clear reason (p.560).

Andell et al. (2019) takes a scientific approach to uncanny in the 'Uncanny experiences as Therapeutic Events' chapter by examining the letters written by a diverse group of people living in Finland (p.187). This text is crucial for this research even though the context is different as it is a unique take over of why people experience the uncanny and how it is critical in a person's self exploration and self construction. The text primarily focuses on "uncanny objects," referring to spiritual, mystic, or belief-oriented events and experiences. Although it does not align precisely with the uncanny approach in this thesis, it provides valuable insights. Moreover, the text explores the link between social and political issues and uncanny experiences, a perspective less commonly addressed.

Andell et al. notes "We start from the empirical observation that as part of autobiographical narratives uncanny experiences are often made sense of through their transformative and fundamental effects. We argue that the uncanny becomes meaningful – and thus quite 'real' – in the sense that it shapes one's actions, life paths and conceptions of oneself and the surrounding world in ways that often promote stability and healing."(Andell et al., 2019, p.187) The study reveals that when individuals narrate their encounters with the uncanny, they tend to depict these experiences as therapeutic moments. These narratives become vital resources for various aspects such as understanding oneself, constructing identity, promoting healing, and enhancing social relationships.

Essentially, the storytelling of uncanny incidents is seen as a powerful tool for personal growth and interconnectedness with others. Andell et al. (2019) discuss that within the framework of individuals' everyday therapeutic arrangements and the creation of their worldviews, uncanny

elements can be equally potent. In this context, these uncanny factors are just as 'real' in influencing and shaping one's life as other more conventional elements. The effectiveness of uncanny elements is highlighted as significant contributors to the ongoing process of personal and social construction (p.195).

According to the argument of Andell et al. (2019), this concept suggests that the world is constantly changing and not permanently anchored in one place. In the context of everyday life, people typically do not view the world in a relativistic manner. Instead, they consistently form truths or, at the very least, relatively stable perceptions about themselves, others, and the things they perceive and engage in. Furthermore, uncanny experiences and practices can be conceptualised as social manifestations of self-care and personal development. Uncanny occurrences, ranging from visions to encounters with mysterious beings, are interpreted based on their transformative impact on an individual's self-understanding and their connection to actions or situations. It implies that uncanny experiences may serve as a coping mechanism for emotionally and psychologically challenging situations, aiding individuals in navigating life's fractures and turning points. (Andell et al., 2019, p.195)

2.1.2 Consciousness and Unconsciousness

The uncanny and the unconscious are deeply intertwined. Within the depths of our minds lies the unconscious, containing our knowledge, past experiences, and primal instincts. The eerie blend of familiarity and unfamiliarity, represented by heimlich and unheimlich, arises from traumatic events, primal instincts, or latent knowledge within the unconscious mind (Sydney et al., 2018, para. 5).

Curtis (2015) interprets the concept by comparing the mind to an iceberg. He argues that, similar to an iceberg where most of its mass remains submerged underwater, the mind operates primarily at an unconscious level. Only a fraction of it is accessible to consciousness, much like the small visible portion of an iceberg above the surface. Curtis emphasises that while we may not actively think about our unconscious mind, we have an intuitive understanding of its existence. We recognise that there's an area of our psyche that operates beneath the surface of conscious awareness. This awareness does not always occupy our thoughts, but we acknowledge its presence, understanding that our unconscious mind influences us even when we're not explicitly aware of it (pp.5–6).

According to Freud (1919/2001), eerie feelings, or the uncanny, emerge from this mental place. The mix of feeling both familiar and unfamiliar, known as heimlich and unheimlich in German, originates from buried memories, instinctual reactions, and hidden knowledge stored in our unconscious (p.230). So, the uncanny is like a puzzle connected to our hidden thoughts and experiences.

Regarding the unconscious mind, Windsor (2020) offers a critique of Freud's perspective on the uncanny in his essay. He states that Freud's exploration of the two origins of the uncanny—the repressed mind and transcended primitive beliefs—is not comprehensive in his essay (p.37) Windsor argues that primitive beliefs are not exactly derived from the unconscious mind, contending that they are not “in the way that the latent content of a repressed complex necessarily is.” (Windsor, 2020, p.41)

He continues by explaining that the uncanny arising from the repressed mind does not necessarily require a specific time or place, as it can be triggered at any moment by anything. On the other hand, the uncanny originating from primitive beliefs necessitates a specific moment when the individual perceives that their beliefs are coming to life. Windsor supports his analysis with “Moreover, not everyone is equally susceptible to surmounted primitive beliefs. On the one hand, some people must simply still hold ‘primitive’ beliefs, which is to say, have never surmounted those beliefs in the first place.” (Windsor, 2020, p.41) Freud (1919/2001) believes that the uncanny originating from primitive beliefs will not have any impact on an individual if they have wholly eliminated these beliefs from their mindset. This aspect of “the uncanny,” related to primitive beliefs, may not directly relate to my research and the aesthetic associated with my art. Nevertheless, considering its significance in Freud's uncanny theory, it is valuable to unravel its context and implications.

Exploring the depths of the human mind often unveils a complex interplay between repressive functions and the uncanny. This complex relationship goes beyond the psychological phenomenon, examining the zones of memory, dreams, and the subconscious. Repression, a protective mechanism employed by the mind, raises engaging questions about the blurred boundaries between familiarity and unfamiliarity. As our brains employ repressive functions to block out certain memories, a paradoxical sensation arises – the feeling of something being simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. This confusing experience requires self-reflection and the unravelling of suppressed memories stored in the unconscious. In his essay, Windsor (2020) asserts that uncanny not only comes from repressed mind and moreover uncanny would not be the only result of evoking the repressed. He is referring to this as “given that the factor of recurrence or repetition fails to distinguish instances of repressed infantile complexes that give

rise to the uncanny from those that give rise to other subjective responses or actions, the theory fails to distinguish the factor (or factors) that determine what it is that makes something repressed which returns be experienced as uncanny.” (Windsor, 2020, p. 39)

2.2 Embodiment of the Body in the Landscape

In exploring the Uncanny Landscape/Uncanny Self workshop, I examined the significant impact of place and landscape, particularly in how we perceive them through our bodies. This research places a strong emphasis on the uncanny, where the presence of place is consistently evident, whether it's within our familiar reality or within the imaginative realms of artistic creations.

The concept of the uncanny landscape raises questions about the nature of our perception, imagination, and the places we inhabit. Our understanding of the uncanny landscape expands beyond the physical, revealing how our perception and imagination play a significant role in shaping our sense of place. Ingold (1993) demonstrates this as engaging with the landscape involves remembering by perceiving an environment infused with the past, rather than retrieving stored internal images in the mind (p.152).

Trigg (2012) describes this relation as the concept of "place" is deeply intertwined with human experience, emotions, and specific characteristics, making it complex to define. Place is not solely a construct of human perception nor just an aspect of the world's reality; it exists in a unique intersection of both. Places evoke powerful memories and imaginations, not only because of their importance to human experience but also because they exist independently of our perceptions, though influenced by them (p. 6). This understanding invites us to explore deeper into the complexity of our relationship with the environment, considering not only the external landscapes we interact with but also the internal landscapes of our minds and emotions.

The exploration of the uncanny landscape does not stop at only recognising the emotional and psychological impacts of our surroundings. It also encourages a broader reflection on how these landscapes serve as mirrors to our inner selves. Trigg (2012) claims that phenomenology, despite its diverse approaches, consistently treats the concept of place as fundamentally linked to human experience rather than as a mere physical space that can be objectively measured. This perspective emphasises that spatiality—or our sense of space—is an integral aspect of our existence and interaction with the world. Instead of viewing place as an empty 'container' or a set of dimensions that can be quantified, phenomenology sees it as a dynamic expression of our "being-in-the-world." This means that place is understood through the lived experiences,

emotions, and actions of individuals, highlighting the intimate and subjective nature of how we relate to and understand the spaces we inhabit (p.4).

Tim Ingold's (2009) examines Irving Hallowell's classic study of the Ojibwa with many aspects. The study of Ojibwa declared that knowledge arises from direct experience, which seamlessly integrates awareness with the world's movements, reflecting an intrinsic connection rather than a separation between mind and nature (p.11). For the framework of this thesis, I will look at his emphasis on the interconnectedness of the individual with their environment through study of Ojibwa. Unlike the Western model, which sees the self as a pre-existing, internal consciousness contained within the body, the Ojibwa model proposes that the self is formed through active engagement with the world. Ingold describes how, for the Ojibwa, the self emerges as a centre of impact and awareness through interaction with the environment. This model suggests that aspects such as feeling, remembering, intending, and speaking are not pre-formed internal processes but are continuously created and expressed through engagement with the surroundings. The Ojibwa view does not separate the mind and body into distinct entities but sees the self as dynamically formed through lived experiences. Ingold highlights that, according to the Ojibwa, the self is not locked away within an internal realm of thoughts and feelings but is openly established in the world. This perspective sees personal identity as fluid and relational, always in the process of becoming through interactions with both human and non-human elements of the environment. This contrasts sharply with the Western notion of a detached, inner self that processes and acts upon an external world (p.118).

Trigg (2012) explores the connection between memory, embodiment, and the experience of place, emphasising the importance of bodily experiences in shaping our perception and interaction with the world. When Trigg speaks of "those places living in our bodies," he suggests that our bodies are not passive vessels but active participants in our engagement with space. Drawing from phenomenology, he argues that our bodily experiences are deeply intertwined with our memories and perceptions of place. Thus, our physical selves carry traces of our past experiences, shaping our present experiences and influencing how we navigate and understand the spaces we inhabit (Trig, 2012, p.39).

Moreover, Trigg's (2012) concept of the "eerie sense" resonates with his exploration of the uncanny, a feeling of strangeness or discomfort that arises when the familiar becomes unfamiliar. He suggests that our bodily experiences can evoke memories and emotions associated with particular places, leading to a sense of eeriness when these memories resurface unexpectedly (p.39).

The uncanny, as it applies to landscape, also brings the notion of the familiar made strange.

This concept challenges us to settle with the idea that spaces known to us can suddenly seem alien and disorienting, reflecting our altered states of mind or shifts in perception. These moments of disconnection serve as sentimental reminders of the fluid boundaries between the known and unknown, the self and the other, the real and unreal.

To understand the experience and the influence of the body movements in the first part of the workshop, we must first look at the connection between landscape and mind. According to Berleant, "From the body we view existential space, determine its directional axes, and measure existential distance. To conceive the spatiality of the lived body is to recognise that places and movements are perceived in relation to the body, seen as here or there." (Berleant, 2005, p.8) In this statement he suggests that our perception of space, or what it refers to as "existential space," is intimately connected to our bodily experiences. When we navigate the world around us, it is through our bodies that we understand the dimensions, directions, and distances of our environment. Our bodily presence serves as a reference point for how we perceive places and movements within this spatial framework. Understanding the spatiality of the lived body involves recognising that our experiences of place and motion are inherently tied to our physical selves. We interpret the world in relation to our own bodies, defining locations as either "here" (where we are) or "there" (where we are not). This bodily perspective shapes our understanding of space, as we navigate through the world and make sense of our surroundings based on our bodily perceptions (p.8).

Furthermore, Berleant (2005) emphasises that the landscape we perceive is not merely a product of our conscious thought or mental constructs. Instead, it emerges from our embodied experience and is infused with the meanings, emotions, and energies that we, as perceiving bodies, bring to it. In other words, our engagement with the landscape is not passive; it is an active process where our bodies play a central role in shaping our understanding and interpretation of the environment (p.35).

For one person, a landscape might evoke feelings of stillness and beauty, reminding them of cherished memories spent in similar places. For another, the same landscape might evoke feelings of unease or disconnection, triggering associations with past traumas or negative experiences. Additionally, cultural influences can further shape individuals' perceptions of landscape, with certain landscapes holding symbolic significance or cultural value within specific communities.

Berleant (2005) explains this notion as for some, the landscape holds deep personal significance, serving as a connection to their sense of home and belonging. They may find

meaning in the familiar features of their surroundings, shaping their identity and understanding of themselves in relation to the environment. Alternatively, others may view the landscape through a pragmatic lens, seeing it as a valuable resource for economic or developmental purposes. The landscape can be intertwined with broader cultural and national narratives, reflecting a society's history, traditions, and collective identity. Individuals may feel a sense of pride or attachment to landscapes that symbolise their nation's heritage, contributing to a shared cultural consciousness. Conversely, the landscape can also become a central point for political debates and conflicts, particularly in cases where issues such as land ownership, conservation, or development arise. (p.42).

In the study of embodiment, it is clear that body and mind can not separate within the experience and perception of Landscape. "Yet to speak of 'body' is as one-sided as it is to speak of 'mind'. What would we think of a journal called Body? By the same token, what should we think of a journal called Mind, as if you could understand body without mind or mind without body?" (Berleant, 2005, p.121) Moreover, he explains that by employing "embodiment," we not only acknowledge the physicality of the body but also recognise its complexity with "cultural, social, historical, and personal experience". (Berleant, 2005, p.125) These contextual factors shape and inform our embodied experiences, diffusing them with layers of meaning and significance beyond materiality.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodological process of gathering data for my research. It discusses the research questions and how they associate with specific methods, alongside the reasoning for selecting the chosen research methodology. Furthermore, it provides insight into how the data collection methods directly address these research questions and elaborates on the methodologies employed, including details on their execution and action.

3.1 Art Based Methods and Research Questions

In developing this thesis, I carefully considered both theoretical and practical components, ensuring a comprehensive approach to exploring the concept of the uncanny. During the planning stages, both theoretical and practical components were thoroughly crafted, including everything from conceptual exploration to data analysis. Each step was guided by the aims and objectives of applied visual arts (AVA), shaping the entire process accordingly. AVA's influence emerged large in my creative journey, particularly in introducing the element of "participation" through the Uncanny Landscape workshop. Eventually, i sought for answers for these research questions in the thesis:

1. What emotional responses are evoked from participants when encountering the uncanny in artistic self-expression and immersive landscapes? (The first research question is aimed at the participants of the uncanny workshop)
2. Does exploring the uncanny as a context for my artistic practice have a true connection to my self-expression? (The second research question is for my own artistic study and practice.)

Each step of the workshop, from its initiation to its evolution into an art form, was crafted to align with the principles of applied visual arts (AVA). This workshop, aimed at exploring the uncanny through participation, owes its existence to the alignment with AVA's specific objectives. These objectives, emphasising engagement, participation, and place-specificity, are

fundamental to both my research and the workshop's development. Another significant aspect of utilising art-based research as a primary strategy is to ensure that my creative process is not only accessible but also transferable to others. This necessity emerged from the principles associated with applied visual arts, which prioritise fostering participation, collaboration, and inclusion within artistic endeavours (Coutts, 2018).

Introducing an abstract theme to participants and initiating a journey of self-exploration aligns seamlessly with the principles of applied visual arts. This aspect is explained in the book *Cool: Applied Visual Arts in the North*, where it is explained that applied visual arts typically engage with their surroundings, often occupying the interstitial spaces between built environments and nature. In these contexts, the cultural, social, and symbolic diversity becomes integral to the work's content (Jokela, 2013, p. 16).

My approach underwent changes throughout the entire process from being only an artist to acting as a “researcher, designer, and innovator.” (Jokela, 2013, p. 16) The process of interweaving it with AVA necessitates precise and methodical planning and shares many aspects with 'design thinking' (Jokela and Coutts, 2015, p.12). Design thinking in the context of the uncanny workshop involves employing creative strategies and problem-solving techniques to explore the concept of the uncanny. Participants engage in a structured process that encourages ideation, and experimentation, allowing them to explore their own artistic expressions and interpretations further.

When I take my data collection methods and theoretical analysis into consideration, this research fits into Art-Based Action Research (ABAR) and Art-Based Research (ABR). The research is conducted by utilising two strategies. I'll describe how these strategies correspond with each layer of the thesis and how they relate to concept and the action. It is challenging to distinguish whether ABAR or ABR serves as the primary research method. Each method serves a unique purpose, with ABAR closely tied to the workshop process and ABR focused on my personal artistic journey. However, these methods are interconnected, as my artistic process relies on materials from ABAR. As a result, both methods are equally distinguished throughout every step of the research.

In facilitating the workshop within the landscape, I draw upon the philosophical insights of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, whose phenomenological approach offers a rich framework for understanding the intertwining of perception, self-identity, and place. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is employed not only as a theoretical framework for the literature study but also as a methodological tool guiding the theoretical study into subjective experiences and embodied

perceptions. Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on embodied experience and the lived body provides a theoretical foundation for creating immersive experiences that evoke uncanny feelings. By engaging participants in direct encounters with their surroundings, I aim to awaken their sensory perceptions and deepen their engagement with the uncanny. Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty's notion of the "flesh of the world" underscores the interconnectedness between individuals and their environment, guiding the design of workshops that encourage participants to explore the uncanny within the context of their own lived experiences. Trigg describes the "flesh of the world" as how our bodies unconsciously connect and merge with the surrounding environment. This connection goes beyond our individual physical bodies, suggesting a deeper, more universal continuity. He highlights the idea that our bodily experience is not isolated but is part of a larger, interconnected reality (Trigg, 2012 p.62). Through this methodology, participants are invited to reflect on the complexities of self-identity and the mysterious aspects of existence, fostering a deeper understanding of the uncanny in artistic practice.

Furthermore, Dialogical Self Theory (DST) is used as a method. Initially, the workshop acts as a platform for dialogue and exchange, where participants contribute their individualistic viewpoints and experiences. These contributions are then incorporated into the self-dialogue, by facilitating an exploration of the uncanny within my artistic practice. By integrating the principles of DST into the workshop and artistic process, this methodology provides a structured approach for navigating the complexities of identity, perception, and artistic expression.

3.1.1 Art-Based Research

My journey into research began with a simple yet profound question: Why do I create art? As an artist, I've always been drawn to the uncanny, the eerie feeling when something seems strangely familiar yet unsettling. It's this fascination with the uncanny that has shaped my artistic vision, influencing everything from my choice of themes to my creative process. This curiosity about deepening my understanding of my practice resonated with the art-based research method that marked the beginning of my thesis. Novelist and sociologist Patricia Leavy, Ph.D.,(2020) explains the ABR method as; "ABR practices are a set of methodological tools used by researchers across the disciplines during any or all phases of research, including data generation, analysis, interpretation, and representation." (Leavy, 2020, p. ix) Then Leavy continues to suggest that art-based researchers are carving from research tools instead of discovering new tools (Leavy, 2020, p.3) which align with my need to understand deep layers of artistic practice.

This perspective corresponds with my belief in the transformative power of art as a means of inquiry and expression. By recognising the process of carving from existing tools, rather than passively discovering new ones, art-based researchers have control and creativity in shaping their research methodologies. This resonates acutely with my approach, as I aim to explore the intricate intersections between applied visual art, unconscious mind, and self-expression. Through embracing the nature of “carving”, I seek to uncover new insights and perspectives within my artistic practice.

By embracing art-based research methods, I aim to not only investigate my own creative process but also to create a framework that allows others to engage with and contribute to the research process. From a research perspective with the purpose of opening the study up, Leavy states this as “As researchers, we are often trained to hide our relationship to our work; this is problematic for some, impossible for others. ABR practices allow researchers to share this relationship with the audiences who experience their works.” (Leavy, 2020, p.3) ABR creates ways of opening the study up to individuals both in terms of research and art making.

Expanding on Leavy's perspective, art-based research (ABR) provides a space for researchers to authentically engage with their work and share their personal relationship to it. Leavy (2020) argues that conventional research practices often encourage researchers to conceal their personal connections to their work, a notion that can be challenging or even impossible for some (Leavy, 2020, p.141.) However, ABR practices provide a means for researchers to embrace and share their subjective experiences. By integrating personal narratives, emotions, and perspectives into their research process, researchers can create works that resonate on a deeper level with their viewers or participants. This approach not only enriches the research outcomes but also supports a more transparent and inclusive research environment. Through ABR, my study becomes more accessible and relatable to individuals, bridging the gap between academic research and individualistic artistic expression which is a crucial point in my study.

According to McNiff (2013) ABR has collaborative qualities, she describes this as “The practice of ABR involves the decision to use art as a way to respond to particularly question and issues that may involve various disciplines ranging from history, literary studies, philosophy, social science, management, art itself and maybe even the natural sciences.” (McNiff, 2013, p.24). Therefore the methods are not following traditional boundaries but it is sculpting the best innovative way to respond to questions. This also applies to art itself. Referring to views of McNiff, “artistic processes and expressions are often the focus of ABR, but these subjects are not the defining elements. Rather, it is the artistic process of inquiry that can be used to explore

art, as well as the totality of human experience.” (McNiff, 2013, p.24). ABR is blurring the boundaries between disciplines, creating collaborative space and loosening the borders of art.

Art-Based Research (ABR) is an innovative approach in research, providing a special way to understand the complexities of human life and society. As Leavy articulates, "In short, ABR cultivates new insights and illuminates aspects of the social world and human experience, as do quantitative and qualitative research, but in different ways." (Leavy, 2020, p.22). This idea emphasises how unique ABR is, showing its ability to reveal new insights and explore aspects of human life that traditional research methods might miss.

One of the defining features of ABR is its constant commitment to process. As Leavy observes, "These research practices are generally attentive to processes." (Leavy, 2020, p.22). ABR works in a similar way, reflecting the ever-changing nature of human life. It helps researchers deal with complex topics by being flexible and responsive to what's happening around them.

3.1.2 Art-Based Action Research

Jokela and Huhmarniemi (2018) highlights the essence of art-based action research as a multifaceted research strategy that operates within the framework of action research cycles. By integrating art into the research process, this approach serves as a guiding force, facilitating progress and innovation. Art is not only a tool for data collection or analysis; rather, it functions as a catalyst for development work across various fields. (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018, p.9) For instance, art-based action research can empower individuals or communities by fostering creative expression and self-reflection.

This quotation from Jokela and Huhmarniemi (2018) emphasises the significance of incorporating art into the research process in a manner that promotes inclusivity and makes achieving research goals easier. By utilising art-based methods, researchers can engage stakeholders and community members actively in the research endeavour, providing them with a platform for meaningful participation. Through art based action research “tacit knowledge and experiences can be obtained from them, which are not conveyed through traditional qualitative research methods based on verbal or written language”. (Jokela and Huhmarniemi, 2018, p.9)

In the context of my thesis, actively engaging as both an artist and researcher offers me a distinct perspective. Unlike traditional research methods where there's a more distant approach, my dual role with ABAR method allows for a closer connection to the research process. By

actively participating in collecting and analysing data, I not only shape the research path but also let my artistic practice be deeply influenced by the insights gained. This integrated approach blurs the lines between creator and investigator, creating a dynamic synergy between theory and practice. Jokela and Huhmarniemi (2018) highlight this as: “The researcher is always a key participant in the research process. In art-based action research, the experiences of the community or research topic are not intended to be studied from a third-party perspective. It is more the opposite in the sense that experiences are often intended to influence and be influenced as part of the research process.” (Jokela and Huhmarniemi, 2018, p.12)

Aims of ABAR such as being an ongoing process of change and learning, running simultaneously and occurring with participatory actions goes parallel with what is conducted within this research and project. The process involved fulfilling the needs of ABR by constant learning from theoretical study to transfer it into participatory action. This process required a concise planning according to the location of LiLa project, timeline and participants knowledge about the uncanny.

The building process of the action aka workshop, is indeed mimicking the qualities of a design process. Jokela and colleagues (2015) refer to this as “Art-based action research is also in a close relationship with design research that has an objective to design new action models or products.” (Jokela et al., 2015, p.442). The workshop transformed into a lively, immersive experience, requiring thorough planning at each step to ensure participants had a well-guided journey. Crafting an environment that evoked uncanny sensations involved a thoughtful design process, balancing structured guidelines with opportunities for participants to express themselves authentically. This flexible approach allowed for a diverse range of responses, fostering deeper engagement with the uncanny elements explored during the workshop.

3.2 Research Philosophy and Ethics

Leavy (2014) states that ethics plays a crucial role in guiding how researchers translate abstract principles into real-world practices and decisions, ensuring that ethical principles are applied throughout the research process. She emphasises the importance of portraying participants' experiences, perspectives, and identities with sensitivity and integrity. This requires thoughtful consideration of how participants are represented in research findings, ensuring that their voices are accurately reflected and that any potential risks to their well-being or privacy are minimised (pp.4–5).

During the LiLa Summer School 2023 project, participants, including those involved in the uncanny workshops, were asked for their consent regarding the use of documented activities and outcomes. This included various materials such as photographs, videos, written records, audio recordings, and lectures. The purpose of this consent was to allow the utilisation of these materials in research articles, conference presentations, master theses, future LiLa summer schools, and exhibitions discussing the actions, findings, and artistic outcomes of the LiLa Summer School 2023.

Participants were specifically asked to provide written consent regarding the use of their images and video documentation in which they can be identified. Additionally, they were asked to grant permission for the use of their artistic productions, ensuring proper credit is given. Participants were also given the option to allow the use of their visual documentation, such as photography and video recordings, with appropriate crediting. Furthermore, participants had the choice to allow the use of their assignments as data while staying anonymous.

The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures ensuring basic principles of integrity must also apply for artistic research activities. These principles are reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability. In the case of an uncanny workshop, the outcomes can be very personal since it is highly associated with emotions, memories and thoughts. For this reason, the answers of participants to the interview and questionnaire are totally kept anonymous within the research. To guarantee the privacy of answers, participants were given the option to not answer during the workshop but to give an anonymous written response to questions.

Sculpted wax models created by participants were utilised in my artwork by analysing their shapes and associated stories. Prior to the workshop, participants were informed that these wax models might directly feature in the final artwork and exhibition, or similar shapes might appear within the final work. Given the potential personal significance of these sculptures, participants were also notified that the wax sculptures will be collected at the end of the workshop and temporarily retained for further study. Eventually, after the study period, the material will be repurposed and returned to the material library, resulting in the disappearance of their sculptures.

3.3 Structure of the Final Research Data

Various types of materials were collected by the end of the workshop, whether from the workshop itself, the Louevaara assignment, or testing the idea with peers. In terms of data for the research, I will only be analysing the materials left from the workshop and the artistic actions these materials inspired, as the previous parts of the route to the final data played a larger role in shaping what happened in the workshop. According to Jokela and Huhmarinemi data can include various materials such as “researcher’s personal observations of the action, documenting with photography and video, artworks from steps of sketches to final work, any design materials, feedbacks, discussions and answers to interviews and questionnaires.” (Jokela and Huhmarniemi, 2018, p.16).

To analyse the data, a distinction is made between the final materials. The analysis of workshop data primarily corresponds to art-based action research and addresses the research question regarding participation within the artistic event. On the other hand, the analysis of my own artistic process coexists with the art-based research and aligns with the research question aimed at my own artistic study. This could also be explained as fresh results right after the workshop ended and results when there is a chance to reflect more on the whole experience. (Jokela, Huhmarniemi, 2018, p.17). In some ways, this notion can also explain this division between the analysis and results. Because, the results from workshops and participants are exactly the same as what I observed, thought and felt right after it ended. However, for artistic practice, almost all of the ideas, feelings and thoughts occurred after a very long time when everything settled down and the inner reflections came forward.

In the case of this research and project, the main data collected are the interviews and questionnaire answers, photographs from the whole workshops, modelling wax sculptures (as a visual) and the artistic process from myself. Photographs became an important part to document the data and as well as to go back and refer to it during the research. The photography itself is not directly connected to the final visual art as a separate material, but rather serves as a tool to visualise the entire research and data process. Therefore, it has evolved into a form of theoretical supporting visual material. Jokela and Humarniemi mention the importance of reviewing photographic material throughout the research process to utilise the photographs to retarget the subjects and methods. (Jokela and Huhmarniemi, 2018, p.17)

My approach to photography evolved considerably during the process. Initially, I envisioned participants capturing their own photographs while creatively posing with their safe or uncanny place. However, as the workshop progressed, it became clear that this artistic photography would introduce complexity, potentially confusing participants. They might wonder how to evoke an uncanny feeling with multiple tasks and mediums. Instead, I focused on allowing them to

freely experience the environment and to find out if they can feel uncanny before moving forward with sculpting.

Having multiple sources of data had a slightly negative affect at some point but it found its place in the end. The negative effect was to realise during the workshop that I have multiple sources of collecting data and not knowing which one is the main, it was unclear which aspect to prioritise and observe more closely. However when the reflection stage started, it became clearer which data held greater influence.

For artistic practice; the whole process of sketching, material choice, and crafting is a part of my data as it also includes a thought process with it. According to Jokela and Huhmarniemi, in art-based action research, the drafts, plans, artistic creations, and reflective insights often form a significant aspect of research material. Incorporating these elements not only aligns with the art-based research methods but also integrates various methods within art-based research. (Jokela and Huhmarniemi, 2018, p.17)

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I clarify what the Living in the Landscape project is and how my Uncanny Landscape/Uncanny Self workshop took place within this project. The project has provided me with valuable data for analysis in my study and artistic process. The data resulted in various forms and shapes which influenced the final artwork. I will walk through each step of the workshop and the participants' actions to understand their engagement with the research concept and the workshop, consequently supporting the qualitative analysis stage.

4.1 Living in the Landscape Project

Living in the Landscape (LiLa) is an international summer school course coordinated by the University of Lapland in Finland, focusing on the interdisciplinary exploration of Northern and Arctic communities. The project aims to address the emerging challenges posed by environmental, social, cultural, and economic changes in the North and the Arctic, including climate change and globalisation (Living in the Landscape, Arctic Arts Summit, 2022). Through a combination of arts, humanities, and natural sciences, LiLa brings together students, researchers, and lecturers to investigate the relationship between Arctic environments, communities, and landscapes. "This year, participants in the school come from various disciplines: art education, general teacher education, fine arts, creative practice, and clothing design." (Lundstedt et al., 2023, p.6)

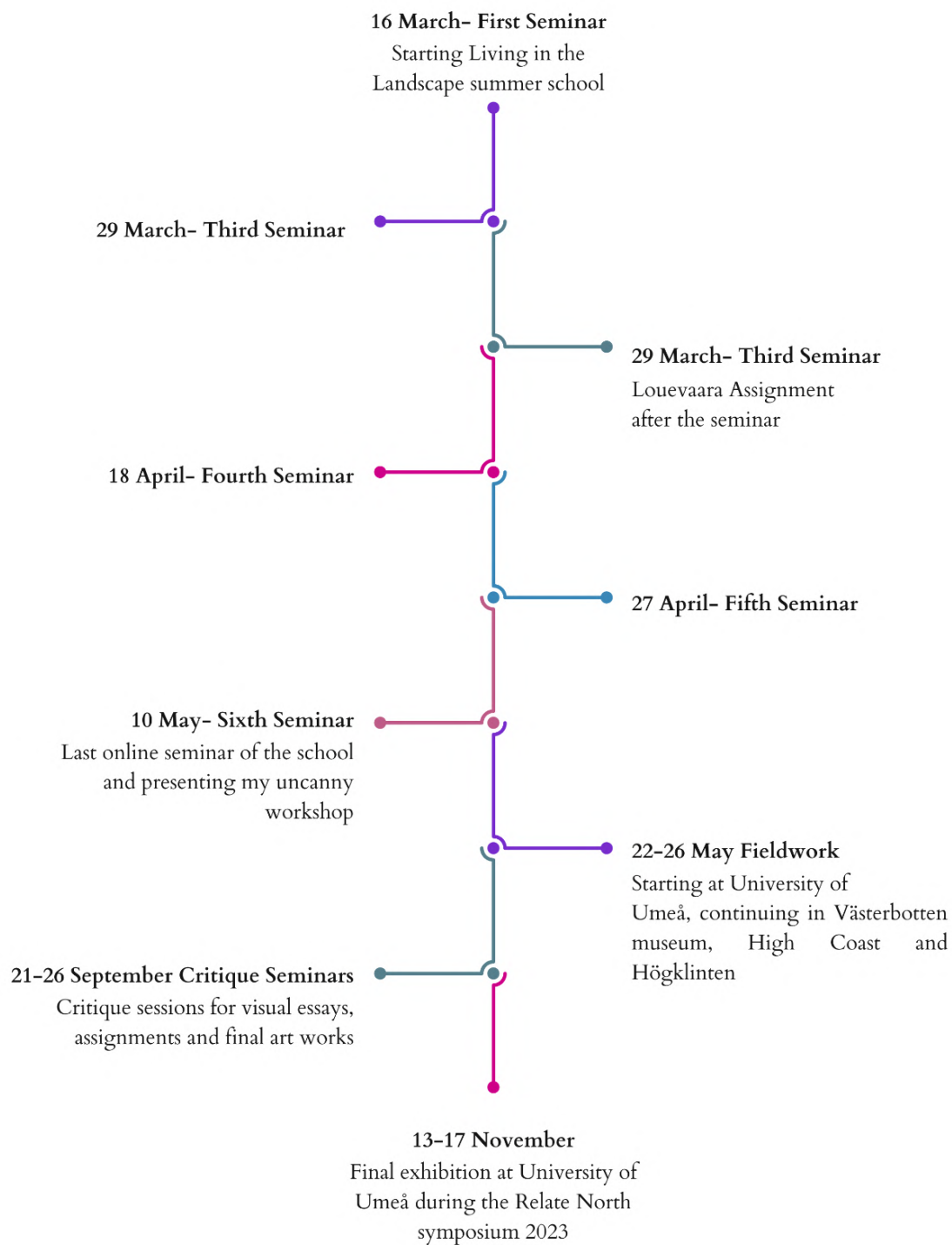
4.1.1 The Team and The Process of the Project

LiLa is a hybrid project that involves online meetings, assignments, and fieldwork "The participating MA and PhD students and scholars this year came from several ASAD partner institutions: Umeå University (Sweden), the University of Lapland (Finland), Nord University

(Norway), the University of the West of Scotland (Scotland), University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI Shetland), Yukon School of Art (Canada), and University of Alaska, Anchorage (USA)". (Lundstedt et al., 2023, p.8)

The summer school started in March with online seminars and assignments centred around the subject of taskscape, inspired by Tim Ingold (1993). This initial phase provided a space for participants to explore themselves and their individual purpose within the landscape, nature and forests. The program progressed with visual assignments, workshops, meetings, and culminated in the fieldwork. The project concluded with visual essays, critique meetings, and lastly an exhibition, followed by the yearly publication. In addition to the summer school's timetable, my personal planning phase started in early November and gradually developed over time.

Figure 1: Timeline of Living in the Landscape project. Image: Author



4.1.2 Reasons of Facilitating a Workshop

Throughout the development of my workshop, numerous aspects and considerations emerged to shape its evolution. Some of these aspects form the core foundation of my research, while others play supportive roles, contributing to the conceptual framework and enriching the overall context.

I started approaching my research idea with a connection to my artistic practice and with curiosity to find out why uncanny themes have a power for self expression. Not only does this benefit me as an artist, but it also helps in understanding how such themes can have a greater impact on individual expression and sense-making through it compared to realistic themes (Andell et al., 2019, p.187). The curiosity also revolves around if as an artist I need a special audience to make the spectator understand my creativity and thought process. Or is it simply perceived similarly by others? Besides exploring my own art practice, I also wondered how other artists use similar imagery to convey uncanny themes in their work. However, for the purpose of this research, I focused on my own practice and aimed to make these themes more accessible by facilitating a workshop to help other individuals explore the concept in a collaborative environment. This seeking to know and learn more about the imaginative themes created the need for some sort of participatory, immersive art event. In this case, it is the workshop and other trial actions that took place earlier.

After having the theoretical foundation of my research, I joined the Living in the Landscape project as a participant and combined my research and project phase with LiLa to gather data from other participants. This participatory immersive art event idea was very abstract in the beginning. First initial idea was to work on an uncanny, immersive artwork and include participation at a very late stage to the end; such as having an immersive exhibition with a possibility to still participate in the final artwork. With learning more about the LiLa project, I started to visualise a workshop idea that could be planned within the LiLa with its participants from various backgrounds. Having participants with various artistic or research backgrounds was important to have a diverse group of people who experience the uncanny, rather than just those who are already deeply familiar with it.

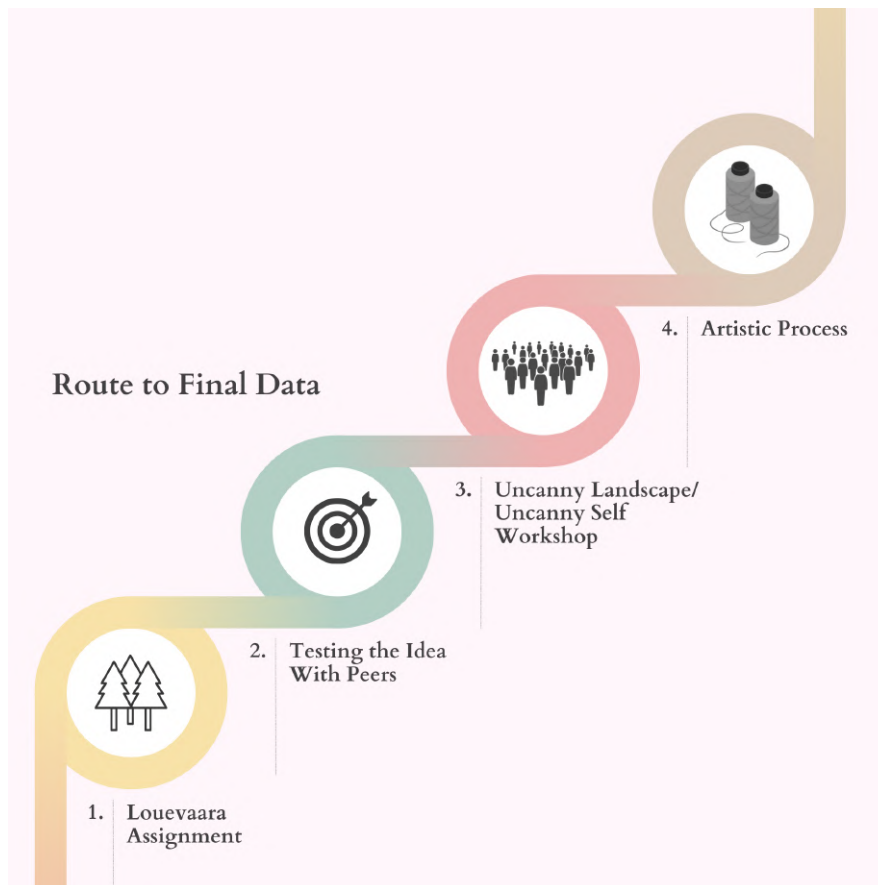
The term uncanny is inherently abstract, and dealing with it becomes deeply personal and subjective, particularly when combined with self-expression. It is more complex than simple pragmatic recurrence of specific events to evoke the uncanny; rather, it involves the interaction of various personal factors (Windsor, 2020, p.39). I acknowledged in the beginning that being comfortable with imaginative concepts and using it as a tool to express yourself can be personal and it might result in participants not resonating with it at all. This is also purely in relation to wondering whether these kinds of artworks need their own audience or can participants also be involved. Since the term is abstract, this kind of participatory art based actions are also making the concept transition from abstract to the verbal, making it observable and explorable.

Living in the Landscape project is based on Tim Ingold's (1993) concept of taskscape."It refers to our way of being and dwelling and the tasks we perform while in our daily landscapes" (Lundstedt et al., 2023, p.6) The learning and practical activities of LiLa were based on this concept. When the project proceeded, the meaning of landscape of a taskscape became more important to me. It also made me realise that the uncanny which I am exploring is very much based in natural landscapes. With this realisation, I started to pay attention to my own connection with a landscape and what it means for me. At first, this process was challenging. I found it difficult to sense or articulate any artistic connection with the landscape I was currently in or I would be in during the LiLa fieldwork. However, this challenge gradually weakened and was completely reversed once I began the fieldwork. I will explain this in more detail in the 4.4 "Results from My Artistic Practice" chapter.

4.2 Route to the Final Data

From the initial action step to the final artwork, each action serves as valuable data for research purposes. Even the smallest actions, such as the Louevaara assignment and testing the idea with my peers, contributed to the final design of the workshop. However, these initial steps did not directly influence the final artwork. Nonetheless, they played a crucial role in shaping how I planned the workshop eventually. Figure 2 displays and summarises the process and its connected cycles.

Figure 2: The venn diagram of main action that took place. Graphic: Author



4.2.1 Louevaara Assignment

During the second online LiLa meeting on 29th of March, we had an assignment outside for each country group to complete. As a participant group from Finland, we organised a small trip to Louevaara which is a small hut located on the mountain. In this Louevaara assignment, I had the chance to experiment my idea with participants for the first time. However this was not a fully planned action, but rather was partly improvised and flexible to follow. This assignment was also crucial for me to explore my own connection with forests and landscapes and to find my place in nature.

Before the trip took place, I did additional research about any similar uncanny concepts that took place or experienced, especially in natural landscapes. This led me to explore the topic of sublime, transcendent moments in nature and the emotion of awe. According to Williams and Harvey (2001) transcendent experience is described by phrases such as feeling intensely joyful, experiencing a sense of harmony with the world, moments of complete absorption and significance, and sensations of lightness and freedom (p.249). Unlike the uncanny, which evokes a sense of unease, sublime is a positive occurrence that one might experience in nature. This emotion is mostly associated with fear and wonder (Edmund Burke, 1810, p.50).

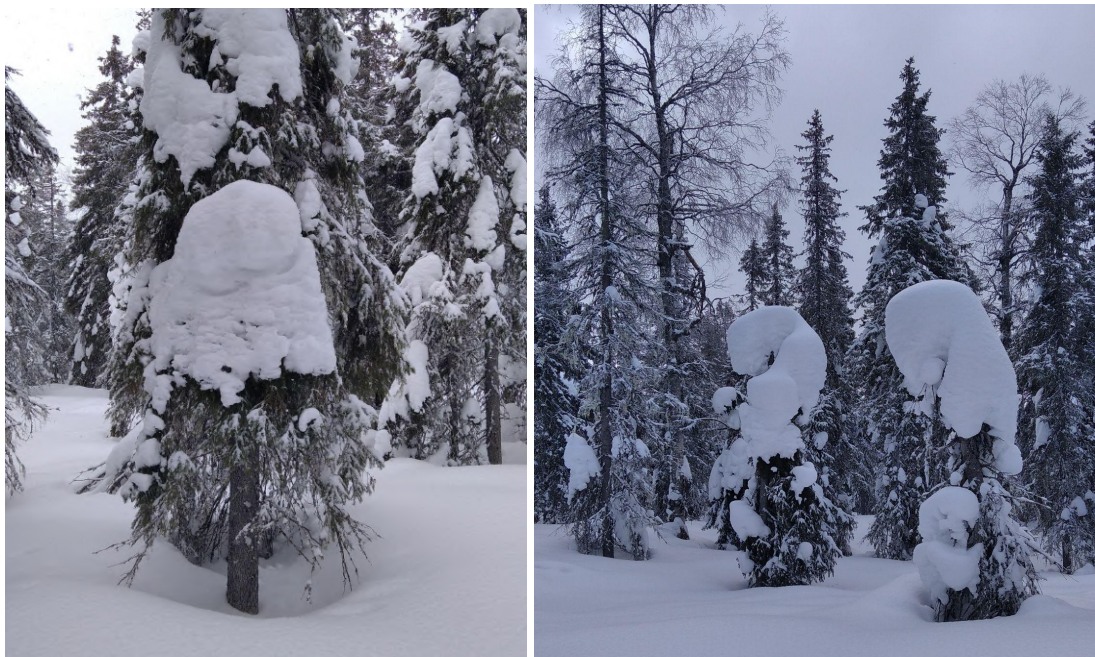
Given that this was more of an improvised version of the research concept, I decided to explore participatory artistic action with an easier and less complex topic compared to uncanny.

In the beginning of the assignment, I presented this idea to the group and asked them to be mindful of these terms, concepts and emotions while hiking in the forest. During hiking to the hut, we sometimes discussed if someone notices an interesting thing in the forest that evokes similar feelings and also had a bigger conversation about this later at the end of the day. This conversation then expanded to include more fairy tales and forest mythical creatures. Later on, we finished the assignment with participants taking photographs with a tree covered with snow that they resonate with or find mystical. (see figure 4)

Figure 3 and 4. Image: Annika Kokko, 2023



Figure 5 and 6: Image: Author



4.2.2 Testing the Idea With Peers

Only a few days prior to the LiLa field work took place, I had the chance to test my workshop idea with my peers from the master's degree program. This gave me the possibility to see how the action is taking place and how kind of reactions the participants are giving to the concept. Also it was a great possibility to make any improvement to the flow of the steps and to the amount of information given to participants beforehand.

In this test action, we tried all of the workshop steps. These steps are explained in detail in the next chapter, for this part i will go through it roughly. My peers explored the outdoor area behind the university. Just like the actual workshop, firstly they found a safe place in the forest and they explored the surroundings of this safe place with their eyes closed to experiment with uncanny, unsettling feelings. Furthermore, we moved indoors to work with modelling wax sculpting to sculpt the experience and feelings from the first outdoor part.

Figure 7 and 8. Image: Chia-Chen Chang, 2023



After getting feedback from my peers, I made a few changes to the final workshop plan such as adding more information about uncanny, providing a written paper of steps for them to follow easily. Additionally, one of the pieces of feedback addressed the challenge of exploring with closed eyes. It was noted that closing their eyes created a sense of tension and unease, initially resembling what the uncanny seeks to evoke. However, this discomfort could extend to the entire process, potentially stopping participants from fully immersing themselves in the forest experience. To address this, I decided to have participants explore the forest in pairs.

Figure 9,10 and 11: Wax sculpture from the peers. Image: Author



Through this testing trial, I had the possibility to see what participants can create with the modelling wax material based on their uncanny and safe place experience. In this trial, participants created shapes and forms totally different from each other. And outcomes were very interesting, various, and inspiring for my final artwork. This helped me to decide I can use the modelling wax sculptures as an influence for my final artwork and as a great method for them to express themselves. It cleared away the hesitation I had towards this material and technique.

4.2.3 Uncanny Landscape/Uncanny Self Workshop

In this chapter, I will discuss every step that took place during the planning and action of the workshop. The details about the location, target group, geography, schedule, and available materials played a big role in shaping the final workshop.

How I Planned the Workshop

After having a solid theoretical phase that was constantly improving and expanding over time, I started to shape the workshop idea according to the aims and needs of the LiLa project. Majority of LiLa took place outdoors, therefore my workshop was also going to take place outdoors. I wanted this to also have a part in my research rather than just being a location. Due to this, I sought for ways to find my own place in nature, therefore nature's place in my art and in the context of the uncanny. I changed my perspective on landscape from seeing it from a physical place to a metaphorical place. This process also made me realise that nature has a big place in my art but it's just not as a geological or physical one. I see the landscape, tree and forest as a place for possible imaginative narratives, therefore the long term connection to a

place that I was seeking before is not necessary to have a connection. This understanding also made my whole research fully joined with the LiLa project.

Another aspect of LiLa affected the materials used in the workshop. As it can be seen in the 4.4 “Results from My Artistic Practice” chapter, final artwork is made with textile and fibre materials which is one of my main techniques. During the planning process, I consistently intended to use textile materials with participants in the workshop phase. Similar to the soft filled textiles in the final artwork, I planned to create small soft pieces for participants to use and craft their own uncanny objects, entities, or creatures. However, due to workshops happening outside, using modelling wax as an art material became a better choice. Eventually it was easier for participants to use and get more creative in nature.

Prior to the fieldwork, I presented my concept to the participants during the final online LiLa meeting. I provided a brief explanation of the workshop's objective and outlined the actions they will encounter. I presented the concepts of the uncanny and safe place, offering examples of artistic works that inspired the initial segment of the workshop to also inspire the participants. These examples were images of Riitta Ikonen's artworks to demonstrate how embodiment into landscape and immersion into nature can be portrayed. Given the complexity of the uncanny, I aimed for participants to grasp the idea beforehand, preparing themselves for the workshop and immersing themselves into the associated emotions. This approach allowed time for exploration, fostering curiosity and preparing an emotional space for the uncanny. The information from the presentation (see more in the next “What Happened During the Workshop” section) was also uploaded to the LiLa online environment for participants to revisit after the online meeting.

What Happened During the Workshop

The workshop took place on the first day of the LiLa fieldwork, outside of the Västerbotten museum in Umeå, Sweden. The uncanny workshop was facilitated alongside the communal flower planting workshop conducted by art education students from the University of Lapland. The flower planting workshop provided participants with an opportunity to take an active interest in the landscape. (Lundstedt et al, 2023.) In the beginning of workshop day, I gave a brief set of instructions and let the participants know what they should do in the forest. I also informed them that there is a practical second part of the workshop where they will create something with their hands. In addition to talking about forest instructions, I provided participants with an instruction paper for those who might have missed the online presentation and needed written guidance.

However, the initial idea was to let participants know about the concept beforehand so they can explore the forest and the steps freely without holding a paper. The first part of the workshop continued as the instruction steps stated as;

Forest Adventure:

- Explore the forest with other team member(s)
- Find your safe place in the forest, (a place that feels safe to you that would also transform the forest into the 'familiar')
- Walk and move around this place while eyes closed with the guidance of the "other" person. Define the place with your body moves and feel it with your senses. (The other person can observe your movements as well. You can photograph yourself in the safe place.)
- While eyes closed, focus on your multisensory feelings and notice how they are changing from familiar, secure to eerie, strange and unsettling when the other person is in control of your body and senses and without having the security of visual perception.

There is interwoven reasoning behind every step taken in the forest: the first part of the workshop. These steps crafted through multiple testings before the actual workshop took place according to how human emotion and interaction works. Now, i will break down these 4 steps with explanation and images from during these steps

1. Explore the forest with other team member(s)

Figure 12, 13 and 14. Image: Annika Kokko, 2023



As this was mentioned before, exploring the forest with a pair or with more than one person would support the connectedness and the safe feelings in nature. It would ease the pure discomfort and uneasy feeling for the complex uncanniness to settle in. At the same time, this

was also an individualistic approach and there were some participants who still preferred to explore the forest on their own. This was their own preference to experience the immersiveness much more. This step of the first part was tricky to decide, however it was always open for participants to follow it as they wish since the whole concept is very individualistic.

2. Find your safe place in the forest, (a place that feels safe to you that would also transform the forest into the 'familiar'):

Figure 15, 16 and 17. Image: Annika Kokko, 2023



Since uncanniness is made of both the existence of unfamiliar and familiar, the need for “the safe place” concept as a representation of the familiar emerged. Dylan Trigg (2012) highlights the meaning of familiar as that the uncanny finds its most firm ground within the cherished corners of our lives, whether they be the spaces we dwell or the intricate landscapes of our own bodies (p.28).

By taking the abstractness of the uncanny into consideration, I decided to introduce the safe place as a concept on its own. This helped participants to first fully immerse themselves into the forest. This also let them be more familiar with the forest which they might feel alienated since it was a new environment for most of the participants. The safe place theme prepared the foundation of uncanny and also it created some kind of bond for participants to express more in the second part of the workshop.

3. Walk and move around this place while eyes closed with the guidance of the "other" person. Define the place with your body moves and feel it with your senses. (The other person can observe your movements as well. You can photograph yourself in the safe place.) And 4.

While eyes closed, focus on your feelings and notice how they are changing from familiar, secure to eerie, strange and unsettling when the other person is in control of your body and senses and without having the security of visual perception.:

Figure 18, 19 and 20. Image: Mari Parpala, 2023



When there is an uncanny theme, there is always duality. If there is a feeling associated with it, then there is always the opposite of it existing at the same time. Having a pair while walking through the forest is also supporting this idea. After choosing the safe place, participants moved into walking around this safe place and immersed themselves in it while their eyes closed. This did create the opposite of feeling safe. In this step, another instruction was the other person to guide you while immersing yourself in the safe place. The reason behind this is to get rid of the safety that comes from being in control of your movements and being able to experience the forest with a vision instead of textures, sounds and feelings. The outcome of this step differentiated from person to person. For some, having another person made them feel more secure; for some, it made them feel more unsettling.

In the first part of the workshop, participants spread out across the forest and followed the guidelines using their own initiative. The entire process was documented for future reference to capture the participants' movements, intending to use it as one of the data points for the research. However, it mostly remained at the level of documentation rather than being

considered as the actual data. I also got a chance to observe a few participants during this part, even though it was not planned considering the size of the forest.

In the second part of the uncanny workshop, participants were split into two groups. While half of the group participated in the uncanny workshop, the other half took part in the flower planting workshop. Therefore, the participants completed the second part of the workshop in two groups. I initiated the session by providing each participant with a piece of modelling wax and proceeded to ask questions that I had prepared beforehand. (see figure 21, 22, 23 and 24) This served as an open platform for them to articulate their thoughts on any uncanny moments they might have encountered in the forest. I inquired about their emotions and the thoughts that crossed their minds. Participants responded by sculpting their interpretation of the uncanny feeling, self, or experience, intertwined with their safe place. The entire discussion was recorded to be analysed later as part of the data.

Figure 21, 22, 23 and 24. Image credit: Mari Parpala, 2023



4.3. Results From the Workshop and Participants

Under these results, I will go through the analyses of how participants reacted to the concept of uncanny, how much they immersed themselves into, what answers I collected and what they sculpted with the modelling wax. I will apply "interpretive description" to the collected data, which will combine various approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding, without relying too heavily on the limitations of a method (Thorne, 2014, p.108).

Since observation was not fully possible in the first part of the forest to avoid distracting participants, what mattered most was how they reflected on their experience in the second part. These reflections consist of both voice-recorded answers from the open discussion and written responses to the questionnaires.

Interview Recordings with Images from the Workshop:

- It was very common for participants to express during interviews that they settled into feelings of safety in the forest, rather than moving on to experience the uncanny. This feedback indicated a tendency to focus on the comfort and familiarity of their environment, rather than exploring the more unsettling aspects. The participants expressed that familiar feelings came forward mostly because feeling safe in a forest environment and also being familiar with it. Here are some of the answers;

Figure 25, 26, 27 and 28. Image: Mari Parpala, 2023



"We found a space that was quite open, because I'm not very used to forests, so I felt safer in a space that was quite open..."

"I lay down in the forest between the trees and I lay on my stomach. And when I opened my eyes I looked at these cots and dead leaves and I just felt very at home because I live in the forest, I grew up in the forest so all the sounds were same as home, the birds sounded the same, so I felt very safe"

" I found a place with a tinder. So I was standing in the middle of it and feeling like the safe, like in a building "

"I looked at some birch trees before going out and I looked through them and I saw a rock. I looked at the leaves and I found out that it was just really familiar for me. There were lots of plants that I recognised from home and I think it was really safe."

- Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on touching and tangibility underscores the intimate connection between our bodily experiences and our perception of the world. (Trigg, 2012, p.159) This notion resonates with the experiences of some participants in the forest. For these individuals, the forest evoked memories, stories, and a sense of nostalgia, bringing feelings of peace and calmness. The familiar natural environment served as a reminder of past experiences, contributing to their overall sense of comfort and awareness. Therefore, both Merleau-Ponty's philosophical insights and the participants' lived experiences highlight the profound influence of bodily engagement on our perception and emotional responses to our surroundings.

Trigg (2012) argues that the profound strangeness inherent in the act of remembering and how it intertwines with our present experiences. It suggests that memories carry with them a unique intensity of strangeness because they involve summoning forth a world that no longer exists, yet is infused with a vividness that impacts our current reality. He describes an experience where a place, which had been forgotten, suddenly comes back into someone's awareness without any obvious cause or reminder. This unexpected return is unsettling and causes a person to feel a deep sense of unease. This feeling is so strong that it disrupts their sense of self, causing their identity to feel fragmented and inconsistent. Essentially, the abrupt reappearance of the place challenges their understanding of who they are, leading to internal conflict and confusion. In essence, he reflects on the unsettling nature of memory and its complex relationship with our present perceptions of reality. (Trigg, 2012, p.33) When these memories are recalled, it causes either a sense of ease or discomfort.

An immersive, uncanny event evoking memories might look strange at first. However uncanny is the outcome of the mind, so does the memory. Trigg is referring to the embodiment of memory within our physical selves, evoking an eerie sensation as our bodies become vessels of spatial history. This notion underscores the dynamic interplay between our bodily experiences and the places we inhabit (Trigg, 2012, p.33).

Figure 29. Image: Mari Parpala, 2023



"It's the first time this year it's so many birds singing In the winter. There is very little noise usually. I want to find out what they are talking about, All these crazy people here sitting and doing crazy things. Why are they doing this, or what they are talking or telling us? "

"I found a place which was like a cradle, where the babies sleep. When I was there I felt like the sun and the moon. But once I started to like to get more relaxed, I started to feel like my grandparents' place. So it took me to my childhood, where I was laying in a puddle and waving with the wind and then I heard birds singing and it felt more like my grandparents' house. So that was my safe place when I was little. So I was shaped like this and it represents that I'm in a safe place with my grandparents, that I'm in a safe place. My grandma got her yard in the helmet and then there is the smell of pancakes and grandma was doing some."

- A few participants described their feelings and experiences as spooky and eerie. These sensations originated from the unknown aspects of the forest, which initially invoked a sense of mystery and unease. However, as they became more familiar with the environment, this duality

of the uncanny emerged, blending the unsettling with a growing sense of comfort and understanding.

Figure 30. Image: Mari Parpala, 2023



"It is an oak tree that was hit by lightning. This makes it a little bit spooky since there are burnt parts in the oak, you can say it slowly died. During the years that I have known this tree so we have often used it to scare our children. Actually, you know you go on a walk late in the evening and you scare them, so it's a bit of an uncanny thing. But it has also become sort of a meeting spot. So you say that we meet by the burnt tree, so it's just a happy place in the daytime, so that was what came to my mind with uncanny."

"...There was something that happened and I said and that felt uncanny. I've got a very strong sense of the uncanny at some point, but I think towards the end and I can't remember it why. But I closed my eyes on top of the rock and you could hear the birds and the air. "

"We chose this place because it was like a circle, and then we went closer and it was like an animal den and we thought it looked like trolls that were being caught in the sun and it's all gathering around each other. And it was covered with moss. It was like a bed."

"That's the uncanny feeling that I got from those rocks. It's like, oh, are we supposed to be here? I don't know, it's this way where the trolls land. But then when we got there, it was actually nice and it was soft like a den."

- Right after following the conclusion of the workshop, a few participants approached to express deeper into their uncanny feelings and unconscious thought processes. These photographs were taken during that small discussion.

Figure 31,32 and 33. Image credit: Author



Questionnaire:

The voice recording from the second half of the workshop and the questionnaire (see appendix for the whole material) were designed to provide participants with the option of expressing themselves either within the group or in private. I opted for two modes of expression, verbal and written, acknowledging that the workshop's subjects could be personal and sensitive for some individuals. This approach aimed to offer a safe space for participants to articulate their thoughts in a manner they felt comfortable with. Since the uncanny is challenging to describe, and feelings associated with it may be hard to put into words, I anticipated that the questionnaire might yield more results than the open discussion during sculpting. However, what actually happened was contrary to my expectations; participants were more open to expressing themselves within the group discussion while sculpting. Each of the participants reflected at least one thought about their experience from the forest.

The participants were divided into two groups during the second part of the workshop, resulting in slight differences between them. The division into groups happened organically, based on the order in which participants arrived at the designated area, rather than any predetermined characteristics of the groups. However, from my observations, it was apparent that the second

group was more open to discussing the uncanny and eerie feelings they experienced in the forest.

The presence of a few individuals who identified with the uncanny seemed to encourage others to share their thoughts, even if they had already expressed themselves previously. This dynamic created an environment where participants felt comfortable elaborating on their experiences and engaging in deeper discussions about the workshop's themes. Also the few participants who joined me right after to talk more about this were also from the second group. This difference might be influenced by the group's natural dynamics and the collaborative nature of the sculpting activity in a circle.

Answers from the Questionnaire:

In the questionnaire, I included 8 questions along with a space for free feedback or comments. This format allowed for flexibility in responses, enabling participants to answer any of the questions as they wish to. Additionally, some questions were intentionally designed to draw out similar responses with different ways of asking it. The reason behind is to have an alternative question if a participant does not necessarily resonate with the other one.

The open discussion/interview during the workshop resulted in more answers focused on safe places than on the uncanny. Consequently, I aimed to obtain more uncanny-related responses from the questionnaire. Participants had the opportunity to answer these questions during the fieldwork week or after they returned from the project. Participation was lower than I expected, especially considering that everyone had at least one reflection during the interview. As a result of that, I will be mostly focusing on answers that are correlated with uncanny than the safe place answers since it is an expected and common reflection from participants.

Questions "How did you feel in your body and mind and what were your emotions like?" and "Did you feel more connected to your mind or did you feel alienated from yourself, from your environment?"

One participant expressed, "I found it difficult to relax," attributing it to the crowdedness of the forest, which made finding a safe space challenging. Another participant described feeling "alienated from both themselves and their surroundings," experiencing a sense of tension and unease while "searching for safety." Another individual felt "disconnected from the environment but in touch with themselves," yet overall "uncomfortable." A

simple response was also noted: "Yes." Lastly, there was a participant who initially felt "connected to their mind" but later experienced "detachment from themselves."

From these answers, it is evident that participants experienced unease towards the forest, although in different ways. On one hand, some participants felt unsafe while searching for their safe place, experiencing a sense of mixed emotions during this process with no connection to the uncanny. On the other hand, other participants reported feeling alienated from their body and environment after immersing themselves in the safe place. This suggests that the process of evoking uncanny-related feelings may have begun for some participants during the completion of these steps.

Question: Were your unconscious thoughts and mind evoked by the actions and motions that you did in the forest?

In response to the provided prompts, participants offered varied perspectives. One participant responded affirmatively, stating, "Yes, I think so." Another simply replied, "Yes." A third participant expressed a nuanced view, saying, "A little bit!" Another participant provided a more emphatic affirmation, stating, "Yes, exactly." The final response offered a vivid anecdote: "Every now and then I became aware of things dropping on me. Small pieces of leaf landing on my arms and it made me open my eyes and look up into the tree above. We spotted a squirrel just above us looking down on us and staring at us. It was the squirrel dropping things on us. It felt as though we were in some kind of silent mischievous communication with it. It made me laugh out loud!"

Exploring whether participants could articulate their awareness of their unconscious mind was a pivotal aspect of both the research and the workshop. Understanding whether one's unconscious mind is in control, and whether they recognise their connection to it, can be a challenging and abstract concept. Merleau-Ponty states, "We think we know perfectly well what 'seeing', 'hearing', 'sensing' are, because perception has long provided us with objects which are coloured or which emit sounds. When we try to analyse it, we transpose these objects into consciousness. We commit what psychologists call 'the experience error', which means that what we know to be in things themselves we immediately take as being in our consciousness of them. We make perception out of things perceived. And since perceived things themselves are obviously accessible only through perception, we end by understanding neither. We are caught up in the world and we do not succeed in extricating ourselves from it in order to achieve

consciousness of the world.” (Merleau-Ponty, 2005, p.5) Initially I was uncertain about the responses I would receive from participants regarding this topic, I was pleasantly surprised to find that many did indeed experience the awakening of their unconscious mind during the process.

Questions: Did your perception towards your safe place/forest changed after closing your eyes and starting to use other senses? And did you perceive your environment differently in a more uncanny way? Did you have any doubts towards the forest or yourself during the action?

"I felt more calm and focused on sensation," while another participant said, "Yes, I felt a wave of peace, a sense of calm, the wind on my skin, my mind slowing down." Additionally, one individual expressed feeling conflicted, stating, "A bit conflicted about this feeling as I don't feel comfortable in the forest. It makes me feel anxious and claustrophobic. It was good to be with another person," while another affirmed, "Yes, exactly, because it is hard to find mindfulness in routine life."

An observation from the interviews and analysis of the questionnaire is whether participants completed every step of the first forest part or if they stuck with the concept of the safe place. The answers from the interviews often did not clarify whether, when participants closed their eyes, they physically moved around guided by others or they simply experienced the moment of being in a forest through a meditative state of mind. These answers reveal that it was common for participants to prioritise experiencing the forest as a calm and serene space rather than “leading not only to experiential anxiety, but to conceptual doubt, too”. (Trigg, 2012, p.27)

The role of wax sculptures was unclear during the planning and action process which was also intended. The wax sculpture itself had the purpose of giving participants a physical tool to express themselves and as well as having another aim of resting a collaborative sculpting circle with discussion. Whether I will be using the sculptures themselves, or their imagery or the purpose behind them was not designated, however it found its own meaning within the artistic process. Therefore, I will analyse it in the next chapter.

4.4 Results From My Artistic Process

I explore themes of the uncanny, the self, and the other, inviting others into the worlds I create by opening a few doors to let their otherness pervade the narrative. I do this to find out how to

reflect better through the double, through duality, through exposing myself” into something that is different than the reality, something that has less concrete borders than the reality to also to make myself flexible and have the space to explore and learn and shape myself my identity through uncanny imaginations.

My own artistic study and the process is the outcome of my dual roles as both a researcher and an artist. This artistic outcome as a final product and the thought process behind it is a result of the research question “Does exploring the uncanny as a context for my artistic practice have a true connection to my self-expression?” From the very start of the research study and to completing the workshop, the artistic process was influenced and shaped by it. Because the final materials, observations and ideas that are left from the workshop are what shaped the artwork.

Until the end of the workshop and for some time after its conclusion, I was very unsure about what my role was in exploring the uncanny and how I could reflect a bond with the artwork through my unconscious mind. There was simply no artistic inspiration, and as the artist involved in the research, I was quite confused about providing answers to the research question aimed at my artistic practice. However, after the workshop ended and during the summer I began to examine the data from only an artist's perspective, some things started to change.

This levelled inner thought process with exploring the corner of my mind is similar to what Jones and Morioka (2011) analyses with Jung's perspective on the unconscious mind, particularly focusing on his concept of the transcendent function. According to Jung (1958), the transcendent function is a dynamic union of unconscious and conscious content, akin to a dialogue between two individuals. In this analysis, Jones and Morioka highlight that Jung referring to this union is almost like two different people having a dialogue, which means unconscious mind and conscious mind. (Jones and Morioka, 2011, p. 22)

Through this process of self-dialogue and the urge to incorporate participants' objects, elements, and thoughts into my own work, the struggle evoked the uncanny for the first time. Trigg explains the encounter with uncanny as “The unity of self identity becomes vulnerable. No longer do we feel at ease within ourselves. The uncanny leaves us in a state of disquiet, unnerved precisely because we lack the conceptual scheme to put the uncanny in its rightful “place.” (Trigg, 2012, p.28) Here is what I’ve written to keep track my thought at that time;

“I felt like my own safe place was invaded. I am exploring whether the uncanny has some type of connection with my identity. And when my safe place is invaded with other people's uncanny

objects, I felt like something special to me was under invasion with other people's thoughts and feelings which is very unsettling and uncomfortable to think about."

This process created a new understanding for me as Jones and Morioka (2011) suggest that Dialogical Self Theory (DST) describes the growing diversity of collective voices, which not only shape interactions in broader society but also contribute to the intricate dynamics within the micro-society of the self (p.14).

Even though as an artwork this would not look 'wrong' to any of the viewers or even perhaps to the participants, I personally felt strong, unexpected discomfort for the first time even though this whole action was planned over a year. The discomfort was so apparent, sudden, and definitely uncanny. Trigg (2012) discusses this conflict within the self, where the body is perceived as distinctly separate from the "I." This suggests uncertainty about whether the body truly represents the self, contributing to the unsettling nature of the uncanny and the ambiguity surrounding the identity of the self (p.73). This complex inner conflict serves as compelling evidence to me that my artwork is intricately linked to my identity, self-expression, and psyche. It firmly establishes the connection between my artistic practice and my inner self, eliminating any doubts about whether the uncanny is only a product of my fabricated imagination.

More from my artist diary;

"I didn't think having elements that are from other people's imagination would affect how I feel towards my own artwork. In the end, they were just some shapes and forms (modelling wax sculptures) from outside that I can play with freely. I've always thought that I could use those basic shapes in my imagination without feeling uncomfortable when I move onto the stage of art making. But, this turned out to be not true. I felt extremely uncomfortable having those shapes in my own personal artistic space. I wouldn't feel this way if they were just random shapes, but these are things that people had experience with and deep connections with (not all but some). With this extra addition, now I feel like my special personal space, my mind, my safe uncanny universe was invaded by "others". Others are in my universe now..."

Within these thoughts, I decided to begin with creating my own safe place as a base for "others" to come and invade. So I started to work on my safe place photographs and built it with yarns on a plastic canvas:

Figure 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41: My collection of safe places from the forest. Image: Author



Figure 34, 35 and 36: During work in progress. Image: Author



Then, I started to study the wax sculptures, the shapes and forms. I did sketches to combine these shapes with skeleton looking lines to represent my inner self.

Figure 42, 43, 44, 45 and 46. Image: Author



Lastly, the final artwork. While the safe places are made of natural colours to reflect the true textures and the invaded elements are pure pink that looks like they do not belong to this world and reality, or do they?

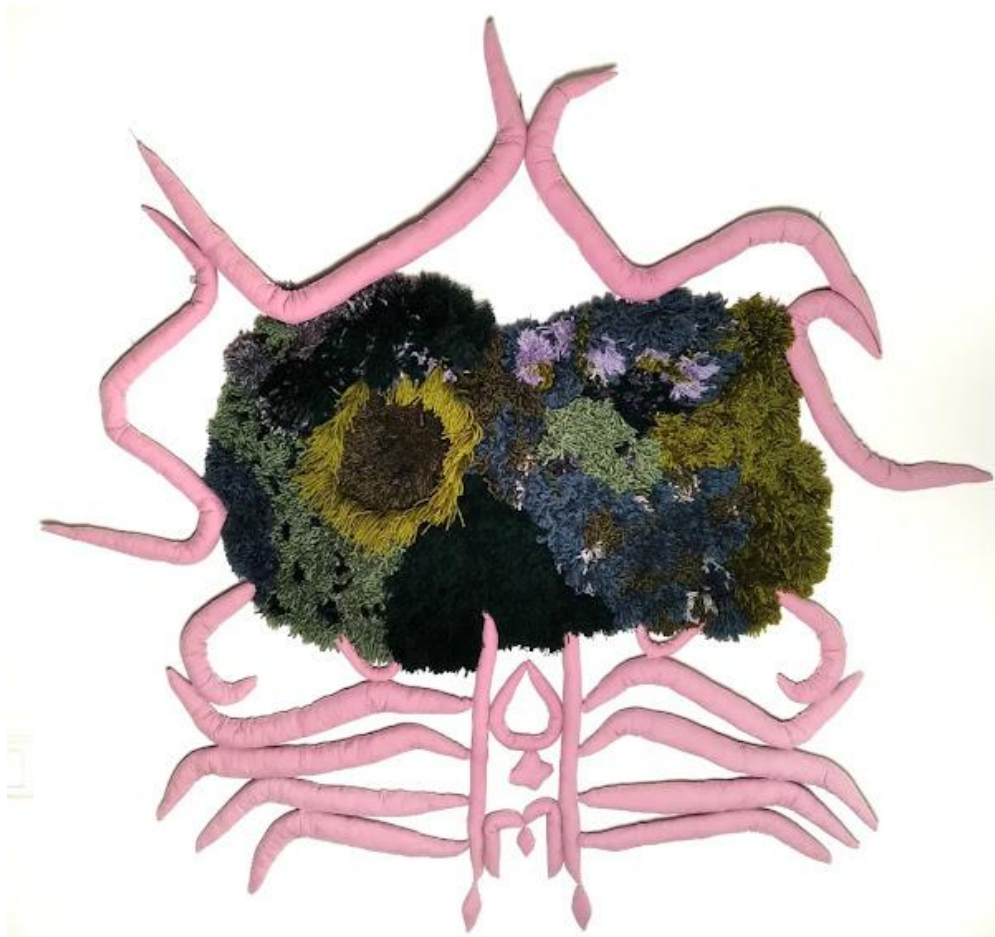
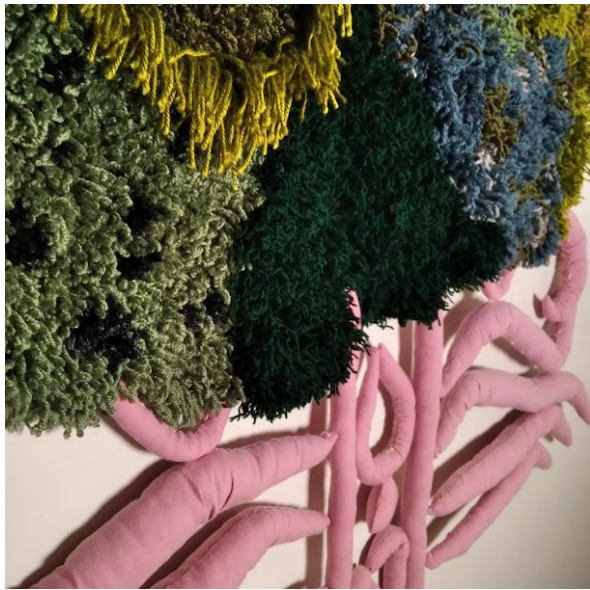
Artwork info:

Textile sculpture (Soft sculpture+latch hook)

Size around L:200cm H:150cm

Materials: Fabric, polyester filling, yarn, plastic canvas

Figure 47, 48 and 49. Image: Author



4.5 Conclusion of the Result

In conclusion, the analysis of the final data from the workshop and artistic process provides insights into participants' reactions to the concept of the uncanny and the researcher's own artistic exploration. The workshop data, consisting of interviews, questionnaires, photography, and wax sculptures, revealed varying responses among participants regarding their experiences in the forest and their perceptions of safe place or uncanniness.

Many participants expressed feelings of safety and familiarity in the forest environment, attributing their comfort to memories, stories, and personal connections. However, some also experienced moments of spookiness and unease, particularly as they encountered unfamiliar or mysterious aspects of the forest. These diverse reactions emphasise the complex interplay between familiarity and uncanniness within the natural environment.

The analysis also highlights my role as a researcher and artist in shaping the workshop outcomes. Initially, being uncertain about merging participants' objects and experiences into my own artwork, I ultimately found unexpected discomfort and uncanniness in this creative process. This realisation underscored the deeply personal nature of artistic expression and its connection to my inner self. Moreover, my reflections revealed a newfound understanding of the authenticity of my artistic expression and its reflection of real-world experiences and emotions. The presence of "others" thoughts and experiences within my artwork evoked a sense of invasion into my personal artistic space, challenging my assumptions about artistic creation and the boundaries of the self.

Overall, the analysis of the final data from both the workshop and artistic process contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding the uncanny and artistic expression. These insights not only inform my research findings but also highlight the intricate relationship between my individual experiences, artistic creation, and the exploration of psychological concepts such as the uncanny.

CHAPTER 5: PUBLICATION AND EXHIBITIONS

At the end of the LiLa project, participants wrote artist statements and visual essays during summer, which were published under the title 'NURTURE: Living in the Landscape Summer School and Exhibition 2023' in autumn 2023. These essays and artworks show how participants explored their sense of place, identity, and work within the landscape context. My visual essay and artist statement are included here to offer more insight into my perspective on finding a safe place within the landscape and how I began to feel a sense of belonging to a new place. (The visuals have been removed from the essay since they can be seen in previous chapters and sections.) Also in this essay, I briefly demonstrate why I perceive certain places in nature as safe.

Furthermore, the final artwork "Familiarity in the Unknown" was displayed in group exhibitions, including the Relate North Symposium in Umea, Sweden, in 2023, and the final graduation exhibition "Narratives & Being" at the University of Lapland in 2024.

Visual Essay- Sense of Belonging in a Safe Place

Introduction:

I decided to focus on the term "place" and what it meant to me. I decided to find the meaning of it by exploring and letting LiLa make me find my own definition. There was some kind of levelled understanding of a landscape through the project which led me into finding my own meaning and purpose of a place through myself and others. The meaning gradually grew on me where it finally shaped my own version.

The meaning of "place" and how it can be perceived differently by others caught my attention in the start of LiLa as I was questioning my connection to landscape as a place. I wasn't only trying to learn about a particular landscape but I was trying to understand and discover my role in nature as an artist and as an individual. This discovery was about how I interact with the landscape and in what ways I create art with it. I always sought for something familiar from my past and childhood in this new environment of High Coast to feel my connection again. At this stage, my learning was all about the layers of place and wishing to understand how others associate with it. How a landscape became special to a person and what makes it memorable for some people? What was the story behind everyone's perception towards places and how

could I achieve the similar connection? These were the questions in my mind as LiLa proceeded.

Safe Place:

With proceeding to plan my workshop called Uncanny Landscape/Uncanny Self in LiLa, i start to think about what would be familiar and unfamiliar for the participants of the workshop, since according to Royle (2003) uncanny means something familiar unexpectedly arising in a strange and unfamiliar context, or of something strange and unfamiliar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context. This would bring up the question of what would be “familiar” to the participants of the workshop within the context of LiLa and the landscape.

The term “safe place” first came up during this process with the need to define the familiar. The safe place would mean some part of the landscape where it in a way resonates with you, your background, past, feelings and imagination. Ingold (1993) describes this as “A place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there” (Ingold, 1993, p. 155). There is no necessity to have any specific qualities to fulfil the needs of the literal meaning of safe, but it is something that evolves into safe with the involvement of the person and their own perception of what is familiar. ‘The safe place’ and ‘the self’ blending together where it creates a personal and unique perspective on a place that is memorable to each person. Therefore, the meaning of it would be linked to the self, the mind of the individuals where it became totally familiar to be turned upside down in the next stage to proceed onto the uncanny context.

It is not so easy to describe why i see some parts of nature as safe but it is about how i feel when i first encounter them. The feelings are the same from my childhood when I see a very tiny pond and not knowing how the pond happened to be there just like these images (see Figure 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41 in the previous chapter.). A tiny water pond that looks like a gate to different worlds. And a rock standing by its own like its a sacred place elevated from the ground. The feelings are very much associated with my imagination as seeing these small details carries a secret message where it encourages me to be a part of it and find out about it.

Place, People and Imagination:

During the workshop, participants were asked to find a spot in the forest that they define as a safe place with their senses and mind. Furthermore, they would create their experience of immersing themselves into this place by sculpting wax figures while expressing their thoughts.

Everyone's view on what is safe and how they reached their familiar place in the forest was different from each other. As the workshop facilitator who was yet to define what was the familiar with this new landscape, i started to change my approach after hearing participant's thoughts about the concept which led me into finding my own safe places during the fieldwork where i could define it as safe, homely and familiar even though i was in a completely new environment.

Torell explains this approach of varieties within the place as "The place can be huge and abstract, tiny and incredibly specific. It can be anything and anywhere, indoors and outdoors. A neutral place for me can be an awkward place for you. (Torell, 2017, p. 15) In my view in the beginning, i was focused on the fact that this place was totally new to me in a physical way where I was confused about how to define it as a safe place. However, after hearing from other participants that their connection to their safe place is coming from their past, their sense and feelings or some sort of connection that they had during the immersive experience in the forest, shifted my own mind into seeing what a safe place could be. Torell describes it as "We identify with it, define ourselves within it, create it and consume it". (Torell, 2017, p. 17) It supports the idea that we define it by ourselves and we make it safe in our minds regardless of how it would be perceived by others. Now, i was able to find various places that would feel close to me which i would view it as safe based on my senses, the similarities that the places carry between my memories and based on the feelings that is created by engaging with the others in the landscape and my imagination that seeking to see what's beyond this landscape.

After the workshop, I started to work on my own artistic production in relation to my thesis where I explored the connection between the uncanny and my identity, and put myself into personal discovery as an artist by utilising external uncanny outcomes. In this case, the uncanny outcomes are the visual and written materials that I collected from the workshop. In the artwork, I'm combining the familiar and unfamiliar just like the definition of uncanny and trying to create my safe place with other people's mind and imagination.

The exploration of the uncanny and the safe place is complex as it is connected to every person's own experience which turns the subject into personal in many layers. Defining what is unfamiliar and familiar in the context is a way of getting into the uncanny and furthermore finding your own definition of what is a safe place and what comes as familiar based on personal experiences. During the process of perceiving the place as safe required from me and others to put something into it from ourselves. The place was in a way temporary and fast to originate a complex and intense connection to it, however the people who experienced it, who

brought something from themselves can make the space special, safe, familiar enough within a short period of time where it creates a sense of belonging.

Artist's Statement - Familiarity in the Unknown

My work focuses on perception, what we find familiar and unfamiliar, and what is beyond the understanding of these concepts. The "Uncanny Self" workshop held on LiLa field trip, and my findings of the safe places, were combined as a starting point, to investigate how we perceive the place and how it changes in our unconscious mind.

The journey of creating the artwork blends finding my purpose in a place, letting the landscape shape my ideas and using other people's imagination and thoughts as a catalyst. Just like how the workshop was putting others into an experience to explore the unfamiliar and familiar, I was having my own uncanny experience during the creation of the work as my own art wasn't my safe place anymore, because now it was invaded by other's minds and imagination.

the feeling of time and space is lost in the forest,
i am no longer in the space with my own mind but with the "other"
a space that is already unknown, strange and unfamiliar,
i have no more of my reliable conscious mind, now the other guides me,
now I am the other and my guide is the other

Textile sculpture

Fabric, polyester filling, yarn, plastic canvas

2023

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This research aimed to explore the interplay between the uncanny and self-expression through artistic practice, with the objective of understanding how the uncanny influences creative processes and shapes our perceptions of reality.

By applying a mixed methods approach that blended qualitative analysis with participatory artistic practice, the study collected and analysed data from the Uncanny Landscape/Uncanny Self workshop. This workshop involved participants in tasks such as immersive forest explorations and wax sculpting sessions, designed to draw out emotional responses and artistic expressions related to the uncanny. The findings indicate that the uncanny serves as a noticeable context for self-expression, empowering individuals to confront and articulate unconscious aspects. Participants started the dialogical self concept within the workshop to continue it to my artistic production, as Jones and Morioka refer to it as “dynamic multiplicity of I-positions in the landscape of the mind, intertwined as one’s mind is with the minds of others.” (Jones and Morioka, 2011, p.12)

Throughout the research process, the application of Applied Visual Arts (AVA) principles played a role in shaping both the methodology and planning process. Applying AVA's principles of engagement, participation, and place-specificity, the study embraced a multifaceted artistic approach to explore the uncanny. The Uncanny Landscape/Uncanny Self workshop, a key part of the research, embodied the integration of AVA principles. By immersing participants in landscapes as a place and facilitating participatory artistic actions, the workshop provided collaborative exploration of the layers of the uncanny.

Art-Based Action Research (ABAR) facilitated a dynamic cooperation between theory and practice, allowing for a closer connection to the research process as both an artist and a researcher by taking part in the action. Meanwhile, Art-Based Research (ABR) allowed me to investigate my creative process while creating a framework for others to engage with and contribute to the research.

6.1 Answers to the Research Questions

1. What emotional responses are evoked from participants when encountering the uncanny in artistic self-expression and immersive landscapes?

The exploration of the uncanny within the context of artistic self-expression and immersive landscapes evokes a range of emotional responses from participants. These responses vary from feelings of safety and familiarity to sensations of spookiness and unease. Many participants expressed a sense of comfort and calmness in the forest environment, drawing on memories, stories, and personal connections to enhance their well-being. However, others experienced moments of uncertainty and tension, particularly when encountering unfamiliar or mysterious aspects of the landscape. The variable emotional reactions highlight the complex interplay between familiarity and uncanniness just like how “concepts are inherently dynamic and ever-changing” (Masschelein, 2011, p.9).

2. Does exploring the uncanny as a context for my artistic practice have a true connection to my self-expression?

The exploration of the uncanny as a context for artistic practice has indeed revealed a true connection to my self-expression. Initially uncertain about merging participants' objects and experiences into my artwork, I found unexpected eeriness and uncanniness in this creative process through dialogical self concept. In both Dialogical Self Theory (DST) and Jungian theory, the concept of the "other" is integral to the understanding of the self. Through the whole methodology, having self dialogue within the framework of my artistic practice and inviting others to influence it emerged a space for another level of uncanny. In simple terms, this participatory process allowed me to perceive myself not as an isolated entity, but rather as interconnected with external factors, including other people and societal influences. (Jones and Morioka, 2011, p.139)

This unsettling process underscored the deeply personal nature of artistic expression and its connection to my inner self. Through reflection and artistic exploration, I realised that my artwork serves as a reflection of my identity, emotions, and inner world.

The presence of others' thoughts and experiences within my artwork challenged my hesitant assumptions about artistic creation. By participatory collaboration, therefore letting my mind open up for creativity, I achieved a different kind of artistic practice than I've experienced before. This also happens by being flexible and having willingness to change which Jones and Morioka (2011) explain as if a person overly stabilises their perception of others to maintain their own sense of stability and continuity, they risk limiting their interactions with others to rigid roles. (p.15) This restriction can block genuine collaboration and the ability to appreciate the full range of perspectives that others can offer.

6.2 New Personal Knowledge and Possible Future Studies

One of the key findings is the realisation that the uncanny is not just a thematic or aesthetic choice, but a deeply personal and core aspect of my artistic expression. Throughout the research journey, from the start of the study to the completion of the workshop, this understanding evolved significantly. I found myself struggling with uncertainty, unsure of my role in exploring the connection between the uncanny and my self-expression. This led me on a journey of self reflection. As I engaged with the data from the perspective of an artist, a significant change happened. During the process of integrating participants' objects and thoughts into my artwork, I felt an unexpected discomfort as if my personal artistic mind was invaded by "others". Despite the unsettling nature of this process, it highlighted the genuineness of my artistic expression. It confirmed that my practice is not just abstract ideas but concrete reflections of my inner self, influenced by personal experiences and external happenings. This realisation reversed my prior assumption that my uncanny art was only imagined abstract stories, rather than a genuine outcome of my self-expression and identity.

Before this research had a foundation, I questioned individuals' place within society. Through art-making, I wondered about what would happen if individuals' identities started to shape within artistic practice in order to transform communities. In this research, I only focused on individuals' separate actions in a collaborative environment. The social norms, community dynamics, and collective values were not part of the framework of this research as I previously aimed to partially study. As a possible future study, this research could expand to communities to investigate the communal sense, identities of communities, and the uncanny as a context for improvements and reflections.

Reflecting on the workshop, it became evident that executing uncanny actions within a brief timeframe, especially with participants newly met, caused challenges. This showcased the need for a more progressed approach and larger time for individuals to grasp and internalise the concept of the uncanny. Among all participants, the team from Finland, who had been facilitating the flower planting workshop alongside the uncanny workshop, demonstrated a more concrete understanding of the uncanny. This was linked to several months of exposure to the uncanny study through group meetings, discussions, and planning, just like my own journey as the researcher. This realisation led me to conclude that the most relevant reactions to the uncanny came from peers within this group.

Consequently, I recommend that future possible continuation of this study must extend the participatory action process over a long period of time to allow for long-lasting engagement and consistent, gradual learning. Furthermore, it is worth considering targeting long-standing art and creativity-based communities for similar collaborative workshops or participatory artistic events. These communities, connected over an extended period, may offer engaging insights and responses conducive to exploring uncanny concepts.

6.3 Limitations and Framework

The experience of the uncanny is deeply personal, varying from one individual to another. As a result, all the findings, whether from participants or the artistic process, are subjective and qualitative. Moreover, defining and executing the uncanny proves to be challenging, as it differs from typical emotions that can be easily described. As a result, the methods employed in this study, including questions, artistic tools, bodily movements, and verbal discussions, aimed to facilitate reflection. However, these methods also have limitations, particularly when dealing with abstract, philosophical and psychological concepts, which can suggest challenges in engagement of the participants.

Another framework within the research is for the theoretical chapter and all literatures used in the research. The concept of the uncanny is vast and pervasive, with multiple approaches and perspectives. Given its historical significance, examining the earliest and foundational studies was necessary, despite their datedness and relevance. Among the literature I examined, I focused on theories related to art, aesthetics, creativity, and self-expression. It's important to note that this research does not embrace every theory and idea mentioned in the chosen literature, but rather selectively integrates reflections aligned with the research objectives.

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APPENDIX A: Collected answers to the Questionnaire

Question 1: How did you feel in your body and mind and what were your emotions like?

- "I felt it was difficult to find a space that felt safe because there were lots of other people around in the forest."
- "Tenseness, searching for safety, unnerved."
- "I felt uncomfortable."
- "Well, my body and mind were peaceful."
- "We took longer to find somewhere that was secluded than we had hoped, so we lost a bit of time finding the right place to be (there was a noisy group of people nearby passing through at the same time as us!). I was a bit flustered to start with, but once I had found a good place and relaxed, it felt good. I managed to shut down and stop thinking about work or studies, just to think about nothing, to just be."

Question 2: Did you feel more connected to your mind or did you feel alienated from yourself, from your environment?

- "I found it difficult to relax."
- "I felt alienated from both myself and my environment - on edge."
- "I felt alienated from the environment, very much in touch with myself."
- "Yes."
- "To start with, I was connected to my mind, but then I felt more alienated from myself - detached."

Question 3: How do you feel about the uncanny feelings that are evoked inside you when there are no physical real outside factors that would evoke it?

- "I try to pay attention to my instincts and trust myself."
- "I felt myself needing to search for something familiar, a sense of safety."
- "I welcome them!"
- "Like finding myself in the forest (in peaceful moments with just a clear mind)."
- "I chose a rock to lie across. I felt as though I was part of the rock after a while and switched off from the world."

Question 4: Did your perception towards your safe place/forest change after closing your eyes and starting to use other senses?

- "I felt more calm and focused on sensation."
- "Yes, I felt a wave of peace, a sense of calm, the wind on my skin, my mind slowing down."
- "A bit conflicted about this feeling as I don't feel comfortable in the forest. It makes me feel anxious and claustrophobic. It was good to be with another person."
- "Yes, exactly, because it is hard to find mindfulness in routine life."
- "Yes, definitely - I became more aware of the air around me and the sun's energy. It was very hot and the sun was very strong that day. It pulsed and I became very aware of the patterns of light."

Question 5: Did you perceive your environment differently in a more uncanny way? Did you have any doubts towards the forest or yourself during the action?

- "I felt more connected to the forest."
- "It felt like a small experience of dwelling with the environment, forming a relationship with it."
- "I was happier once I sat down and didn't have to move around or through the forest."
- "No, I had no doubts and it was really satisfying to hear birds or being in a quiet place."
- "I definitely felt a part of it rather than separate from it."

Question 6: How did you feel about guiding and observing the other person?

- "I didn't feel comfortable with this part because we didn't really know each other."
- "A bit uncertain at first, but it allowed me to get to know the other person and understand the environment differently."
- "That was fine. The other person was very proactive and moved on their own account."
- "Being myself completely."
- "This part was more tricky as the ground where we had chosen was so uneven - we didn't move far for fear of falling and stumbling. We were both drawn to the same spot but to different parts (I was drawn to the rock, my partner was drawn to the birch tree by the side of it)."

Question 7: Did you feel like you are not in a regular, everyday mindset but in some kind of unconscious thoughts and feelings?

- "I'm not sure."
- "Yes, I did. I had to concentrate on what certain movements could feel like."
- "I was very conscious of my feelings and thoughts, and it was difficult to release to the unconscious because I felt so uncomfortable in the forest. I got a bit used to it after a while."
- "No."
- "Yes - in another zone."

Question 8: Were your unconscious thoughts and mind evoked by the actions and motions that you did in the forest?

- "Yes, I think so."
- "Yes."
- "A little bit!"
- "Yes, exactly."
- "Every now and then I became aware of things dropping on me. Small pieces of leaf landing on my arms and it made me open my eyes and look up into the tree above. We spotted a squirrel just above us looking down on us and staring at us. It was the squirrel dropping things on us. It felt as though we were in some kind of silent mischievous communication with it. It made me laugh out loud!"

Question 9: Any comments, observations etc.

- "I think this exercise would have been better done later in the week and in a quieter location."
- "Thank you."
- "Thank you. But sorry for responding late."
- "I loved this activity so much and enjoyed capturing the experience by conveying it in the modelling clay. So often we feel disconnected from nature, but this activity made me feel a part of nature - immersed in it."

APPENDIX B: The presentation of uncanny landscape/uncanny self workshop from Living in the Landscape online seminar

This workshop is a part of my applied visual art master thesis.

Main questions of my thesis;

- How does the use of art in uncanny function to connect with the "self"
- How to use the unconscious mind in art to create uncanny feelings?



Uncanny: Something familiar unexpectedly arising in a strange and unfamiliar context, or of something strange and unfamiliar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context (Royle, 2003)

Keywords: the uncanny, the sublime, the self and the other, unconscious mind, unknown and familiar

- Connecting to "unconscious mind" and "the other"; and creating uncanny moments/feelings
- Using uncanny themes to connect with ourselves

- First Half of the Workshop (Monday, Umeå forest

Exploring the forest

Finding your safe place, defining it physically and mentally

Walk and move around this safe place while eyes closed with the guidance of the "other" person. (the unconscious mind). Define the place with your body moves and feel it with your senses

Focus on the strange, unsettling eerie feelings of the forest and feel how it is changes when the other is in control of the body, senses.

- Second Half of the Workshop

Turning the uncanny experience/feeling/self into visual form

Creating your uncanny forest adventure with art materials

Open discussion space and feedback

- I'm planning to work artistically with the findings of this workshop and hopefully bring it to the LiLa exhibition.

Inspiration for the first part
Riitta Ikonen
<https://riittaikonen.com/>

feeling of time and space is lost in the forest,

I am no longer in the space with my own mind but with the "other"

a space that is already unknown, strange and unfamiliar,

i have no more of my reliable conscious mind,

now the other guides me,

now i am the other and my guide is the other

