KATJA JUHOLA

International Socially Engaged Art Symposium: A Place of Creation, Shared Knowledge, and Conversational Art

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Dedicated to my family
My husband Jukka Juhola
Our son Viktor Juhola
My mother and father Pirkko and Rauno Myllymäki
And my sister's family Phoenix
And my brother's family Myllymäki
To our entire nature with all its elements

Abstract

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Acta electronica Universitatis Lapponiensis, 428

This dissertation explores how my organic garden and participation in international art camps have shaped my interest in researching and creating socially engaged art. It examines my involvement in various international art symposia, with a particular focus on the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS), which I have organised over several years. Central to my research is the exploration of conversational art within the ISEAS framework, where I investigate how socially engaged art can foster dialogue and community involvement. Through ISEAS, I have delved into the integration of art and science, environmental activism, and the mitigation of eco-anxiety, guided by posthumanist and Anthropocene perspectives.

The dissertation adopts a pragmatic philosophical approach to the examination of art in my practice, highlighting my roles as creator, participant, organiser, and leader. In the theoretical section, I discuss the factors influencing my research, underscoring the importance of conversational art. I also explore art activism, the relationship between art and science, and the impacts of climate change and environmental anxiety. My art-based and artistic methodology is explained, and I provide an analytical framework for interpreting the research findings. I discuss my methodological choices in detail, emphasising the omnipresence of art and presenting my understanding of art-based analysis. Ethics is a central aspect of my work, intersecting with socially engaged art, collaborative methods, and academic goals, thus highlighting its crucial role in the research landscape. Additionally, my research addresses ethical challenges related to socially engaged art, such as power dynamics, artwork ownership, and co-authorship in academic publishing. As an organiser, artist, and researcher, my role has been to create a reliable and inclusive environment where creative expression can thrive.

My research encompasses four ISEAS events and two major art exhibitions: *Conversation* at the Rovaniemi Art Museum and *Our Shared Food* at the Lapua Art

Museum. The dissertation is based on six peer-reviewed articles covering a diverse range of topics, including power relations in the art and art education sectors, ethical issues in conversational art, and the capacity of participatory digital art to foster empathy and connections. The ISEAS Symposia function as a "third space," promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and linking community art with environmental and social activism, particularly in the context of northern forest disputes and natural resource management. One study highlights the impact of art methods on empathy and ethical thinking within food culture, while another examines how elementary schools can employ various art forms in immersive, sensory food education, reinforcing the significance of sustainability and cultural practices in daily life.

ISEAS has developed and achieved significant results thanks to the commitment and active participation of many individuals. My findings emphasise that conversational art transcends verbal communication, using artistic practices to engage with complex social and environmental issues, particularly when direct verbal exchange is challenging. It has established a unique approach to addressing local and global problems, especially those related to climate change. Cooperation and diversity are crucial in finding solutions to these challenges. Humans possess diverse forms of ingenuity that flourish when different people and experiences converge. At ISEAS, I have developed a framework and processes to facilitate this, which can lead to even more creative and engaging collaborative projects through continual refinement and adaptation to individual needs. The importance of a shared will in fostering effective action and innovative collaboration is highlighted, and cooperation must extend beyond traditional boundaries to include various disciplines, arts, age groups, religions, and nationalities. Encountering the unknown presents an opportunity for learning and the creation of new ways of thinking.

Keywords: Socially Engage Art, Community Art, Participatory Art, Art-Science Collaboration, Climat Change, Arts-based research, Artistic research

Tiivistelmä

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Tämä väitöskirja taustoittaa kuinka luomupuutarhani ja osallistuminen kansainvälisille taideleireille ovat synnyttäneet kiinnostukseni sosiaalisesti sitoutuneen taiteen tutkimiseen ja tekemiseen. Väitöksessäni keskityn erityisesti International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS) -tapahtumaan, jota olen järjestänyt useiden vuosien ajan. Tutkimukseni ytimessä on keskustelutaiteen tutkiminen ISEAS:in viitekehyksessä, jossa tuon esille, kuinka sosiaalisesti sitoutunut taide voi edistää vuoropuhelua ja yhteisön osallistumista. ISEAS:in kautta olen tutkinut taiteen ja tieteen välistä yhteistyötä, ympäristöaktivismia ja ympäristöahdistuksen lievittämistä posthumanististen ja antroposeenisten näkökulmien ohjaamana.

Tuon esille pragmaattista filosofista tarkastelua taiteesta käytännössäni, korostaen rooliani käytännönläheisenä toimijana: osallistujana, järjestäjänä ja johtajana. Teoreettisessa osuudessa käsittelen tutkimustani vaikuttavia tekijöitä, korostaen keskustelutaiteen merkitystä. Lisäksi tutkin taideaktivismia, taiteen ja tieteen välistä suhdetta sekä ilmastonmuutoksen ja ympäristöahdistuksen vaikutuksia. Selitän taideperustaisen metodologian sekä tarjoan analyyttisen viitekehyksen tutkimustulosten tulkitsemiseksi. Keskityn metodologisiin valintoihini, korostaen taiteen läsnäoloa kaikilla tasoilla, ja esittelen ymmärrykseni taideperustaisesta analyysistä. Etiikka on keskeinen osa työtäni, ja se liittyy sosiaalisesti sitoutuneeseen taiteeseen, yhteistyömenetelmiin ja akateemisiin tavoitteisiin, korostaen sen keskeistä roolia tutkimusmaastossani. Tutkimukseni käsittelee myös sosiaalisesti sitoutuneeseen taiteeseen liittyviä eettisiä haasteita, kuten valtasuhteita, taideteosten omistajuutta ja akateemista julkaisemista koskevaa yhteiskirjoittamista. Järjestäjänä, taiteilijana ja tutkijana roolini on ollut luoda luotettava ja osallistava ympäristö, jossa luova ilmaisu voi kukoistaa.

Tutkimukseni kattaa neljä ISEAS-tapahtumaa ja kaksi merkittävää taidenäyttelyä: *Conversation* Rovaniemen taidemuseossa ja *Our Shared Food* Lapuan taidemuseossa.

Väitöskirja perustuu kuuteen vertaisarvioituun artikkeliin, jotka käsittelevät laajaa aiheiden kirjoa, kuten valtasuhteita taiteen ja taidekasvatuksen sektoreilla, keskustelutaiteen eettisiä kysymyksiä sekä osallistavan digitaalisen taiteen kykyä edistää empatiaa ja yhteyksiä. ISEAS-tapahtumat toimivat "kolmantena tilana", joka edistää poikkitieteellistä yhteistyötä ja yhdistää yhteisötaidetta ympäristö- ja sosiaaliseen aktivismiin, erityisesti pohjoisten metsien kiistojen ja luonnonvarojen hallinnan kontekstissa. Yksi tutkimus korostaa taidemenetelmien vaikutusta empatiaan ja eettiseen ajatteluun ruokakulttuurissa, kun taas toinen tutkii, kuinka alakoulut voivat hyödyntää erilaisia taidemuotoja immersiivisessä, aistillisessa ruokakoulutuksessa, vahvistaen kestävyyden ja kulttuuristen käytäntöjen merkitystä jokapäiväisessä elämässä.

ISEAS on kehittynyt ja saavuttanut merkittäviä tuloksia kiitos monien ihmisten luottamuksen ja aktiivisen osallistumisen. Havainnot korostavat, että keskustelutaide ylittää sanallisen viestinnän rajoja, käyttäen taiteellisia menetelmiä monimutkaisten sosiaalisten ja ympäristöllisten kysymysten käsittelemiseen, erityisesti silloin, kun suora sanallinen vaihto on vaikeaa. ISEAS on luonut ainutlaatuisen lähestymistavan paikallisten ja globaalien ongelmien käsittelyyn, erityisesti ilmastonmuutokseen liittyvissä kysymyksissä. Yhteistyö ja monimuotoisuus ovat keskeisiä haasteiden ratkaisemisessa. Luovina olentoina ihmisillä on monenlaisia innovaatioita, jotka kukoistavat, kun eri ihmiset ja kokemukset kohtaavat. ISEAS: issa olen kehittänyt kehyksen ja vaiheet tämän mahdollistamiseksi. Se voi synnyttää entistä luovempia ja kiinnostavampia yhteistyöprojekteja jatkuvan hienosäätämisen ja yksilöllisiin tarpeisiin mukautumisen kautta. Korostan, kuinka yhteinen tahto voi johtaa tehokkaaseen toimintaan ja innovatiiviseen yhteistyöhön. Yhteistyön on ulotuttava yksittäisten alojen rajojen ulkopuolelle, kattaen eri tieteenalat, taiteet, ikäryhmät, uskonnot ja kansallisuudet. Tuntemattoman kohtaaminen tarjoaa mahdollisuuden oppimiseen ja uusien ajattelumallien luomiseen.

Asiasanat: Sosiaalisesti sitoutunut taide, Yhteisötaide, Osallistava taide, Taiteen ja tieteen välinen yhteistyö, Ilmastonmuutos, Taideperustainen tutkimus, Taiteellinen tutkimus

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The journey toward completing my doctoral thesis on International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS) research has been both transformative and challenging. This work would not have been possible without the support, guidance, and trust of many individuals and communities.

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ISEAS itself would not have been possible without the goodwill, trust, and collaboration of so many people and communities. The beauty—and challenge—of socially engaged art lies in its relationships with diverse individuals, whose participation makes the work come alive. I am forever grateful to each and every one of you for being part of this shared journey.

To my family, Viktor and Jukka Juhola, my profound appreciation. Your patience, love, and steadfast support have carried me through the long, often arduous road to becoming a Doctor of Arts. Without you by my side, none of this would have been possible.

This path has not been easy. It has been a process shaped by the energy, participation, and collaboration of hundreds of people, as well as by the intricate and beautiful interconnectivity of nature and its living and non-living networks. I honor and recognise all these contributions, even the difficult ones, each of which has brought this research to life.

I have lived my life driven by a desire to know more, and now I stand here, brave enough to say, "this much I have learned," yet always eager to learn more. This thesis is the culmination of that lifelong search, and it is but one step on the road ahead.

To everyone who has been part of this journey, my deepest and most heartfelt thanks.

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List of Figures

Contents

1. Background

In 2013, an invitation whisked me away to the heart of Scampia, Naples, Italy, enticing me into the enchanting world of OCCHI APERTI, an international art symposium meticulously curated by CasArcobaleno. The allure extended beyond borders, with fellow artists from Italy and England converging for my inaugural venture into international art symposia. The organisation orchestrated events with a community-focused artistic touch, such as artists joining community members in decorating cookies or collaborating with students from a nearby school. For example, one artist worked with students, asking them to create flowers from plastic bottles in a manner aligned with the artist's vision. As a trained community artist, I began contemplating the environment in Scampia and how I could contribute as an artist. Scampia is renowned as one of the most challenging places in Italy, where many children's parents have been incarcerated. Public spaces, including parks and roadsides, were littered with garbage, clothes, and furniture. Anything no longer needed was casually discarded by the roadside. In response, I decided to collect discarded clothes, wash

Figure 2. Italy, Scampia, Socially Engaged Artworks with Local Children. Image: Katja Juhola, 2013

them, and invite the children to paint on them, expressing things that were important to them and that they wished others to see. After painting dozens of clothes, I strung the finished pieces between lampposts for a few hours. The children took great pride in their creations. This experience strongly affected me and catalyzed me to establish my own international art symposium.

Mustio, a small village in southern Finland, has been my home for 30 years. Since 1996, I have run an organic garden, Juholan Puutarha, with my husband, Jukka Juhola. Our organic farm has always been communal and international. During these last almost 30 years, I have taught tens, if not hundreds, of people the principles of organic farming and sustainable lifestyle. My husband and I are both idealistic about organic farming. We never chose the gardening industry because of money but precisely because of idealism. We want to grow healthy food that is good for the earth. We still think the same. Organic farming is the way to a sustainable life on our beautiful planet. This philosophy and my experiences from our garden, in collaboration and working and living together, have also guided my art and research themes. It is impossible to separate my personal life from my art or research.

2. Introduction

This dissertation examines my participation in various international art symposia, focusing on the activities of the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS) over several years. I perceive ISEAS as akin to the artistic creations of American artist Suzanne Lacy's performative conversational art events, which are aimed at transforming the socio-political landscape across diverse groups (Irish & Lacy, 2010; Lacy, 2010) I have organised dozens of socially engaged art events both abroad and in Finland (Figure 2). Internationally, my projects have taken place in Poland, Italy, Turkey, Romania, and India. In Finland, I have facilitated events in various locations, including my home village, where I have worked with two schools (Finnish- and Swedish-speaking), a kindergarten, various associations, and willing villagers. While some events were part of my research, I had already started implementing similar initiatives in the early 2000s during my community arts studies and as an active villager when our son was a small child.

At ISEAS, art occurs among artists and scholars who expand their work to local people through socially engaged art workshops. Artists, even socially engaged artists, often work alone. In my research, I aim to find new ways to work collaboratively in a socially engaged art field. ISEAS can be compared to an artist residency, which provides an easy way for artists to work in different cultures and contexts. Unlike residencies, ISEAS is short-lived, lasting a week or two, and involves several dozen artists and scholars living and working together in different contexts of socially engaged art. ISEAS offers artists and scholars an interactive platform where natural science and art converge, allowing this content to be disseminated to local people, communities, and research-producing institutions. ISEAS is my work of art, designed to foster an environment for conversational art and creativity across multiple levels.

2.1. Symposia

I have organised eight symposia (Figure 3). In 2014 (Symposium 1), I organised an international Greenhouse art symposium in my home village, Mustio, Southern Finland, with 14 international artists. In 2017(symposium 2) (Figure 4), I organised ISEAS for the first time as part of my master's thesis. The project brought together teams working with ten different communities in my hometown, including a daycare centre for young children, two primary schools, a secondary school, two

Figure 3. Timeline of Symposia Organised and Participated In. Image: Katja Juhola, 2025

daycare centres for individuals with special needs, two group homes for people with complex mental health conditions, and a hospital ward for elderly patients, many of whom were in critical condition or suffered from severe memory disorders. The event engaged 13 international artists, 10 local artists, and several hundred community members. Following the event, three art exhibitions were organised. My doctoral dissertation builds directly upon this process, further developing the ISEAS concept, which integrates international artists, scholars, a mentor, and a documentary team.

In 2018 (symposium 3) (Figure 5), ISEAS placed a strong emphasis on performance art. Eleven international artists and seven Finnish artists dedicated three days to their practice in public spaces across the Raseborg region. While the work had a social dimension, the specific communities involved were not predetermined but emerged organically. Under the guidance of an ISEAS mentor, the artists adapted their methodologies in real time. They later refined and conceptualised their approaches for presentation in a nearby gallery.

The 2019 ISEAS in Nature (Symposium 4) (Figure 6), held once again in my home village of Mustio, explored the relationship between humans and nature, bringing together five international and eight Finnish participants. The symposium produced socially engaged art events in collaboration with three interdisciplinary teams, each composed of artists and environmental researchers. These teams worked with local schoolchildren, kindergarten children, and the Martha Association—a Finnish non-profit organisation renowned for its commitment to public education in home economics.

Figure 4. ISEAS 2017: Artist Sub-Teams Working in a Local School in Mustio. Image: Fabio Cito, 2017

Figure 5. ISEAS 2018: Artist Grazia Simeone Performing in Karis. Image: Alessandro Sabena, 2018

The teams, *Freshwater Pearl Mussels*, *Circular Economy*, and *Meadows and Wood Pastures*, integrated both artistic and scientific perspectives. This symposium focused on using conversational art as a tool to translate scientific knowledge into practice, alongside other arts-based methods to deepen understanding of environmental issues. ISEAS emphasised the interconnectedness of humans with the broader ecosystem, challenging the notion of human superiority over other living beings and inanimate matter.

In 2020 (symposium 5) and 2021 (symposium 6), ISEAS relocated from its original base in Raseborg, southern Finland, to Äkäslompolo, northwest Lapland. My doctoral thesis work at the University of Lapland prompted this transition. My aim was to explore the implementation of ISEAS in a different environment from its usual surroundings. Seventeen artists and researchers collaborated on an arts-based conflict mediation project organised into three groups. The symposium sessions occurred twice: in August 2020 and January 2021. Throughout these events, 75 local individuals engaged in art workshops focused on addressing both local and global issues. Among the significant themes explored were forest disputes, mining projects, and the spiritual connection to nature, which hold relevance both locally and internationally.

As part of my dissertation, the exhibition *Conversations* at the Korundi Art Museum in Rovaniemi critically examined the artistic experiences and outcomes of the symposium sessions held in 2020 and 2021 (Figure 7)

The 2022 (symposium 7) ISEAS took place in Lapua, Western Finland, with the central theme of food. Engaging the community, the ISEAS Food 2022 symposium hosted workshops involving four distinct groups: Tiistenjoki Elementary School, visual arts students from Seinäjoki Secondary School, local farmers from South Ostrobothnia, and the Lapua literary circle, predominantly comprising retired teachers from Lapua, with one retired banker. A total of 101 people participated in the events. Following the symposium, the outcomes were showcased in the *Our Shared Food* exhibition at the Lapua Art Museum in 2023 (Figure 8), as well as in the ISEAS documentary at the Seinäjoki Art Hall in Kalevan Navetta. In addition, photographs were presented at the Seinäjoki InnoFood Conference in 2023, where I also shared my research. This exhibition forms an integral part of my dissertation, offering a detailed analysis of the artistic experiences stemming from the 2022 symposium.

When I participated in my first international art symposium in Scampia, Italy, I noticed the importance of my Finnishness to the local children. I represented something unfamiliar and exciting for them to engage with. The same dynamic emerged at the first ISEAS event in 2017. The presence of international artists was significant;

Figure 6. ISEAS 2019: Professor Jouni Taskinen Showing how Mussels Clean the Water. Image: Fabio Cito, 2019

despite occasional difficulties in finding a common language, it elevated the event to a new level. Again, the participating community members felt a heightened sense of value when international artists visited them. However, as an organiser, I can say that a noteworthy feature of ISEAS has been my preference for familiar environments, exemplified by the hosting of symposia in Mustio in 2014, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2024 (Symposium 8). The choice of venue is significant because Mustio is my home, and I have a deep knowledge of its natural landscapes of forests, lakes, and rivers. My profound emotional connection to Mustio, its elements, and its inhabitants have made interventions in this place particularly meaningful and accessible to me.

Similarly, the 2022 ISEAS was organised in Lapua, my parents' hometown. Lapua holds my family ties and nostalgic memories, adding to its familiarity. This sentiment was also shared by the local artist at every event. These examples highlight the importance of personal connections to selected symposium venues. When I was organizing the Lapua ISEAS, we were living in my mother's home, and with my mother's help, I negotiated with potential communities to invite. My mother currently resides in the village that was my father's childhood home, so I am also known there.

Figure 7. My Installation from Toilet Paper, “Paper Forest,” and Video Artwork, “Forest,” are About the ISEAS Forest Dispute Teams’ Experiences in Rovaniemi Art Museum. Image: Katja Juhola, 2021

Figure 8. Lapua Art Museum Our Shared Food Exhibition Opening. . Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2022.

The symposia in 2020 and 2021 in Äkäslompolo in northwestern Lapland differed from the traditional home regions of ISEAS, relying more on the local participants' networks and interests, emphasizing the need for local involvement.

This is a question of a multilayered and versatile cooperation pattern. I have consistently invited both local and international artists to all locations—Mustio, Äkäslompolo, and Lapua—promoting a diverse and inclusive collaborative environment. Lapua and Lapland have demonstrated to me that ISEAS can be hosted in other locations.

Every ISEAS event has started with me reaching out to different communities and societies and establishing agreements with them: schools, farmers, forest owners, the Martha Association, kindergartens, and so on. Due to my extensive network, inviting people has been easy. I explain what is expected from ISEAS and the time commitment required. I invite artists and natural scientists, creating small groups, which I refer to as sub-teams. I intuitively curate these sub-teams to consider who would work well together based on the artists' disciplines and temperaments. In most cases, I have been the sole person acquainted with everyone. My idea as a curator is to invite people from various disciplines, genres, ages, and nationalities. I am not looking for a homogeneous group. The idea is to shake hegemony. Before ISEAS begins, I meet with these sub-teams in online meetings to discuss the community they will work with, the theme, the community's possible wishes, schedules, and other wishes. Closer to the symposium start, I also establish email discussion groups for practical questions, such as the required materials, time commitments, and necessary facilities. I include community representatives in these discussions.

Despite this advanced preparation, the group remains in a very uncertain situation, eagerly waiting to know what will be done, why, and what the results will be. The situation is exciting for all participants, including myself, as it involves a short and very intense shared time. Since the purpose is to work together, the participants cannot plan their work extensively. They must know how to let go of planning and immerse themselves in the collective doing. The actual work begins only when the participants arrive at ISEAS. We then start planning the practical aspects of what to do. We engage with each other using all our senses. Working together is strongly influenced by the dynamics that arise within the group, which are directly proportional to the desire of the artists and natural scientists to contribute themselves and their skills to the creation of the common good. Our first joint dinner table discussion always revolves around the ethics of socially engaged art. This discussion delves into what each participant thinks is related to the ethical rules of ISEAS. Socially engaged art, the collaborative efforts

of artists, and patterns of cooperation between art and the natural sciences pose moral dilemmas. As a creator, curator, artist, and researcher of ISEAS, my artistic project is always holistic, and I take great care and responsibility for the event's success. It can certainly be compared to organizing a seminar or conference. Even though the project could not have happened without its participants, the event organiser's work is still significantly greater than any participant's in the event.

One of the goals of ISEAS is to disseminate environmental information to various local audiences by inviting them to participate. I have shared information about ISEAS activities extensively on social media channels, always accompanied by a documentary team (i.e., a professional photographer and videographer), aiming to highlight the importance of the socially engaged art process. ISEAS has organised an exhibition after each symposium, two of which—the 2021 Rovaniemi Art Museum exhibition and the 2023 Lapua Art Museum exhibition—are included as artistic sections in my dissertation.

Through these actions, I aim to influence a change in attitudes at the grassroots level, similar to my approach in my organic garden to teaching future farmers and gardeners a sustainable way of doing important work. In my ISEAS work, contemplation of the state of the environment draws strength from art. Art utilises imagination, irony, and the scale of emotions and returns individuals to the role of conscious actors and self-critical thinkers. ISEAS fosters a dialogue between the perspectives of science and art, creating work methods for living in the climate change era. Identified problems in environments and communities within ISEAS are addressed, and operational models are developed to navigate the new state of climate change.

ISEAS has underscored the role of humans as part of the climate change process. ISEAS consistently collaborates with local communities, integrating environmental research knowledge into people's lived experiences. The most crucial aspect is understanding our role in the ongoing process—and recognizing that each individual's actions contribute to climate change. The combined effect of small decisions can have a significant impact.

2.2. Aims and Research Questions

In the context of my dissertation, ISEAS stands as the focal point of my research, which aims to unravel the intricate dynamics of socially engaged art within a global and local framework. The investigation spans diverse dimensions, exploring critical

intersections such as power relations, the ethics of collaborative art and academic participation, digitality in art workshops, collaboration between art and science, environmental conflicts in forestry, alleviating eco-anxiety, and the nonverbal expression of feelings and ethics related to everyday food experiences.

The research task is to develop ISEAS. I have organised ISEAS once a year between 2017 and 2024, which has led me to learn from past years' events when developing the next ISEAS. In my research, I am interested in exploring how the experience of living and working with international and national artists and natural scientists increases the potential of ISEAS to become a space for artists and scholars to develop and share conversational art methods to increase knowledge of the ongoing climate change period.

Research goals are as follows:

- To develop and strengthen a socially and environmentally engaged art field. and close the gap between art and science using conversational art methods.
- To foster collaboration between artists and natural scientists by supporting facilitated conversations alongside shared living arrangements and social activities, which include physical exercises such as walking, yoga practice, mushroom picking, dancing, and sauna sessions, which encourage interaction and camaraderie among participants.

The main research question is: How can ISEAS be developed using conversational art to transform it into an activist art event that promotes ecological and socially sustainable living in the era of climate change?

ISEAS aims to facilitate interaction and collaboration between artists, natural scientists, and local communities in a manner that ensures genuine community participation participation. These activities are designed to benefit local communities and align with local ecological and social sustainability objectives. In my dissertation, I explore the following sub-questions:

- What kind of power relations exist in art symposia?
- How do art symposia create places for art education?
- What ethical issues and choices are involved in producing a socially engaged art and science symposium?
- How can digitality be applied to ISEAS and artistic fieldwork?
- How can arts-based methods be used in the broader field of organisations, where art can be used to develop empathic actions towards nature?

- How can arts-based methods facilitate a trustworthy atmosphere for alleviating eco-anxiety?
- How can arts-based methods be used to promote thinking and the nonverbal expression of feelings and values related to elementary school children's relationship to everyday food?
- How can conversational art be used to develop a greater awareness and understanding of current global food issues and encourage communication about them?

2.3. Dissertation Structure

My writing style aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) concept of the rhizome, a structure that resists linear progression in favour of interconnected pathways. As I progressed with this dissertation, I realised that my text repeatedly revisits key themes—ethics, methodology, philosophy, and epistemology—across different chapters. My thinking is inherently rhizomatic: I establish connections, draw insights from multiple sources, and circle back to earlier discussions to reinforce or expand upon them.

Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) describes rhizomatic writing as non-linear, with multiple entry points rather than a traditional introduction-development-conclusion format. It creates complex interconnections between ideas, embraces multiplicity and fragmentation, and allows meaning to emerge dynamically rather than being fixed. Similarly, Irwin et al. (2006) discuss *a/r/tography* as a research approach that mirrors rhizomatic structures, blending artistic practice, research, and teaching in an interconnected, evolving process.

This dissertation begins with a philosophical exploration of art in the context of my practice, highlighting my roles as creator, participant, organiser, and leader. The theoretical section explores the factors influencing my research, with an emphasis on socially engaged art—particularly the art of conversation. Themes such as art activism, the relationship between art and science, and the impacts of climate change and eco-anxiety are also explored. I clarify my arts-based methodology and provide an analytical framework for interpreting my research outcomes. My methodological choices are presented, emphasising the omnipresence of art, and I introduce my understanding of arts-based analysis. Ethics are central to my work, intersecting with socially engaged art, collaborative approaches, and academic pursuits, underscoring its pivotal role in the research landscape.

3. Art as Being, Becoming, and Knowing: A Philosophical Inquiry into Socially Engaged Artistic Practice

Figure 9. The Philosophical Foundations of My Research. Image: Katja Juhola, 2025

3.1. The Being of Art: Presence, Existence, and Social Reality

Ontology is a branch of philosophy that deals with the study of being, existence, and the nature of reality. It seeks to understand the categories of things that exist and how they relate to each other. In the context of socially engaged art, ontology refers to the exploration of the nature and existence of social relationships, communities, and the roles that art plays within them. Artists working with socially engaged practices often investigate the existence and dynamics of power, identity, and agency

within communities, exploring the boundaries between art, life, and social action (Figure 9).

Philosopher John Dewey (1859–1952) is often considered one of the leading figures of the pragmatist philosophical tradition (Dewey, 1934/2005). Pragmatism is a philosophical approach which emphasises the practical consequences and results of ideas and actions. Dewey argued that the value of any idea or belief should be judged by its practicality and ability to solve problems in real life (Dewey, 2005). Almost all plans change and come to life in relation to the people collaborating (Figure 9). Socially engaged art inevitably involves its unpredictability. Dewey believed in the close connection between thinking and doing. He argued that thoughtful reflection and action were interdependent and that meaningful learning occurred when people engaged both intellectually and practically with the world around them.

In my research and my work at ISEAS, I see the creation of the atmosphere as one of the most important elements. It must be relaxed so that the participants dare to throw themselves into the artistic activity. By participants, I mean artists, natural scientists, and community members who are often completely unknown to each other. I employ a self-deprecating approach, often making myself the subject of laughter, or I create art with a childlike simplicity, emphasizing that creativity does not require exceptional artistic talent. Within the ISEAS context, this is further enhanced through the art of conversation. For instance, we explore how our interactions during painting sessions influence our work. In another example, when I painted a tree, it prompted another participant to paint its roots, which we discussed both during and after the painting session, engaging in reflective dialogue. We also observe how participants' smiles emerge when they embrace vibrant colors or incorporate dancing movements into their work.

> Moreover, I do not think it can be denied that an element of reverie, of approach to a state of dream, enters into the creation of a work of art, nor that the experience of the work when it is intense often throws one into a similar state. Indeed, it is safe to say that "creative" conceptions in philosophy and science come only to persons who are relaxed to the point of review. The subconscious fund of meanings stored in our attitudes have no chance of release when we are practically or intellectually strained. For much the greater part of this store is then restrained, because the demands of a particular problem and particular purpose inhibit all except but the elements directly relevant. Images and ideas come to us not by set purpose but in flashes, and flashes are intense and illumi-

> nating, they set us on fire, only when we are free from special preoccupations. (Dewey 1934, 2005, p. 287)

In socially engaged art, participation, interaction, and dialogue are key. Hans-Georg Gadamer (2004) was a German philosopher best known for his work in hermeneutics, a philosophical discipline focused on interpreting texts and broader issues of understanding, language, and communication. Gadamer's (2004/1975) central idea is the concept of the "fusion of horizons." He claims that when we interpret a text or have a dialogue with others, we bring our own preconceptions and historical context (horizon) to the interpretation. However, we must also strive to understand the historical and cultural context of the text or the interlocutor. A strength and simultaneous, weakness of ISEAS is that it explicitly brings together very diverse factors through different cultural influences. Gadamer speaks of a process of understanding through which these horizons merge, creating a deeper and more nuanced understanding. He emphasises the importance of dialogue in the interpretation process. He believes that genuine understanding comes from talking and interacting with others. Dialogue allows individuals to share their perspectives and work toward a common understanding, transcending individual subjectivity.

The themes of ISEAS are politically conscious and related to current issues in our environment, so it can be described as activist art. Finnish artist, director in theater, film and opera, writer and researcher Teemu Mäki (2005) discusses about the intrinsic philosophical and political value of art. According to him, art can act as a source of information and influence in the same way as numbers and words. Mäki highlights different art forms as political and philosophical works and criticises the excessive demand for aesthetics in art. According to him, art has four fundamental purposes: pleasure, dialogue, the pursuit of wisdom, and the development of emotional life. Art is, at its best, a flexible, expanded, and comprehensive form of philosophy and politics (Mäki, 2017).

Philosopher and art historian Vid Simoniti (2018) advocates a pragmatic approach to evaluating socially engaged art, where its true value test is its ability to create meaningful social change. This perspective challenges more traditional views of artistic value by emphasizing the importance of real-world outcomes:

> I assess how this form of contemporary art should lead us to rethink theories of artistic value and argue that these works make a convincing case for an often-dismissed position, namely, the pragmatic view of artistic value. However,

> the pragmatic view, when properly applied, sets the bar high indeed—art that tries to change society should be considered good art only when it succeeds in making a tangible difference. (Simoniti, 2018, p. 71)

Simoniti's pragmatic approach, which ties the value of socially engaged art to its ability to create tangible social change, presents several challenges. One major difficulty lies in defining what constitutes a "tangible difference." Social change is complex and multifaceted, often occurring in subtle or gradual ways that are not easily measured or directly attributed to a single artistic intervention. Furthermore, the question arises: Who are the individuals or groups qualified to evaluate the effectiveness or value of socially engaged art practices? The evaluation process itself is subjective and can vary greatly depending on cultural, social, and personal biases.

From my perspective, the value of socially engaged art is deeply intertwined with the process rather than just the outcome. The engagement, dialogue, and shared experiences that occur during the artistic process are intrinsic elements of its value. These aspects foster connections, raise awareness, and stimulate thought, which are valuable outcomes in themselves, even if they do not lead to immediate, measurable social change. Therefore, if evaluation is necessary at all, it should consider both the process and the outcomes of socially engaged art, acknowledging that its true impact may extend beyond tangible results. In many cases, the process is where the most meaningful and enduring change happens, even if it is not immediately visible or quantifiable.

For many ISEAS events, I have applied specifically thought-provoking and difficult themes connected to environmental issues. While curating with actors, artists, researchers, and community members, I have had to justify my research's ethics and operating model. I have encountered prejudices and doubts, but I could justify the event's impact and importance through my openness and discussions. Gadamer (2004) talks about prejudices that shape our understanding. He believes these prejudices are not necessarily obstacles to understanding, but are part of the interpretation process. Rather than trying to eliminate them, he suggests that we should be aware of our biases and engage in open dialogue to refine our understanding. Gadamer introduces the idea of the hermeneutic circle, which is the notion that understanding involves a circular movement between the whole and the parts of a text or discourse. To understand a particular part, we must understand the whole; to understand the whole, we must understand the parts. This dynamic process leads to continuous refinement of the interpretation.

In my research, the hermeneutic circle describes exactly the state of uncertainty in which I have walked as a researcher. Although I presuppose a new way of working and discussing difficult issues arising through the collaboration of artists and natural scientists, each ISEAS has been a new and unpredictable event that I have had to analyse and reflect on through my own experiences during the event and afterwards (Figure 9). Each ISEAS is also born and developed in relation to previous ISEAS events to be even better and more developed. In this case, we incorporate the hermeneutic knowledge that affects practice, as intended by Gadamer. My research has alternated between planning a new event, curating, facilitating, and organizing the event, observation, artistic work, reflection, analysis, and art exhibitions, and starting from the beginning again.

ISEAS is based on collaboration, which requires an empathetic ability to work together with others. Philosopher Irmeli Hautamäki (2010) presents Gadamer's theory of the miracle of understanding: participation in shared meaning. Interpretation is made possible by placing oneself in the soulscape of another (i.e., the author of the text, the author of the work, or the interlocutor). Placing yourself in the landscape of another's soul requires empathizing. Professor and artist Janinka Greenwood asserts:

> Human beings are complex: we are body as well as mind. Many of us might contend we are spirit as well. We come to know the world through our senses as well as through the verbally coded information we receive. We communicate through our bodies as well as with words. And when we know things, we often do that in ways other than just the intellectual. (Greenwood, 2012, p. 2)

Communication involves senses and words; knowledge goes beyond the intellect to include emotional and experiential elements. Arts-based research methods have grown to capture and share nuanced understandings and experiences that are not fully accessible through traditional approaches (Greenwood, 2012).

The love of my neighbor, my great love for nature, and my fear that we humans are destroying it have guided my artistic activity. Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thích Nhat Hanh (1995, 2007) teaches in his book *Living Buddha, Living Christ*:

> The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When our mind embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers. If you love someone but rarely make yourself available to him or her, that is not true love. When your

> beloved is suffering, you need to recognise her suffering, anxiety, and worries, and just by doing that, you already offer some relief. (Hanh, 2007, p. 34)

This presence spoken of by Hanh is one of the most essential elements of ISEAS. Because of presence, we live, eat, plan, make art, discuss, and reflect together. In the hermeneutic understanding of an event, in this case, the work done together in ISEAS, requires seeing it as an answer to a question. In hermeneutics, the key is the application of interpretation among questions. All understanding is fundamentally an application or translation of meaning (Grondin & Plant, 2003).

Finnish philosopher Juha Varto (2017) underscores the importance of intuition in artistic work, which, despite its apparent confusion, arises from the artist's mastery of and ability to control their materials to realise their vision. In ISEAS, reflective learning and evaluation are key, even when working guided by intuition, even when it feels like navigating through fog, as Varto suggests. Nevertheless, Varto stresses that artistic skill is paramount, rejecting the notion of a "divine" gift bestowed from above, which has historically mystified art and downplayed the creator's expertise. Discussing artistic methodologies, Varto (2017) highlights their diversity and potential to enrich research practices. According to Varto, the physicality of art and the demands of skill require the artist's complete engagement in the activity, a crucial aspect of my research on ISEAS. My active participation is indispensable. However, both artistic work and research entail a conscious framing of the world. Varto (2017) argues that reality emerges from the artist's physicality, skill, and conceptualization, shaping the narrative they wish to convey.

In ISEAS, the focus is on experimental participatory artistic activities, which are not simply practiced but emerge from the collective skills and collaborative spirit of the participating artists. Varto (2017) draws attention to Francis Bacon's (1878) concept of combination as a key outcome of experimentation. It refers to Bacon's philosophical idea about bringing together various elements or forces to create new knowledge or discoveries, particularly through experimentation. Varto (2017) is pointing out that for Bacon, this combination is an essential outcome of the experimental process, suggesting that experimentation involves blending or fusing different elements in a way that leads to new insights or outcomes. Regardless of how familiar the elements may be, their combination in art always yields something new. I believe that working in sub-teams and as a collective at ISEAS fosters richness, pushing each artist beyond their comfort zone onto an experimental platform where their individual skills can be shared and utilised by others.

3.2. The Lived Experience of Art: Perception, Action, and Engagement

While reading *The Idea of Phenomenology* by Edmund Husserl (1964), phenomenology was revealed to me in glimpses. In a way, it is akin to of a child's curiosity and courage to question all the truth that is taken for granted. Our awareness weakens as we get used to things and repeat them automatically. The starting point of the phenomenological examination can be considered to be detachment from this habit of natural attitude. According to Husserl's understanding, reduction is the basic method of philosophy, which is also the most difficult concept in phenomenology. Detachment from familiarity begins with an epoch, which is the initial impulse of reduction (Bredenberg, 2017; Himanka,1995). With the help of reduction, we get rid of our habitual actions and can examine our intentional relationship with the world. For Philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2012) intentionality manifests itself not only in thinking, but also bodily. Our preconceived attitude towards phenomena brings out perceptions of the world. From Merleau-Ponty's point of view, what is interesting is the artist's ability to reject pre-learned models, examine the constitution of perception, question its limits, and thus pursue the meaning and expression of the world (Hacklin et al., 2014).

How does phenomenology manifest within the context of ISEAS? The initiation of any research process begins with a curious mindset. According to Professor Tom Barone and Professor Elliot W. Eisner (2012), artistic research is intended to spark questions and facilitate discussions rather than offering definitive conclusions. This perspective resonates with the essence of the phenomenological method. In the ISEAS setting, where artists and researchers may be unfamiliar with each other, an opportunity exists for reduction, or at least the initial phase, known as epoche (Figure 9). When the participants gather at the symposium, it is akin to transitioning to another dimension temporarily. The participants experience a brief escape from the familiar conventions of home and work, including family dynamics, relationships, and career aspirations. This unique environment arises because participating in the event entails engaging in a distinct form of artistic activity. The objective is to collaboratively produce artworks involving both artists and natural scientists during the symposium. While each participant contributes their expertise, the creative process does not unfold in isolation. The resulting artworks are outcomes of collective efforts, preceded by collaborative discussions and planning.

For reduction to occur, participants must possess the determination to step outside their comfort zones and the courage to prioritise the collective project over one's individual ego. Without meeting these conditions, reduction, where curiosity and alternative thinking thrive, becomes unlikely. Only by fulfilling these requirements can we create the conditions for the unexpected to emerge and unfold. ISEAS mentor Mari Krappala wrote an article for the ISEAS book about her experiences at ISEAS 2018:

> With a smile on her face, one of the artists said that this symposium was not only about experimental arts, but that it was a human experiment. As I understood it, she then referred to the combination of living and creating art together, as well as to the discussions during the internal process. In this human experiment, the artists were not only perceived as the initiators of certain activities, but as a group of people to be transformed to some extent. That is, the artists were forced to live in a symbiosis, with a shared use of the physical facilities (kitchen, working spaces, etc.) and cooking together. If they wanted to have some privacy, they were able to spend some time in the nearby nature. (Krappala, 2020, p. 28)

Philopher and art curator Saara Hacklin (2012) writes about the concept of *dérive* in the art of the Situationists. ISEAS has goals similar to those of dérive. As Hacklin suggests that dérive is a matter of phenomenological reduction, I also see ISEAS working like dérive; that is, when artists arrive at ISEAS, they want to see the space and place playfully and as a place of new artistic possibilities. ISEAS is a space where participants want to see differently and remove familiar conventions.

> I will not examine the concept of dérive further, but finally propose that considering the principles of dérive in terms of phenomenology it could be understood as aiming to lose the naturalist attitude. Moreover, dérive could be seen as having similar ambitions as reduction, since it aims to challenge the way we perceive and act in the surrounding space. It is based on the assumption that our actions within urban space are often governed by familiarity, and this familiarity is deeply rooted in our own bodies. (Hacklin, 2012, p. 143)

Even if my claim about reduction occurring after artists and scientists participated in ISEAS is not valid, the lived life, strong experientiality, and multilayered exchange of information are constantly present in ISEAS itself.

3.3. Knowing Through Art: Truth, Meaning, and Transformation

Knowledge (*episteme*) is the conceptual or discursive accountability in the apprehension of what one does, works on, makes, displays, or performs in the actual context of one's formal studies. The epistemology of art is, therefore, the theoretical framework of the knowledge of art and how the knowledge "of" art and knowledge "in" art are produced in specific material conditions and circumstances of the art world—from the art school through the public communication channels and spaces allocated to performing/displaying art to institutions of archiving and collecting art as such (Šuvaković et. al., 2008). So, what forms the basis of my knowledge and skills in supporting and developing this international convergence of art and science? Varto (2017) emphasises the importance of researchers standing behind their episteme. For me, my knowledge is rooted in my entire life experience. While visual art studies are crucial, my engagement in socially engaged art studies in 2007 revealed my strengths as a participatory artist.

Before these studies, I perceived different aspects of my life separately artistic talent, interest in people, leadership in my organic garden, exposure to diverse cultures, teaching experience, and my interest in equality between humans and non-human animals, as well as nurturing biodiversity. Creating the ISEAS has allowed me to combine all these elements and leverage my strengths effectively in fostering collaboration between art and science to address societal issues (Figure 9).

Varto (2017) presents the knowledge of art as an artistically significant phenomenon. He continues by stating that knowledge born from practice requires special care and accuracy. This means that it is necessary to understand how knowledge born from experience produces meaning in its own field. In the section about my research on ISEAS, understanding my own episteme is especially important. ISEAS crosses the borders of many research areas and involves many people who do not have the same experiences as I do.

Varto (2017) also underscores the significance of artists engaging in thinking and writing, as this practice gives rise to theories. Authorship is a unique skill inherent in creative work, making the artist–researcher the foremost expert on their creative output. Varto describes thinking as a continuous process that is deeply intertwined with practice. I find parallels with Deleuze and Guattari's (1980) concept of the rhizome, which challenges linear progression and instead fosters a network of interwoven connections. In my research, continuous artistic activity generates new information,

and participants can engage in discussions with colleagues—a characteristic integral to ISEAS. ISEAS has fostered discussions among artists and natural scientists since its inception, emphasizing collaborative art creation and research publications. Writing is pivotal in clarifying my thoughts. While my art is often intuitive yet purposeful, reflecting on my work through writing steers my artistic endeavors more towards research. Reflective exploration of my authorship facilitates the emergence of new theories, allowing me to share the knowledge I have gained with a broader audience.

Given ISEAS's commitment to cross-pollination across various art and natural science disciplines, I find co-writing research articles with different authors crucial. From my perspective, this collaborative writing, in addition to co-authorship, is a valuable asset of ISEAS—a platform where artistic collaboration intertwines with reflective writing and thinking. However, Varto (2017) emphasises the importance of understanding the relationship between the texts a researcher uses and their practical experiences. He suggests that texts from artists who have worked in diverse art areas are often more intriguing. I concur with this viewpoint, as it aligns with my belief that diverse perspectives enhance the richness of artistic and research dialogues.

4. Theoretical Background

My artistic passion and keen interest in the natural sciences and society have driven my research on ISEAS. Professor and artist Jaana Erkkilä-Hill (2024) notes that discussions about artistic research often exclude those unfamiliar with the field. Rooted in creative activity and thought processes, artistic research offers a unique approach to generating and interpreting information. Like appreciating art without being an artist, understanding artistic research does not necessitate being an artist. It provides fresh perspectives within technical and natural world views. Significantly, artistic research is not opposed to scientific research but complements it, inviting dialogue with curiosity and enthusiasm (Erkkilä-Hill, 2024).

Mäki (2020) discusses the context of art and its autonomy. He advocates experiencing art in its own right as an independent creation, although he acknowledges that art cannot entirely detach itself from its context. Understanding the context in which research is situated is integral to art research. Research cannot simply be a stream of consciousness; it must consider previous studies and grasp the theoretical framework within which it operates. While research always involves new methods and perspectives, it must acknowledge existing theoretical foundations. Erkkilä-Hill (2024) further explains that merely defining a shared meal or conversation does not become art just because someone defines it as such. In the case of participatory art, it is equally important to ask whether we are dealing with high-quality art or whether it is simply a social activity that has nothing to do with art in itself. Erkkilä-Hill (2024) suggests that we need to ask what the artistic goals of the event or act are.

In this chapter, I aim to underscore the significant theoretical fields that have influenced my research and my art. I particularly emphasise the practice of conversational art, which serves as a foundation for many other theoretical frameworks.

4.1. Conversational Art/Dialogical Aesthetic, Relational Aesthetics

The theoretical framework of my research is related to conversational art (Kester, 2004). When working collaboratively, the main focus is communicating (see also Building Conversation, n.d.). How do we understand each other, and how do we find new solutions collaboratively? Professor of communication François Cooren (2010) points out that

communication is a much broader subject than just verbal dialogue. Conversational art emphasises many ways to create a dialogue and provides opportunities for dialogue in many arts-based methods. Conversational art is more comprehensive than talking, as Cooren states, too. The core of my research is to verify conversational art in collegial, socially engaged art in the ISEAS context. I aim to examine the connection between ISEAS and the art field by incorporating French curator and art critic Nicolas Bourriaud's (2002) relational aesthetics, which views art as occurring within the interactions among people, and Grant Kester's (2004) dialogical aesthetics within the framework of socially engaged art theories and art–science collaboration. Kester is an American art historian and critic known for his influential work in the field of socially engaged art. Within ISEAS, the importance of experience appears at various levels, where participants coexist and collaborate, engaging in conversations about socially engaged art and participatory art experiences and broader audience engagement. In During ISEAS, my artistic work functions as a facilitator of interconnectedness, rather than conforming to traditional artisan roles. After ISEAS, I analyse my experiences through artworks, which are exhibited in art galleries or museums, representing what is considered more traditional artistic work. Conversational art, a genre often overlooked as art, encompasses various forms to foster dialogue and communication (Gablik, 1995; Kester, 2004; Manresa, 2021).

My research, specifically focusing on a broader study of socially engaged art and the participatory artistic activity between art and science in the climate change framework, shows that Kester's (2004) theory became one of my overarching theories. His theory emphasises the importance of dialogue, cooperation, and social interaction in contemporary art practices. Kester challenges traditional notions of art as an object or artifact, focusing instead on the relative dynamics of artists, participants, and their social context. His writings, such as *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Kester, 2004), explore various case studies and examples of artists who have adopted his theory of the dialogical aesthetic. According to this theory, art becomes a space of dialogue and exchange rather than a static, isolated creation. Kester's theory emphasises empathy as a methodological framework so that we can understand social situations, and for the conversation to be authentic and open to new things, the participants must strive for an empathetic approach to understand each other's cultural starting points and the everyday reality surrounding them:

> ... upon the insights to be derived from their interaction with others and with otherness. They define themselves as artists through their ability to catalyze

> understanding, to mediate exchange, and to sustain an ongoing process of empathetic identification and critical analysis. (Kester, 2004, p. 118)

This empathetic approach was evidence in the Rovaniemi Art Museum exhibition *Conversation* 2021 and the Lapua Art Museum exhibition *Our Shared Food* 2023 in several works, but especially in the video we filmed during the 2022 ISEAS, *Farmarikeskusteluja/Farming Conversations*.

In the 2022 ISEAS I invited local farmers to visit ISEAS to discuss climate change and their everyday lives and coping. Because of the empathetic approach, our conversation was rich and touched on serious issues without polarizing or blaming. Kester (2004) claims that the artist's role extends beyond producing art objects to promoting discussions and interactions within the community. This is precisely where ISEAS's activities are concentrated. In ISEAS, dialogues occur on many different levels and do not necessarily need verbal expression. The Singaporean performance artist Fie Neo, who participated in ISEAS 2019, provided feedback about her experiences with local kindergarten students in the Circular Economy workshop, as follows:

> This project touched on many levels for me. I understood very early on that verbal communication would be almost impossible. From the first day of activity in the kindergarten, I adjusted my expectations and gave up on speech. I decided to play.
>
> I ran into the playground with the children and played with them. I got on the swings, went down the slide, and built sandcastles with them.
>
> I held their hands and jumped with them in the mornings, we rolled on the floor, and we ran across the field together.
>
> The children quickly became very attached to me and a couple of them started to reach out to hold my hand. They brought me to different parts of the playground, showed how they played, showed how they could skip very well on jumping ropes.
>
> I did not understand what they were saying, and they soon understood that I did not speak Finnish. We started communicating through body language. On the second and third day, some of the kids started to speak some English. One word here and there; yes, no, or some words that I had used.
>
> We did not need spoken language to build trust and be connected.
> (Fie Neo, personal communication, 2019)

According to Kester's theory of dialogical aesthetics, art happens in an inner dialogue within a community. Even if the work leads to a visual display—an exhibition that can also be an artistically significant work—the art itself has, nevertheless, taken place earlier in the process and the dialogue engendered inside the community during the art intervention (Kester, 2004). Lacy employed dialogical aesthetics (1994, 2010; see also Kester, 2004), contending that social relations are increasingly dispersed across society. Her artistic endeavors unfolded within social interactions among people in vulnerable situations. For instance, during a significant clash between youth gangs and the police in California in 1999, Lacy orchestrated a gathering on a rooftop, bringing together representatives from both sides to engage in dialogue regarding a critical situation that had reached an impasse with mutual misunderstanding. These conversations played a crucial role in resolving the conflict. Danish curator Lars Bang Larsen (1999) has collaborated with Lacy, and his work in socially engaged art focuses on art that seeks to engage with social and political issues and involves collaboration between artists, communities, and institutions. He is particularly interested in how socially engaged art can address contemporary social and political problems and contribute to developing more democratic and equitable societies.

Another example from Kester is the artists' collective WochenKlausur, which has produced conversational art since 1993 to solve complex social problems in communities (Hawley, 2015; Kester, 2004). WochenKlausur combines art with activism and overcomes the distinction between ethics and aesthetics (Hawley, 2015). While documentaries of Lacy's projects are presented in modern art museums, WochenKlausur sets up temporary offices in exhibition spaces when invited by art curators and institutions. They elaborate on possible solutions to social-political problems with local communities, public authorities, and the business sector within four to twelve weeks (Kester, 2004; WochenKlausur, 2014).

When discussing socially engaged art, we often discuss art and what happens in the process. My primary goals in the ISEAS interventions are to facilitate the creation of art in collaboration with artists, scientists, and people who participate in the workshops on environmental issues and to have the theories of dialogical aesthetics, socially engaged art, and conversational art guide the process. Kester (1998; see also Bourriaud, 2002) argues that art activism is a powerful social change and justice tool. According to Kester, the shared dialogue process can proceed most effectively if artists do not act as outsiders but as participants who are closely involved in the community

in which they work. This is one reason why I have always involved local and international artists in working collaboratively at ISEAS.

According to Kester (2004), social art with people works best when the artist is involved in the activity for a longer period of time. This has happened in my study of ISEAS as well as in contrasting situations, such as when the art interventions were carried out in my home village of Mustio, where I have made participatory art works for more than 20 years. One can talk about persistence, even though the participating ISEAS artists were only visiting for a short time. When I took ISEAS to Äkäslompolo or Lapua, I asked local artists to join. Although the events were short-lived, they were accompanied by a pattern of cooperation spanning several years at the level of museum exhibitions and other personal encounters. Still, I agree with Kester that if I could continue with these same people for a longer period of time, the result would certainly be even more impressive.

Among Finnish artists and art researchers, the pioneer of conversational art is Lea Kantonen (2005, 2010). She brought up the dialogical aesthetics of Kester's conversational art in her 2005 dissertation *Teltta, Kohtaamisia nuorten taidetyöpajoissa* [The Tent, Encounters in workshops for youngsters]. Kantonen highlights Kester's concern about the tendency of many community artists to unilaterally use the work input of collaborators to build their careers and status. I also see this as a danger, not only in discussing socially engaged art, but also in academic arts-based research. When the academic demand for research results is high, the principle of ethics can be forgotten or backgrounded. Korean curator and art history educator Miwon Kwon (2002) worries about the same issue; she sees that art institutions can use communities to build their own identities. I return to this in a later chapter, focusing on socially engaged art ethics. Kantonen (2005) continues by asking what conversations mean in socially engaged art. I think the question is relevant. Kantonen summarises that, according to her, all art is, in one way or another, conversational art because, ultimately, all artists work intertextually to continue the tradition of earlier art. Kantonen continues, when talking about conversational art, by stating that the confusion is compounded by the fact that the words conversation, dialogue, and discourse used in art discussions are related to very different theoretical views. In connection with community/socially engaged/participatory and conversational art, the dialogical aesthetic means that the included parties can respond to each other in one way or another and possibly change their views during the conversation.

4.2. Community Art, Socially Engaged Art, Participatory Art

Art enhances the potential of research to deepen our understanding of humanity. The use of images broadens our interpretative horizons, allowing us to perceive new nuances in research situations (Eisner, 2008). This shift from elitist ownership to broader societal enjoyment characterises a significant paradigm shift. Terms such as socially engaged art, community art, and participatory art describe art that involves people in various ways.

In Finland, art involving society began with performative art forms. Happenings gained traction in the 1960s, with notable instances including artists who painted their bodies as tuxedos and attended art exhibitions (Takalo-Eskola & Lintilä, 2017). In Finland's Constitution (Suomen perustuslaki, 1999), the right to culture is guaranteed under Section 17, which affirms the right of individuals to use their own language and culture in dealings with authorities and courts. ArtsEqual (2015–2021), a Finnish art research group, investigates the societal impacts of social art, striving to uphold cultural rights and well-being for all, regardless of age, abilities, or life situation (Kallio-Tavin et al., 2019; University of the Arts Helsinki, n.d.). Their mission centres on ensuring art's accessibility and everyone's right to engage in artistic expression. The term *community art* emerged in Finland in the 1990s as art activities involving the community became more common (Jussilainen, 2019). Despite this progress, efforts to establish universally accepted terms in this evolving landscape are ongoing. In the Nordic countries, art events have long been rooted in the artist's ability to critically examine and respond to social situations (Larsen, 1999).

Numerous terms and concepts are used to describe art created with and for people. While I have chosen to use the term *socially engaged art* to describe my own practice, I find it essential to explore the broader range of theories and terms that have shaped my understanding and approach to art and research.

British art historian, critic, and President's Professor of Art History Claire Bishop (2012) discusses the "social turn" in contemporary art, highlighting a significant shift towards practices that actively engage with social issues and community involvement:

> To put it simply: the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of situations; the work of art as a finite, portable, commodifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term project with an unclear beginning and end; while the audience, pre-

viously conceived as a 'viewer' or 'beholder', is now repositioned as a co-producer or participant. (Bishop, 2012, p. 2)

In a similar vein, Bourriaud (2002), in his work *Relational Aesthetics*, introduces the idea of art that centres on human interactions and social contexts as its primary medium and platform. Lacy (1995) is another pivotal figure in the realm of community-based art, particularly within feminist contexts. Her edited volume *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, was foundational in establishing the field of socially engaged art.

The concept of new public art often refers to contemporary public art that directly engages with communities. Kwon (2002) delves into related ideas in her book *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, providing essential insights into the theorization of site-specific art. Kwon (2004; see also Kantonen, 2010) understands community art as part of an expansion of place-related art. However, Kwon is wary of community art projects in which artists collaborate with various pre-existing communities. Kwon, therefore, recommends that artists preferably work as a temporary community, as they have the best space for art mobility and diversity. ISEAS itself is also an expansion of place-related art, in that every artistic act is a result of collective ISEAS reflection. Kwon asks quite provocatively:

> In actual practice, how does a group of people become identified as a community in an exhibition programme, as a potential partner in a collaborative art project? Who identifies them as such? And who decides what social issue(s) will be addressed or represented by/through them: the artist? the community group? the curator? the sponsoring institution? the funding organisation? Does the partner community preexist the art project, or is it produced by it? What is the nature of the collaborative relationship? If the identity of the community is produced through the making of the art work, does the artist's identity also depend on the same process? How does the collaboration unfold, and what precisely is the role of the artist within it? Does the partner community coincide with the audience? (Kwon, 2004, pp. 116–117)

Kester, a leading voice in the discussion of dialogical aesthetics, explores dialogue-based, socially engaged art in his book *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (2004). His work emphasises the importance of foster-

ing community interaction through art. Both Bishop (2012) and Kester (2004) offer critical perspectives on participatory art, with Bishop scrutinizing the political implications of participation. Bishop has written extensively about socially engaged art, particularly its potential to provoke discomfort, tension, and even negative emotions. In her essay "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents" (2006), Bishop argues that while socially engaged art is often celebrated for its ability to promote community and social change, it also has the potential to generate conflict, disagreement, and discomfort. This resonates with my own practice, although I personally strive to avoid conflicts at all costs. When they have occurred, I have often experienced a sense of failure. Nevertheless, Bishop maintains that one of the defining features of socially engaged art is its ability to challenge established norms, compelling participants to confront issues they may not otherwise consider. Such processes can be disconcerting, as they often involve navigating power dynamics, social inequalities, and uncomfortable truths. While the intention of the artwork may be to spark dialogue or transformation, addressing difficult social issues can lead to friction among participants or audiences—particularly when the work does not provide clear solutions or exposes divisions within a community. Despite the potential for tension, Bishop views this division as a strength, believing that socially engaged art can catalyse reflection and bring about change. Stephen Levine, Professor Emeritus of Social Science (2013) emphasises the necessity of allowing art the freedom for improvisation, highlighting its dynamic nature. Shannon Jackson broadens this discourse by examining the intersection of performance and social engagement in her book *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (2011). Jackson's analysis expands the scope of socially engaged art by considering how performance as a medium can effectively support and engage communities. Similarly, performance artist Mark Leahy's practice embodies collaboration and conversations (Mark Leahy, n.d.). His work resonates with the principles of conversational art by emphasising dialogue and fostering meaningful connections. Through performative engagements, Leahy allows artistic expression to unfold fluidly, reflecting a dynamic interplay between the artist, participants, and the environment. This approach celebrates the spontaneity of the creative process and its potential to generate transformative interactions, aligning with the broader relational and dialogical frameworks in contemporary art practice.

American author, curator Nato Thompson (2012, 2015) further extends this discussion by addressing socially engaged art and activism, exploring how art can impact societal issues globally. Thompson explores the transformative nature of socially

engaged arts in *Living as Form* (2012). Over the past 30 years, social arts have disrupted traditional art discourse, transcending conventional boundaries and disseminating techniques and ideas beyond the confines of classical art forms. Unlike historical avant-garde movements, such as Russian Constructivism, Futurism, Situationism, Tropicalismo, Happenings, Fluxus, and Dadaism, socially engaged art is not a singular movement but rather a dynamic evolution that broadens the accessibility of art.

In community art, the themes of visibility and voice are often central, as it can be challenging for marginalised individuals to articulate their own experiences and emotions. Art offers a meaningful space where artists and participants can be heard, seen, and understood (Barone & Eisner, 2012). American sociologist Patricia Leavy (2015) illustrates the power of visual experiences, noting that when we think of an event like 9/11, the image of planes crashing into the Twin Towers immediately comes to mind. This demonstrates the profound impact of images, yet it also underscores the challenge of conveying meaningful content in a visually saturated world.

The term *socially engaged art* encompasses diverse practices that are continuously evolving and subject to ongoing scrutiny. It generally refers to a particular way of working, an attitude, and a set of values. Community art, viewed as interactive art initiated by an artist within a community, embodies shared authorship. One way to understand the difference between terms is to divide them by purpose. Community art arises from the community (Bas, 2016; Helguera, 2011; Matarasso, 2019). The artist works to benefit the community by making their artistic professionalism and facilitation available to the community. This usually involves transferring the sovereignty of a work of art from the artist to the community. Art is made in collaboration with community members; community art explicitly seeks to involve communities in creating a work of art. The aim is to activate people in the community, strengthen their artistic skills, and encourage them to reflect critically on issues related to their community. Community art tends to foreground what is discussed while creating a work of art.

Socially engaged art arises from the artist's desire to influence society and its structures. It involves people and communities in debate, collaboration, or social interaction. Socially engaged art is an intervention an artist brings to change, reveal, and influence people's ways of thinking through artistic means. It can have very activist meanings and political targets. According to American artist, performer, author, and educator Pablo Helguera (2011), "Socially engaged art functions itself to subjects and problems that normally belong to other disciplines, moving them temporarily into space of ambiguity" (p. 5). Helguera is known for his commitment to socially engaged

art practices. His projects often involve collaboration with diverse communities, encouraging participation and dialogue. He addresses social and cultural issues through art, fostering a sense of connection and interaction.

ISEAS is an art gathering where the action happens between community art and socially engaged art. Interventions are designed with the art–science sub-teams and are created to benefit the community by opening up conversations using artistic methods. Writer, researcher and artist François Matarasso (2019) explains how participatory art can help us live through difficult times. According to him, participatory art can enable us to express pain, anger, and hope; make friends and find allies; imagine alternatives; share feelings; and be accepted.

The most meaningful aspect for me is inviting community members to participate in socially engaged activities, such as a school class or other easily accessible communities. Socially engaged art activities at ISEAS, then, are closer to art education methods, for example, with elementary school children or secondary school classes. When invitations have been open calls and dependent on participants' "free will" to join art activities, it has been more challenging for the ISEAS team to plan. Asthildur Jónsdóttir (2017) underscores the importance of participation, particularly in the context of art education for sustainable development. Her research reveals how crucial inclusive pedagogy and collaborative, communal practices are for fostering a deeper understanding of sustainable development education.

4.3. Mentoring

Over the years, ISEAS has developed into a vibrant hub that embraces a multitude of disciplines, welcoming international and national artists, as well as natural scientists and philosophers. Within this environment, individuals have formed connections, fostering friendships and exchanging their enthusiasm for both art and life. Socially engaged art underscores the importance of being heard and acknowledged; it serves as a medium for expressing the diversity of human experiences, where disparate voices converge in empathetic harmony, attentively listening to one another. It becomes a commitment to an idea that is more common than what separates us, especially in terms of human dignity (Matarasso, 2019). Matarasso notes that "there are three things that participatory artists most need: money, trust, and professional development" (Matarasso, 2019, p. 192). For each ISEAS event I have organised, inviting a mentor to participate alongside the process serves as a means of providing profession-

al development. Mentor and writer Mike Pegg (1999) points out that great mentors help people to take more control of their acts and find their own way to work. He argues that mentoring sessions can follow the classic "five C model. It shows how to run a structured session that helps somebody to focus on their (1) challenges, (2) choices, (3) consequences, (4) creative solutions, and (5) conclusions" (Pegg, 1999, p. 139). This is how mentoring has helped the artist-scientist teams during ISEAS fieldwork.

4.4. ISEAS as a Third Space

With ISEAS work, I often feel that something magical happens, something other than what is pre-planned—a power that bursts forth and grows within the community. ISEAS itself is an art piece. Artists are individuals removed from different backgrounds and contexts who, on request, participate in ISEAS and thus create a community bound to place and moment. Collaboration and conversations at many levels are central to ISEAS. ISEAS is like a childhood boarding school or summer camp seasoned with extra species with an artistic, scientific, and international twist. ISEAS has always been a multinational and multicultural place. Indian scholar and critical theorist Homi Bhabha's Third Space concept, characterised by cultural hybridity and the blending of different influences, challenges fixed identities and binary categories (Bhabha, 1998; see also Rutherford, 1990). This space, integral to ISEAS, is cultivated through art, opening possibilities for identification through the other. Bhabha's idea emphasises the potential of this third space to give rise to novel meanings and senses.

ISEAS is a hybrid space transcending individual contributions, altering and fortifying artists' identities. As artist Robert Back suggests, the possibility of creating a parallel third space in art schools involves inviting international artists to engage with art students on an equal footing, fostering a more open discussion (Back, 2014; Wilson, 2008; see also Wilson & Ryder, 1998). Similarly, at ISEAS, meeting peer artists on an equal basis is crucial for avoiding imbalances that may hinder the creation of a magical third space.

Bhabha's Third Space in ISEAS is a hybrid entity greater than the sum of its individuals, challenging fixed identities and existing in an in-between state (Bhabha, 1998). It is neither fully one thing nor another, breaking away from traditional categories. ISEAS deliberately positions itself as a third space between art and science, offering participants a setting where conventional boundaries dissolve. This fluid space

fosters international collaboration and cultural encounters, which may not always lead to predictable or positive outcomes, but serve as essential moments for personal and collective growth.

Within this third space, participants can enter a state that Hungarian-American psychologist Mihály Róbert Csíkszentmihályi (1996) describes as flow—a deep immersion where individuals lose track of time and self-awareness, experiencing heightened creativity and engagement. ISEAS, by disrupting everyday routines and community norms, creates an environment similar to the artistic process itself: open-ended, transformative, and detached from conventional work structures. In my view, this experience mirrors the way many neurodiverse individuals navigate life. While there is no conclusive research proving that artists are more likely to be neurodiverse, I suspect there may be a connection. Through its dynamic and interdisciplinary nature, ISEAS offers a space where participants, much like artists in a state of flow, can momentarily step outside structured expectations and engage fully in creative exploration.

4.5. Art as Activism

As stated above, ISEAS comes under the socially engaged art umbrella, where the artist desires to actively work to change the community through artistic practice or bring issues into it to be discussed and addressed. In my case, themes have been related to environmental issues. Kester (2004) understandably brings racial issues and economic inequality to the fore because his cultural background is American. However, I grew up in Finland, one of the world's most equal and happiest countries. We do not carry guns in our back pockets, and our history is not as deeply rooted in racial slavery as that of the United States. Nonetheless, our own history includes the oppression of the indigenous Sámi people, the only living indigenous group in Europe. The Finns are people of the forest, but not only in its positive sense. We have built our well-being based on the sustenance we get from nature ("Finland's Forests," n.d.). We have also lost our connection with nature and destroyed forests rich in biodiversity. As reported by the Natural Resources Institute Finland, only six per cent of the forests in southern Finland are designated as protected (LUKE, 2022). Conversely, Greenpeace (Greenpeace, n.d.) states that less than three per cent of these forests are protected. Everything else is an economic forest grown and used for its natural and commercial values. On a global scale, humanity finds itself in a perilous trajectory, where the crossing of planetary boundaries poses a significant risk of our own species

facing extinction (Biermann, 2012). Inevitably, when such a scenario unfolds, the consequences will be catastrophic.

Journalist and writer Eleanora Brooks (2023) states that "activism refers to action taken challenging those in power to bring about change in society and benefit the greater good" (Brooks, 2023, para. 1). Activists want to influence things in the world by changing people's thinking or by getting information out. Art activism means the same thing, but the method of activism is art. In 1984, American writer, art critic, activist, and curator Lucy Lippard (1984) penned an insightful essay on art activism, suggesting that perhaps the Trojan Horse could be considered an activist's inaugural art creation. Her discussion delves into the human imagination, a force capable of birthing novel solutions to challenge prevailing circumstances. Lippard posits that activist art, grounded in both subversion and empowerment, operates within and beyond the confines of high culture or the art world, making an impact both inside and outside the fortress. Over 40 years later, her assertion that activist art is a pragmatic and evolving form has proven accurate.

According to Lippard (1984), the essence of activist art lies in an artist's ability to create, perceive, and enable others to see the potential within their creative capacity cascading effect that empowers individuals to make something meaningful from what they observe. This transformative power, she suggests, positions the activist artist as a catalyst for social change, shedding light on the possibilities inherent in such influence. Lippard emphasises the cooperative and participatory nature of most activist work, rooted in its direct utility for specific communities, with community needs acting as both inspiration and limitation for artists. Lippard underscores the long-term commitment required of activist artists, asserting that it takes years to develop effective formal strategies. Reflecting on my journey as an art activist, I recognise its evolution from early community artworks in the early 2000s to the international recognition received while documenting ISEAS activities in my research. The essence of activism art lies in seeking attention and change, with a nuanced understanding among participants serving as a crucial metric for successful transformation. As I perceive it, this process nurtures the growth of initiatives that may safeguard our planet from human impact—an aspiration that resonates deeply with my hopes for the future.

Lippard (1984) also draws attention to the exhaustion experienced by artists, an aspect I encountered during my research—a stark truth that cannot be avoided. She highlights the high burnout rates among visual artists engaged in collaborative efforts, as the rewards of such activities are often perceived as disconnected from art development and receive less recognition within the art world.

In the 21st century, art activism is thriving globally, with the intersection of art, science, and environmental issues gaining prominence. American artist, writer, activist Gregory Sholette (2022) emphasises its pivotal role, reminiscent of the impactful 1960s and 70s. The Art & Science Collaborative movement has added to this narrative, reflecting the diverse contributions from interdisciplinary cooperation (Art & Science Collaborative, n.d.). American Director of Art Education and Professor of Art and Museum Education, Marit Dewhurst (2014) contends that, throughout history, art has shaped political and cultural perceptions and influenced attitudes and behaviours. From inspiring attendance at religious gatherings to functioning as a means of highlighting social injustices and inequality, art, in its diverse forms, remains a powerful tool for critiquing and transforming society. Dewhurst (2014) further asserts that contemporary social justice art education is a dynamic, ongoing process wherein individuals create artworks to address inequalities or other forms of injustice. The roots of performative activism go back far to the beginnings of the environmental movement. Activists have chained themselves to excavators, camped in forests under threat of construction, and disrupted the operation of oil rigs. Therefore, creative action is not new in environmental activism.

The environmental crisis is a cultural crisis in which humankind has been unable to adapt to planetary boundaries, and education should focus on seeing surrounding nature, all living and nonliving nature, as equal to humans (Foster, 2016). Environmental-focused art activism is a significant focus in platforms like ISEAS, as underscored by Juhola et al. (2020, 2022), Juhola (2020), and Raatikainen et al. (2020). To gain a comprehensive understanding of contemporary art activism, exploring these diverse sources can offer valuable insights into its multifaceted and dynamic landscape.

We can talk about the white noise of climate change, as Icelandic writer Andri Magnason (2021) states that it covers up the most important thing (i.e., what we should do and how to act). Art is the silver thread that allows us to weave ourselves back into reality. We must use all our senses to create a new and sustainable future where the earth is treated as sacred and not as untapped raw material (Magnason, 2019). Authors Laura Kim Sommer and Christian Andreas Klöckner (2021) see art activism as influencing opportunities in the age of climate change. However, they suggest that art should not be dystopian, fear-inducing, or shocking. According to them, this kind of art does not work for people in such a way that it encourages actions and changes; rather, it should offer solutions and restore man's connection with nature. According to them, initially using dystopian elements to attract attention is a good

thing. However, the final solution should be hopeful and require everyone to develop creative solutions to change the situation. They also emphasise that activist art should leave institutions and reach people. Here, I see connections to ISEAS activities in such a way that, even though ISEAS artworks have been exhibited in art museums, ISEAS activities have reached more than 1000 people to discuss environmental issues through socially engaged art. Sommer and Klöckner (2021) argue that reaching the public is difficult, even though the art activist intends to do so. It is not enough to present the problem only aesthetically. However, according to the characteristics of a great solution, it is necessary to create a personal connection to the causes and consequences and offer solutions. ISEAS displays artworks in art museum spaces. These artworks are the result of workshops involving community members, rendering them personal and captivating to the participants and their wider community, including family members and the entire city or region where the activity has transpired. Sommer and Klöckner (2021) also emphasise the collaboration model between art and science, which is also part of the ISEAS template.

4.6. Art and Science

Finnish writer Iida Turpeinen (2023) brings attention to the historical human-induced killing of animals, contributing to the extinction of various species, as exemplified by Steller's cows. Her book *Elolliset* [Living] explores research methods, scientific drawings, and the evolution of museum collections, illuminating the intricate relationship between humans and other species. Turpeinen notes that the collaboration between art and science, including artists illustrating discovered species, has been a practice spanning hundreds of years.

In a related context, art historian Anna Luhtala (2021) contends that the establishment of museums during the Renaissance can be attributed to collectors' aspirations to comprehend and organise the world. This was achieved by creating collections and cabinets of curiosities, aligning with Turpeinen's argument about the interconnectedness of science, art, and the impact on animal life. Both Turpeinen and Luhtala shed light on the interconnected history of science, art, and museums, suggesting that the human impact on animals, driven by scientific exploration and displayed in museums (audience), has been a long-standing phenomenon with implications for various species.

In the late 1960s, engineer Billy Klüver's Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) at Bell Labs initiated the fusion of art and science. Concurrently, Maurice

Tuchman's Art & Technology program at The Los Angeles County Museum of Art has provided artist residencies in industrial settings since 1970, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. The Artist Placement Group (APG), founded in 1965, uniquely placed artists in organisations to instigate change through artistic processes. John Latham's APG, influenced by chaos theory and cybernetics, introduced the concept of the butterfly effect, suggesting that artists' mere presence could unpredictably transform an organisation (Schnugg & Song, 2020).

A conversational connection between different parties can create something completely new. Cooperation becomes meaningful when the encounters are fruitful, and looking at things from different perspectives broadens one's thinking. At its best, the dialogue between art and science helps us perceive the world in new ways and find something unprecedented, even for the world's good.

Trained initially Brandon Ballengée, an American artist, biologist, and environmental activist, explores the intersection of science and art (Ballengée, 2015). He believes that collaborative efforts between artists and natural scientists can enhance the public understanding of ecological issues, fostering awareness and long-term ecosystem protection. Ballengée highlights the effectiveness of art in conveying research to non-experts and emphasises its significance in participatory art–science research. He contends that art is crucial in capturing attention and communicating important research results (Ballengée, 2015). Environmental protection needs ordinary people to understand why protection and specific actions are important. We need to understand the results of science empathically. Art is here to help. Art is connected to the use of all our senses.

By engaging with reality extensively through our senses, we can use our creativity to better perceive the ongoing reality that researchers and science have brought forth. "Writer, Feminist, and Cultural Critic, Minna Salami (2020) argues, we need a perspective on knowledge that combines creativity and rationality, the quantitative and the immeasurable, the intellectual and the emotional. Without emotions, knowledge becomes stale; without reason, it becomes sketchy. An approach is needed in which wisdom is measured based on technical fields or gross domestic product and how ethically societies are developed (Salami, 2020). The same idea is highlighted by scholars Claudia Schnugg and BeiBei Song (2020). According to their view, the collaboration between art and science can improve the communication of concepts, contexts, and phenomena with the help of the aesthetic power of art. In addition, the interdisciplinary discussion between artists and scientists promotes the development of versatile communication skills and improves personal communication. Collaborative processes that combine or

imitate artistic and scientific ideas can lead to and support sensing processes. This helps us to understand different perspectives on things and opens up new ways of thinking in interpreting information. For me, collaboration with scientists and other artists opens up a new and interesting way of creating my art. The ISEAS has developed into an activist art event with a meaningful impact on the people who participate. According to Ballengée (2015), many people are unaware that we are in the middle of a mass extinction. He specifically considers the collaboration between artists and scientists meaningful when it engages and involves ordinary people. In his view, work like this could increase the public's understanding of ecology, because today's environmental issues are global and daunting challenges that cannot be solved by the fields of science or art alone. However, he warns of the dangers of the synthesis of art and science such that if art is set to serve exclusively the purposes of science as a means of communication, it can turn into a less open activity Ballengée (2015). Furthermore, collaboration encounters challenges in multidisciplinary communication, where differing writing styles and methodologies necessitate extra effort and time, often in short supply (Mustajoki & Mustajoki, 2017).

It is often argued that art–science projects produce new knowledge, combining different disciplines to process complex ideas. Such cooperation can generate innovative knowledge for both art and science. The effects may vary depending on the project; for example, art practices can bring a new perspective to science, and scientific visualization techniques can benefit the artist. Art–science projects aim to modify knowledge, create new ideas, and change existing knowledge. This perspective also includes research on new experimental practices and technologies. It is important to note that those who reshape knowledge through art–science projects can also provoke radical criticism of established knowledge production practices, which opens up possibilities for an alternative knowledge policy (Hediger & Scott, 2016).

Research by Muller, Bennett, Froggett, and Bartlett (2015) explores the collaborative dynamics between art and science, aligning with findings from my work with ISEAS. They introduce the concept of the Third Hybrid Space, rooted in Homi Bhabha's (1998) notion of the Third Space, which I discussed earlier. This space supports the emergence of innovative mechanisms for addressing current environmental challenges like climate change, mass extinctions, and new viruses, reflecting Ballengé's (2015) ideas.

According to Muller et al. (2015), "As a form of collaborative research, its intersection with the public distinguishes art–science, and its capacity to connect audiences and stakeholders to researchers in mutually enhancing ways" (para. 2). They argue that the Third Hybrid Space facilitates contexts that critically engage with human and

subjective experiences. The visual matrix is highlighted as a powerful method for capturing deep responses, fostering shared knowledge and discussion, and demonstrating the role of aesthetic engagement in evidence-based research within this hybrid space.

Curating artists for ISEAS activities has always been easy for me. Getting natural scientists involved has been more difficult. First, the cooperation between art and science has created hesitation, but breaking away from the academic schedule and requirements is also difficult, especially when the core of ISEAS activities is in the process and cooperation with art. The balance between art and natural science is also not equal. Each sub-team has always had several artists and only one natural scientist. It is easy to get an artist involved in ISEAS activities; artists come more from the free art field and do not have agreements with institutions. However, ISEAS is an art-oriented event, and the results of this event are mainly presented in art museums and art journals. Designer and researcher Gjoko Muratovski (2016; see also Friedman, 2002) talks about multidisciplinary cooperation in the field of design and how it utilises in many ways the professional growth of designers as well as society as a whole to develop to better meet the needs of the future. I see this same need for multidisciplinarity in art professionals. Art and so-called hard science must put their know-how to common use to better respond to the challenges that climate change, in its diversity, will bring us in the future, and these challenges are here already to be solved now.

4.7. Eco-Anxiety

Theological researcher Panu Pihkala (2017) recounts an incident involving a client who expressed distress over animal deaths during a therapy session. Following standard practice, the therapist suggested that the animals might symbolise the client's relationships with certain close human connections. The client reacted angrily, exclaiming that it truly was about the animals. I resonate with this sentiment, as, to me, animals hold equal importance to human beings. Humans, being the most violent species on the planet, relentlessly harm their fellow creatures. This includes the capture and torture of animals in practices such as pig farming and broiler production, among others. Eco-anxiety and environmental anxiety are pervasive in my life, intensifying my distress. Finnish writer and journalist, Jeanette Björkqvist (2024) discusses the case of Hanna Höijer, a 20-year-old who experienced severe burnout due to climate anxiety. Children and young people can generally be divided into four groups regarding climate anxiety. A recent study by Salmela-Aro, Veijonaho, and their team

(Veijonaho et al., 2024) involved over 3,000 Helsinki youth aged 11–15. According to their study, about half of the participants belonged to the first group, who were fairly unconcerned about climate change and were coping best. The second group, about one in five, consisted of climate change deniers who did not experience climate anxiety. The third group was similarly sized and emotionally invested in climate change. They faced everyday challenges, such as concentration issues and feelings of inadequacy or guilt. However, this group was active, engaging in more concrete climate actions in their daily lives than others (Björkqvist, 2024; Veijonaho et al.,2024). The studies by Pihkala (2017) and other researchers clearly underscore that climate anxiety is a genuine issue. This anxiety can also lead to extreme actions; Finnish journalist and non-fiction writer Jussi Niemelä (2024) warns that climate anxiety may harbor hidden potential for fanatical and even violent behaviours when individuals believe they are acting correctly. In Finland, both young and older individuals have engaged with the political movement Elokapina (Elokapina, n.d.), which is part of a broader international activism effort, including Extinction Rebellion:

> Extinction Rebellion began in 2018 with a Declaration of Rebellion which led to 10,000 people protesting on the Streets of London in 2019 and Parliament declaring a Climate Emergency. XR is now a global movement, comprising 1080 national, regional, and local groups of people who demand urgent action to halt carbon emissions, protect the natural world, and preserve all we hold dear. We believe ordinary people have the power to effect change and that we are stronger together, as governments have repeatedly shown they cannot be relied upon to act in our interest. Whether we contribute to local campaigns or participate in major national protests, there are many ways people contribute to the movement (Extinction Rebellion, n.d.).

To address eco-anxiety, individuals need opportunities to take action, yet it must be recognised that these actions can also lead to violence: "If people believe that they are good and righteous and that they are pursuing a great cause, they often become fanatical, ruthless, merciless in doing so. History offers countless examples of the phenomenon" (Niemelä, 2024, p. 20).

While exploring climate anxiety studies, I encountered psychologists emphasizing the escalating need for mental health services due to climate threats. Addressing subacute and prolonged climate impacts requires innovative mental health interven-

tions, such as community relocations, public health education, violence prevention, risk communication, environmental engagement, and fostering positive psychological outcomes (Palinkas & Wong, 2020). Numerous studies have highlighted climate change's direct and indirect effects on mental health, affecting vulnerable populations, especially in low-income countries (Berry et al., 2010; Doherty & Clayton, 2011; Robbins & Moore, 2013). Anger impacts action. In their study, Stanley et al. (2021) investigated the relationships between various negative emotions (eco-anxiety, eco-depression, and eco-anger) related to climate change and their associations with mental health and pro-climate behaviour. While each eco-emotion individually contributes to lower well-being and increased pro-climate behaviours, considering all three together changes this pattern. Eco-anger is uniquely associated with greater engagement in both personal and collective pro-climate behaviours, while eco-depression and eco-anxiety show different patterns. Their findings suggest that eco-anger may be a healthy form of expressive coping, while eco-depression and eco-anxiety may be debilitating (Stanley et al., 2021). Pihkala (2017) highlighted one coping mechanism for climate anxiety—denial. Professor of Climate Psychology Per Espen Stoknes (2015) shared a similar experience during a lecture on climate change. He faced a question about how he would respond to the assertion that scientists have declared climate change untrue:

> So what did I reply to the group of executives? …But being happy about the thin, thin 2 to 3 percent slice of contrarian researchers does not give license to ignore the other 97 percent–even if ignoring the unsettling climate facts could be personally more convenient for my lifestyle. Choosing ignorance would let me off the hook of feeling implicated when I fly too much–or don't contribute enough. (Stoknes, 2015, p. XIV)

As per Pihkala (2023), individuals' initial lack of awareness regarding the severity of the environmental crisis gradually transforms into partial awareness. Many people encounter a sense of unease during their lives. Some attempt to evade the consequences of this realization, and for others, shock is a common reaction. In certain instances, this awareness prompts significant life changes (Pihkala, 2023). I realised this when a journalist visited the Lapua Art Museum exhibition 2023. The journalist became conscious of the impact of the artworks, describing the exhibition as enlightening, alarming, and anxiety-inducing, and still hoping that everyone could experience the same feelings, as it felt so important to the journalist. This made me reflect on my

assumption that everyone lives with a heightened awareness of environmental issues, simultaneously realizing that scientific facts might not penetrate people's consciousness—perhaps art is necessary to break through this barrier.

Geographer Mike Hulme (2009) states that climate change is not merely a scientific or technical problem awaiting a solution. Instead, he argues that climate change is a multifaceted environmental, cultural, and political phenomenon. It is reshaping the physical world, how individuals and societies perceive themselves, and their place on Earth. Hulme emphasises the diversity of meanings attached to climate change, highlighting that it circulates through various realms, such as politics, business, law, trade, knowledge, religion, and the arts. He acknowledges the scientific consensus that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) presents regarding the physical transformations in the world's climates. However, he contends that there is yet to be a consensus on what climate change means for individuals and societies. Hulme suggests that approaching climate change solely as a physical phenomenon is limiting. He encourages a more imaginative and creative engagement with climate change, considering it an evolving concept that influences how people think, feel, and act. He argues against the notion that climate change can be solved in the conventional sense and proposes that it should be seen as a resource of the imagination that can inspire new thinking, artistic creations, ethical considerations, and social movements.

Mäki (2017) questions the effectiveness of knowledge and intellect, asserting that merely presenting information, even through compelling visuals, gestures, and sounds, does not ensure a meaningful impact. He contends that the common assimilation of knowledge is a human error and that art plays a crucial role in rectifying it. When successful, art internalises information and compelling action (Mäki, 2017). Therefore, I agree that art, for impactful change, should go beyond merely creating or transmitting information. Mäki (2017) understands the possibility of art presenting information vividly and comprehensively so that the message becomes deeply impressive and lasting. In this process, knowledge seamlessly integrates into our emotional and temporal dimensions. Observing works of art can provide a deep understanding of the suffering caused by climate change or shed light on the harsh reality of global free trade, where exploited individuals produce goods under unfavorable conditions. According Suominen (2018), we need empathy and rethinking in many different ways when facing the demands brought by climate change. Art can evoke empathy. Individuals, for emotional or rational reasons, can take information so seriously that it fundamentally changes their behaviour. Art can potentially bring about such trans-

formative changes. Scholars Maike Sippel, George Marshall, and Chris Shaw (2022) discuss strategies for promoting climate action within groups where it is yet to be the dominant behaviour. They emphasise the effectiveness of showcasing real-life examples of individuals changing their behaviour, especially if those individuals are influential. From my understanding, socially engaged art, especially conversational art, can be a tool that promotes people's mental well-being during climate change. We need to have conversations, be heard, and explore possibilities for action.

4.8. Anthropocene and Posthumanism

Thirty years ago, philosopher Leena Vilkka (1996) explored the concept of deep ecology, explaining that this term implies that the Earth is not solely for human benefit, but that natural resources and habitats belong to all forms of life. Similarly, Finnish writer and fisher Pentti Linkola asserts that nature, with its diversity, holds far greater significance than any single human being (Linkola, 1971; Niemelä, 2024). This perspective aligns with the contemporary discussion of posthumanism. Posthumanism challenges the traditional humanist view that human beings are the central or most important entities in the universe. It questions the notion of fixed human nature and the belief that humans are fundamentally separate from the natural world or non-human entities. Human activities have breached planetary boundaries, causing significant harm to the planet. Posthumanist thinking moves away from human-centred perspectives, recognizing the lives of other species as equally, if not more, important than human life. Just as the extinction of the dinosaurs marked the end of an era, humanity's impact on Earth may similarly lead to a new epoch. Mäki (2017) presents posthumanism as a moral response to climate change and the sixth extinction, advocates denying humanity's special status, and demands equality between species. However, he notes that widespread support for posthumanism is currently limited because most prioritise human interests over broader ethical considerations.

The term *Anthropocene* refers to the current geological epoch characterised by a significant human impact on Earth's geology and ecosystems, including climate change and mass extinction events. The Anthropocene factor has been a central theme in my ISEAS research. When selecting topics for ISEAS, I have prioritised themes that resonate with me personally, as seen in ISEAS 2022, with the theme of food. Food production is one of the biggest causes of climate change. While plant-based protein products are available in grocery stores in many Western countries, they create

a fake feeling of change in the food habits of all people; global meat consumption is rising significantly, particularly in Asian countries, the USA, and Brazil (Our World in Data, 2021). In 2000, paleoecologist Eugene Stoermer informally used the term *Anthropocene*, which gained academic prominence when Nobel Prize-winning scientist Paul Crutzen endorsed it. They argued that the Holocene era had ended, marking the start of a new geological epoch shaped by human actions. The beginnings of the Anthropocene are debated, with proposed starting points ranging from the rise of agriculture to industrialization or the 1945 Trinity nuclear test. Crutzen and Stoermer suggested that the late 18th century, linked to the Industrial Revolution, marked a significant turning point (Nixon, 2018). This perspective suggests that, over the past 225 years, humans have significantly impacted Earth's geological and biological systems, intensifying since the Great Acceleration after 1945. Changes include altering carbon and nitrogen cycles, causing extinctions, creating radionuclides and plastics, building lasting megacities, and reshaping ecosystems globally. Humans and domesticated animals now outweigh wild creatures in terrestrial life, and global temperatures have risen rapidly. The long-term effects of the Anthropocene on the fossil record raise questions about the signals these changes will leave (Demos, 2017; Hohti et al., 2022; Nixon, 2018). In light of the urgent crises of the Anthropocene, there is heightened emphasis on the aspiration to address them swiftly with corrective actions. The thinking that precipitated and perpetuated the crisis is deeply ingrained in our technologies, practices, and relationships. Learning these entrenched ways of doing things is a complex process, akin to searching for treasures without a foolproof method. Some critical voices in the discussion underscore the necessity of generating new concepts to navigate and address these challenges (Hohti et al., 2022). According to Professor Emeritus Arto Mustajoki, University of Helsinki and Head of National Open Science in Finland Henriikka Mustajoki (2017), climate change challenges can be overcome with multidisciplinary cooperation. In the past decade, activist art has gained prominence in inspiring societal change, particularly addressing issues like global climate change. While scientific consensus on the anthropogenic causes of climate change is established, efforts to communicate these concerns and engage the public face challenges. These challenges include the complexity of climate change, the need for long-term planning, and the global inequality of its impacts. Most communication campaigns have been information-focused, assuming that educating people about risks would drive action. However, some argue that a purely fact-based approach may not be sufficient for behavioural change. The emergence of artists engaging with climate

change issues presents an alternative, creative avenue for fostering public awareness and engagement (Sommer & Klöckner, 2021).

Mäki (2017) sees climate change also as a positive opportunity for humanity. He suggests that climate change could gently guide humanity to change direction, avoiding worse scenarios. This change includes preventing major disasters and offers the potential for a more meaningful life and increased happiness. He suggests that adapting values and lifestyles due to climate change might improve quality of life, possibly resulting in greater happiness than a trajectory of unchecked economic growth, pollution, and overconsumption of natural resources (Mäki, 2017).

Despite my rather pessimistic outlook on the current state of the world, a profound belief in miracles serves as a wellspring of strength within me. In contemplating the future, I am drawn to the optimistic perspectives of transhumanists who envision a transformative role for artificial intelligence and computers (Ross, 2019) as well as people's will to go back to a simple way of living. The idea that these technological advancements could alter our consumption patterns and prevent us from exceeding planetary boundaries offers a glimmer of hope. Perhaps Mäki's hopeful vision regarding the positive changes within the Anthropocene might also prove to be true.

In considering these possibilities, I entertain the notion that over the next 50 years, I may witness a remarkable transformation—a shift toward a more sustainable and harmonious relationship between humanity and the planet. The prospect of observing such positive developments inspires a sense of wonder and anticipation, fostering a hopeful mindset that transcends the current challenges our world faces.

4.9. Summary of the Key Insights

My research intricately weaves together Kester's dialogical aesthetics, conversational art, and socially engaged art within the unique context of ISEAS, exploring art's potential as a catalyst for dialogue, cooperation, and positive social change. Examining conversational art within the broader ethical context of art and science collaboration enhances the understanding of contemporary art practices and their impact on communities.

ISEAS operates at the intersection of community art and socially engaged art, promoting artistic interventions for community benefit and meaningful conversations. Bishop's (2012) redefinition of art roles highlights artists as collaborators, situations as ongoing projects, and audiences as co-producers. Kwon (2002) underscores the

importance of artists working as temporary communities, raising questions about community identification and collaboration dynamics.

The collaborative synergy between art and science is presented as a valuable approach to tackling contemporary challenges, emphasizing the concept of a third space between art and science. According to Kester (2004), conversational art stands out as a primary theory guiding exploration, highlighting the importance of dialogue in shaping artistic practices. Challenges in assessing the outcomes of such collaborations are acknowledged, particularly in evaluating personal learning and experiences.

Reflecting on experiences curating ISEAS, the ease of involving artists compared to natural scientists is noted. The importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in fostering innovation, especially in the context of climate change, is underscored. By advocating for a balance between art and science, this research recognises the necessity of multidisciplinary cooperation to address future challenges effectively.

Climate anxiety, a central theme, refers to the emotional distress individuals experience in response to the profound environmental challenges of climate change. It encompasses feelings of unease, fear, and helplessness, often stemming from an awareness of the severe consequences of climate-related issues and the struggle to reconcile this anxiety with ingrained behaviours, particularly in the face of privilege.

The Anthropocene and posthumanism are concepts that aid the understanding of the current state of the world, especially the effects of human activity on the planet. Posthumanist thinking advocates for a departure from human-centric perspectives, promoting equality between species and considering climate change and the sixth extinction as moral concerns. Acknowledging the urgency to address Anthropocene crises, my research recognises the challenges ingrained in existing technologies and practices. It touches on the role of art in addressing climate change, presenting an alternative to purely information-focused communication, and considers Mäki's perspective on climate change as a positive opportunity for meaningful change and enhanced happiness.

5. Methodology as Creative Inquiry: Arts-Based, Artistic and Socially Engaged Research in ISEAS

Art, by its very nature, is a relatively new field of research that foregrounds emotional affect, the embodied dimensions of human experience, and, increasingly in the age of climate change, the inclusion of non-human nature. These dimensions are also central to this study. My research has been guided primarily by intuition and by the notion that artistic processes are inherently unpredictable. This aligns with a phenomenological approach, where pre-defined ideas must be set aside in order to trust the unfolding process of art itself.

But how, methodologically, can I ensure that this research remains reliable?

Firstly, I have been personally and continuously present at every ISEAS event. I have designed the programme, secured funding, curated the selection of artists, researchers, and communities, cooked meals, cleaned up, built exhibitions, written diary and collected feedback. My reflective practices — including journalling, discussions with peers and participants, and ongoing documentation — support transparency and help mitigate personal bias.

ISEAS is not a singular event, but a sustained, evolving research process. Since 2017, the event has been organised annually, with the most recent iteration taking place in 2024. From a research perspective, this long-term development constitutes a form of practice-based, developmental inquiry. Each year's experiences feed into the next, allowing for a coherent multi-methodological integration of diverse materials: artworks, interviews, observations, reflective writing, and co-created outputs.

Given that arts-based research challenges traditional notions of reliability due to its emergent and subjective character, it becomes essential to define key concepts within this particular artistic and participatory context.

Triangulation is achieved through the layering of multiple perspectives and data types — from visual and performative works to spoken reflections and community interactions. Where interpretations have diverged, these have been made visible through critical dialogue and collaborative reflection, supporting convergence and shared understanding. ISEAS is inherently a participatory and community-oriented project. It

brings together a wide range of actors — artists, researchers and local residents — each contributing different forms of knowledge. In such a setting, participatory reliability demands a careful negotiation of ethical inclusivity and collective knowledge production. Agreement on how reliability and representation are handled is not imposed, but developed in dialogue with stakeholders. This commitment to co-constructed rigour significantly strengthens the trustworthiness of the research.

As a platform for arts-based and artistic research, ISEAS plays a crucial role in developing new collegial approaches to socially critical and environmentally engaged art. My development research in ISEAS is committed to advancing conversational art within socially engaged art. Each iteration of ISEAS is a focused sub-study that evolves through reflecting on past knowledge, analyzing previous events, and shaping subsequent goals. Documentation from ISEAS, including video and photo records, discussions, research diaries, participation logs, art productions, and exhibitions, has created a rich repository of research material. My analysis explores the significance of interactions, encounters, and communities arising from collective artworks. The overarching goal is to develop a deeper understanding of the conversation and the local and global importance of interdisciplinary collaboration resulting from local interventions.

The annual ISEAS serves as the focal point for my research activities, involving reflective analysis, collaborative article writing, and the emergence of new research interests. In addition to artistic outputs, ISEAS research encompasses participants' collective perceptions and conversation-based interpretations gathered through observation, photo documents, interviews, mentoring sessions, and feedback discussions.

My primary focus lies in socially engaged art productions and interpretations provided by participants, including artists and community members, regarding phenomena stemming from ISEAS. Observations, experiences, and reflections with the ISEAS mentor and members contribute to a nuanced understanding of my research. This understanding is further developed and supported by active participation and comprehensive documentation through photographs, video recordings, and various materials. In socially engaged art, acknowledging diverse perspectives is essential for progress. ISEAS promotes collective work, contributing to the evolution of innovative thinking within the community and offering new ideas and viewpoints.

The term *arts-based research* (ABR) originated from Elliot Eisner (Barone & Eisner, 2012) in 1993 at Stanford University to help scholars understand what research guided by art might look like. American sociologist Patricia Leavy (2017) states that research design builds a structure or plan for the research. Leavy notes that the main

questions of building the methodologies are "What do we want to achieve? and How do we execute that goal?" (Leavy, 2017, p. VII). Shaun McNiff, one of the most prominent scholars of arts-based research, writes in his book *Art-Based Research* (1998):

> Does the language of inquiry correspond to the expression of the phenomena being studied? If the object of research is art, do we then conduct inquiries within the language of the arts? Can I study an artistic object or the processes of creation through language and conceptual frameworks that do not resonate with their beings? (McNiff, 1998, p. 40)

McNiff's emphasis on finding the right research method resonates in the context of ISEAS, where experimentation and new ways of working in collegially applied art are implemented.

ISEAS embodies a community-driven process in which research questions gain precision as the activity unfolds. In arts-based research, development work and research are intricately intertwined. Leavy (2015) contends that the researcher's role, traditionally detached and concealed from the research object, takes on an opposite dynamic in arts-based research. Here, the researcher becomes an integral part of the research, serving as a creator and experiencer alongside the audience (Leavy, 2015). This dynamic mirrors the essence of ISEAS, where I am intricately woven into every moment through my personal efforts and presence. Greenwood (2012) acknowledges that while ABR is relatively new in the academic field, it aligns with artists' historical working methods. Across different epochs, artists have used their works to reflect and challenge societal norms, paving the way for new perspectives. Art as activism boasts a rich historical legacy. Dr. Mira Kallio (2008) emphasises that in ABR, the artistic component transcends mere intervention; the artwork plays a crucial role in generating research information. Kallio (2008) envisions the starting point of arts-based research as a nuanced understanding of people in changing contexts, unveiling tacit information through artistic methods. She underscores the inherent nature of arts-based research in elucidating information about the surrounding reality and its social and interactive significance.

Since I am an artist by training, it is self-evident when I research my own art and artistic practice that artistic research and ABR are my ways of conducting research. It has always been clear to me that I believe in the possibility of art to open and discover something to which words and numbers cannot provide the answer. Leavy (2017)

confirms that art-based methodology is based on practice and relies on generative processes in which art is studied. Still, arts-based methodology is most commonly used when the purpose is to investigate, describe, awaken, provoke, or shock. My research deals with ISEAS's activities as a conversational art developer and how art can be used to communicate and take a stand on environmental threats, as Leavy argues (i.e., artworks as a methodology).

Muratovski (2016) suggests that one of the most challenging aspects for novice researchers is grasping the methodology, the application of methods, and understanding their distinctions. While perusing his book *Research for Designers: A Guide to Methods and Practice*, his explanation significantly enhanced my comprehension: "A simple way to look at this is to think of methods as 'tools and methodology as a toolbox'" (Muratovski, 2016, p. 34). Muratovski elaborates on this concept with examples; the tools required for plumbing or carpentry differ, although some tools may overlap, whereas others are specific and necessary for particular tasks. As a socially engaged artist navigating between art and science and conducting research through art, it is evident that most of my tools are arts-based. However, I also conduct interviews, make observations, and administer feedback surveys. Therefore, as Muratovski suggests, some of my methods

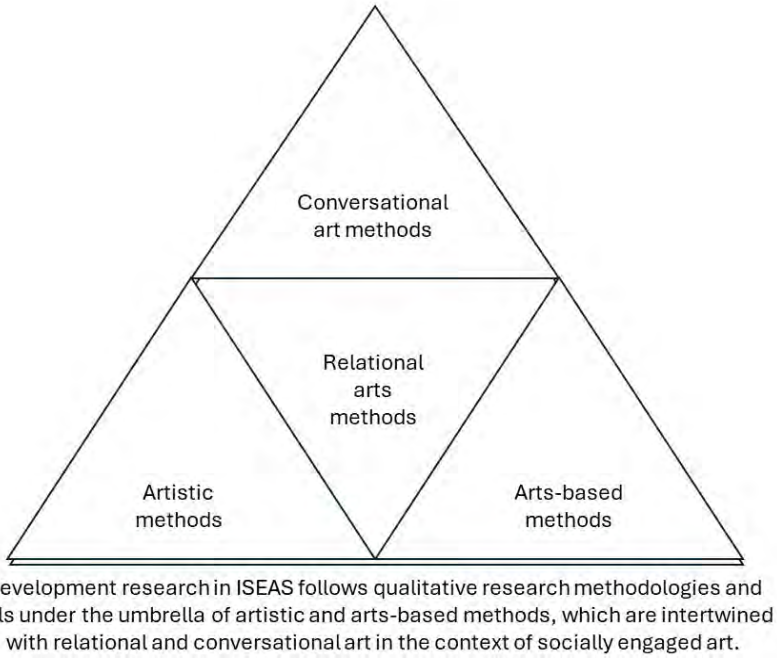


Figure 10. Example of Methods Used in ISEAS. Image: Katja Juhola, 2024.

are common to various qualitative research domains, while others originate distinctly from the tools (methods) inherent in art.

Varto (2017) discusses the significance of spotlighting and illumination emphasizing how the direction of light influences the way phenomena are perceived. This concept is reflected in my research at ISEAS, where information is gathered through artistic practices. Depending on the perspective one chooses to highlight—much like the angle of light—different aspects of the research can be illuminated, revealing various contexts. At the same time, the question is precisely about nurturing my episteme. When collaborating with other researchers and artists, it is important to understand my artistic methods and goals. What question do I want lighting for with these methods? Varto also suggests that the presentation of different art forms provides different lighting. From the very beginning, ISEAS has involved cross-pollination and cooperation between different arts and natural sciences. This has been appropriate, but at the same time, the results have always been unpredictable for me. My methods relate to the desire of creative people from different fields to cooperate and develop something new in communities. Varto (2017) states, "Artistic activity is recognizable through its creators" (p. 78). By this, he means the same thing that I implement curatorially at ISEAS. The methods always arise from the individual and depend on the individual's artwork. Even though ISEAS has been implemented many times with a similar formula, the methods always depend on the artists that year and their skills. All ISEAS interventions have been different. Varto also says that anything can be a method of art when the artist adopts it. This has also been realised in ISEAS in many different ways. At ISEAS, art is displayed comprehensively—from sauna boards to dance and from yoga and poetry to painting. At ISEAS, the range of artistic methods is rich when artists and researchers from many fields have been invited and when they are tied together by shared meals, housing, and small-group community art.

5.1. Interdisciplinary Approaches to Conversational Art, Collaboration, and Community-Driven Research

Greenwood (2019) notes that ABR is growing because more people realise that life experiences involve multiple senses, are intricate, and connect in complex ways to time, space, ideologies, and relationships. Traditional research methods, focusing on the intellect, language, and linear time, are increasingly seen as limiting in capturing the richness of knowledge and experience (Greenwood, 2019).

According to Varto (2017), in artistic activity, the creator is intimately connected to the phenomenon and is concerned with immediate meanings. The works instantly affect the recipient through the senses, enabling a change in the recipient's attitude toward the world. The person is not only a thinker; we are inherently physical and sensory beings, constantly using our senses to receive information and stimuli from the world around us. We must recognise these aspects. Particularly in artistic activities, sensuality and physicality take centre stage. Varto (2017) suggests that physicality and sensuality are complex phenomena, but crucially, they form the core of art research. Therefore, accurately naming and understanding their role in art is paramount. In ISEAS practice, various art forms and diverse expressions of physicality and senses are pivotal to the work. The entirety created through these elements highlights the objectives of the respective event.

ABR differs from traditional art research in terms of educational methods, with growth and utility being central. In ABR, the focus is on fostering change or development, with outcomes assessed based on their usefulness (Leavy, 2015, 2017, 2019). This contrasts with art research, which may not always prioritize these aspects. Additionally, arts-based methods can be used purely for the purpose of collecting research data (Vist, 2016). Mäki (2017) states that research is a systematic pursuit of knowledge. Mäki believes this is also true for artistic research, but he contends that it is not the whole truth. He states that research is artistic research when the artworks are part of the research process and results (i.e., if, in addition to the scientific meanings of the artworks created as research results, the artistic quality is also seen as significant (Mäki, 2017). In ISEAS, it is a question of both in addition to the tradition of qualitative research, however, in such a way that the deeper essence of the research is in the traditions of activism art and socially engaged art, specifically in an empathetic approach.

Muratovski (2016) sees the world changing due to population growth. He identifies global terrorism, wars, natural disasters, epidemics, and many other critical uncertainties as essential problems in the future. According to him, problems like these require unusual approaches. In my opinion, the methods used in ISEAS to increase empathy are models that generate creative solutions to better understand global situations. Muratovski (2016) continues by claiming that this requires the cooperation of different disciplines; in this case, the results are not only aesthetically beautiful works of art, but also meaningful acts that effect social changes. Since ISEAS's operation is multilayered, and artistic work and research take place on many different levels, it is also understandable that my research methods are determined accordingly (Figure 10).

The research methods include the following mixed methods:

Qualitative methods:

- Observation
- Participation
- Research diary
- Inquiries/feedback
- Reflection together during and after the event
- Photography
- Video recording.

Arts-based methods emphasise the process of creation as a means of inquiry:

- Drawing
- Painting
- Joint painting
- Dancing
- Clay work, sculpture
- Crafting
- Installations
- Photography
- Video recording
- Performance art.

Artistic methods encompass various approaches, techniques, and processes:

- Video artworks
- Photographs
- Paintings
- Installations
- Audio works
- Performance
- Clay work, sculpture.

Socially engaged art methods focus on social interactions and the relationships they foster, bridging artistic methods and arts-based methods:

- Yoga

- Sauna
- Forest walks
- Cooking together
- Eating together
- Physical exercises
- Creating art workshops together for community members
- Making art with people.

Conversational art methods are artistic approaches that prioritize dialogue, exchange, and communication as central elements. They occur somewhere between artistic methods and arts-based methods and include activities designed to foster interaction and shared experiences:

- Guided conversations
- Eating together
- Joint painting
- Cooking together
- Dancing together
- Having a sauna together
- Doing yoga together.

Within ISEAS, a variety of methods are employed across different contexts, often overlapping. However, to provide clarity and structure to my research, I delineate two distinct approaches. First, I generate research through the publication of articles stemming from each ISEAS event, where my methods are derived directly from specific occurrences within ISEAS. Another avenue of research stems from the ISEAS art exhibitions, such as the *Conversation* exhibition held at the Rovaniemi Art Museum in 2021 and the *Our Shared Food* exhibition at the Lapua Art Museum from 2023 to 2024. These exhibitions serve as independent research outputs and are integral to my dissertation. Here, the focus is on the artistic methodologies employed by each participating artist, which collectively shape the composition of the entire exhibition. Nevertheless, the entirety of the exhibition is subject to research evaluation, with myself serving as curator for both exhibitions. I specifically aimed for the artworks to serve as artistic analyses of ISEAS activities, crafted using artistic methodologies.

5.2. What Does Arts-Based Analysis Mean?

Feminist new materialist thought offers a particularly meaningful and generative lens for analysing participatory, arts-based work. In this research, it has supported a deeper understanding of how knowledge and affect emerge through embodied artistic activity, material engagement, and shared spatial experiences. Drawing on American feminist theorist and physicist Karen Barad's (2007) concept of *intra-action*, I interpret the moments of co-creation not as exchanges between distinct individuals and objects, but as dynamic processes where participants, environments, and materials mutually shape one another.

American political theorist and philosopher Jane Bennett's (2010) idea of *vibrant matter* further enriches this analysis, illuminating how materials such as soil, clay, forest, trees, objects, or locally harvested food acted not only as tools or symbols but as active participants. These materials carried affective charge and conceptual weight—guiding the emotional tone of the workshops and performances, and at times even redirecting conversations and outcomes.

By drawing on neomaterialist perspectives, I am able to articulate how artistic knowledge production occurred through entangled material-discursive-affective relations. This approach makes visible the vital role of more-than-human elements in shaping both the process and meaning of the work. As such, it aligns closely with the values and practices of socially and environmentally engaged art, where listening to materials, environments, and affect is central.

ABR represents a relatively new frontier within qualitative research. Consequently, the analysis of arts-based data is an emerging field. To ensure research reliability, ABR embraces various qualitative analysis methods. Given the diverse artistic methods used in collecting data, analysis methods likewise vary, offering researchers a range of options. Professor James Haywood Rolling Jr (2013) highlights that when examining instances of arts-based activity, a more intricate understanding of the past, alongside a heightened sense of community and regional identity, emerges compared to traditional qualitative methods.

Greenwood (2019) argues, "Artists themselves understand through their practice that art is way of coming to *know* the world and of presenting that knowing, emergent and shifting though it may be, to others. Sometimes the process of *coming to know* takes the form of social analysis." (para. 9). I mirror Greenwood's proposal for phenomenological thinking when participating in the ISEAS symposium, which

is based on doing together and not on a pre-planned concept, but on creating in the moment and giving birth to something new collegially. Firstly, *phenomenological reflection* involves writing research journals, reflecting on events, and revisiting emotionally or experientially significant moments. I have often recorded my own reflections on my phone in the evenings — recounting how the day went, what we did, and what observations I made. I have listened to these recordings while writing research articles, and these reflections serve as both documentation and interpretation.

Secondly, *collaborative dialogue* is central: I analyse events and artworks with fellow researchers, artists, and community members through shared conversations, feedback discussions, and peer commentary — often taking place around the dinner table each evening during ISEAS. I have also recorded these conversations, which has enabled me to return to them while writing research articles. This aligns with Greenwood's concept of socially engaged collaborative analysis.

We can analyse the event in light of what happened and how we experienced it due to our presence. Greenwood (2019) further presents the collaborative analysis method, whereby these collectively experienced moments undergo joint analysis. In my research on ISEAS, this socially engaged creative process extends to writing research articles and analyzing the experience together. Rich documentary material plays a key role in the analysis of experiences and events. Rewatching video recordings about all the sub-teams deepened my understanding. As a third strategy, I employ theory-informed interpretation, beginning with a conceptual framework and returning to it as new insights emerge. For example, I draw on concepts such as socially engaged art, third space, conversational art, relational aesthetics, and site-specificity when interpreting artistic outcomes and interactions in the ISEAS projects. However, my significant research analysis has been the feedback I received after the events from community members, artists, and natural scientists who participated and created arts-based activities. This feedback has been important confirmation for the rest of the analysis that has emerged from the research project.

Typically, I commence my research from a theoretical standpoint, exploring existing literature on the topic and identifying the theoretical framework underpinning the event (Bishop, 2012; Collins & Stockton, 2018; Kester, 2004; Kwon, 2004). Theoretical framework analysis forms an integral part of qualitative research, facilitating the interpretation of the collected data. When crafting research articles, contextualization is paramount. I consider the broader landscape of research in the same field, enabling comparisons with existing studies. Consequently, my findings may offer novel insights

grounded in existing theory, extending or challenging current perspectives. As Christopher Collins and Carrie Stockton (2018) suggest, recognizing and centralizing a theory facilitates the identification of presuppositions and epistemological connections, guiding systematic exploration of divergences from anticipated outcomes.

Artistic analysis represents a unique, personal encounter for each artist contributing to exhibitions such as *Conversations* at the Rovaniemi Art Museum or *Our Shared Food* at the Lapua Art Museum. As a curator, I acknowledge the inherent individuality of each artist, recognizing that their personal histories and experiences inevitably influence their final artistic output. While I strive to be mindful of the works presented in exhibitions, I intentionally avoid exerting excessive control. In the 2021 ISEAS, the emphasis was on collaborative design and artwork creation. Working closely with an ISEAS mentor, the artists collectively planned their contributions, fostering a sense of shared creativity. In contrast, the Lapua Art Museum exhibition featured predominantly individual artistic analyses, with minimal collaborative planning during the ISEAS meetings leading up to the event. The arts-based analysis process in this research is grounded in a commitment to artistic work, experiential reflection, dialogue, and theoretical insight. These modes of interpretation complement one another and help to support the trustworthiness of the findings within an emergent, participatory research context.

6. The Ethics of Socially Engaged Art

The ethics of socially engaged art require reflection on assumptions about knowledge, values, and actions, particularly in academic collaborations between art and science. This involves critically examining these aspects when addressing contemporary issues through interdisciplinary practices. In socially engaged art, art takes place among people. Thompson (2012, 2015) notes that while some artists use materials like clay or colors, socially engaged artists work with people as their medium. This dimension requires deep ethical consideration. As ISEAS is my work of art, as well as the focus of my doctoral study, I bear a profound responsibility for the socially engaged art collaboratively created during ISEAS.

Professor Raphael Vella and artist Margerita Pulè (2022) highlight the ethical responsibility of socially engaged artists to amplify the voices of those living on the margins. They argue that these practices frequently conflict with ethical considerations, even with positive intentions of artists or commissioning bodies. During societal crises and overlooked discrimination, artists and stakeholders encounter dilemmas involving power imbalances, responsibility, political agendas, and artistic quality (Vella & Pulè, 2022). Although ISEAS activities have taken place with many groups often considered marginalised — including older adults, individuals with special needs, mental health rehabilitation clients, and farmers — I have never encountered a situation where participants felt exploited by the artists involved. On the contrary, participants have consistently expressed enthusiasm and pride in the outcomes, especially when their contributions were presented in art exhibitions.

Nevertheless, I consider this kind of socially engaged practice to exist on ethically slippery ground. It is therefore essential that the artist or artistic team remains highly attentive to ensuring that participants never feel instrumentalised or used in the process.

According to Kwon (2002),

> This is not to say that artists and community groups are innocent pawns in a conspiracy devised exclusively by curators and art institutions. The important fact is that, within the community-based art context, the interaction between an artist and a given community group is not based on a direct, unmediated

> relationship. Instead, it is circumscribed within a more complex network of motivations, expectations, and projections among all involved. (p. 141)

Kantonen (2005) continues by observing that in early community art, art institutions and artists' efforts to promote their own position were hidden in rhetoric emphasizing community problems. Community art was understood as an altruistic activity and equated with charity. It was not publicly discussed that the operation of art institutions presenting community art and the careers of community artists depended on the existence of minorities and the work contributions of minority representatives. Ethical problems hidden in charity talk have recently been brought to light (Kantonen, 2005, 2010). Professor Hal Foster (1995; see also Kwon, 2002) criticizes how contemporary art adopts strategies from anthropology and discusses collaboration between the artist and the local community. They savor the outsideness of the artist and the institution's powers, making local participation in the artist's representation possible. Foster's central concern is the artist's authority not being questioned and the transformation of everyday life into an anthropological exhibition (Foster, 1995).

According to Kantonen (2005), ethical questions in community art are related to the entire project process—from planning to presentation and possible monitoring. Ethical questions concern the relationship between the artist and the work of art to the group or community involved in the production of the work and the relationship with other collaborators and the art world. It is about how artists politically commit to pursuing something they consider socially essential and how they consider the communal and individual aspirations of their collaborators (Kantonen, 2005). With this idea, Kantonen also summarizes the layered nature of ISEAS's activities and how diverse activities and ethical considerations are involved in making socially engaged art.

Mustajoki and Mustajoki (2017) advocate a stakeholder perspective that prioritizes relationships in ethical decision-making. This approach underscores the importance of connections between individuals, viewing decision-makers as interdependent entities within a context. Grounded in the values of harmony and collaboration, it assesses harm and benefit by considering the impact of decisions on a relationship's well-being. The ethics-of-care framework, integrated through guided dialogue, allows for scrutinizing ethical decisions without assuming an objective and distant stance. This framework recognizes human relationships and emotions as valid ethical considerations (Mustajoki & Mustajoki, 2017). ISEAS operations also require many different levels

of ethical review. It is not clear that all of us participants would agree on things, and even though we have spent many hours together thinking about the ethical rules of ISEAS work, situations can still escalate into a dispute.

According to Dr. Mari Martin (2021), studies rarely consider the activities of a multidisciplinary group of artists when all members come from different fields of art, from different cultural backgrounds, are already unknown to each other, and are at different points in their careers. When the presence of natural scientists is added to this mix, when everyone must work together collaboratively, and yet everyone has a different understanding of the event and different ways of working, things can be challenging.

Kantonen (2005) highlights the challenges of multicultural, socially engaged art projects in which the artists' work is placed in a broader cultural and political context. I have organised ISEAS event seven times now, and there have been disputes in three of them. In two of the three instances, the dispute escalated only after the ISEAS event, while one occurred during the ISEAS event. Each dispute has been a personal failure for me and has caused me to feel that the whole event has been derailed. However, I have been able to distance myself and understand that other adults' behaviour cannot be my responsibility. Each person is primarily responsible for their actions. ISEAS is a place that has always given birth to Bhabha's Third Space (Rutherford, 1990), enabling the creation of beautiful works of art and human encounters. Even though disputes have been overwhelming for me, ISEAS has been a beautiful and generative situation for most participants. Many participants were probably tired after the event. Fatigue is natural when learning happens. ISEAS is, to the greatest extent, a learning situation for all participants. Various discussions are fruitful and essential for the success of ISEAS, but they are also very thought-provoking and, therefore, tiring. ISEAS is also a very camp-like entity where people who do not know each other, in addition to working together to promote a common goal of creating something new, also live more or less camp-like, sharing the same room with one other or more participants.

Issues related to ethics in academic and artistic collaborations are significant, particularly when participants come from diverse fields, cultures, and backgrounds. It is essential to recognize that ethical perspectives can vary widely. What may seem obvious to one person might be entirely new or unconsidered by another. Therefore, the necessity of ethical discussions must be understood and addressed at the most fundamental level. Mustajoki and Mustajoki have written a book, *A New Approach to Research Ethics* (2017), in which they point out that "Egocentric patterns are always present in human behaviour. They develop into a problem when they override ethi-

cally grounded choices" (p. 217). From their perspective, top-notch research triggers competitive scenarios where universities strive to draw in the most accomplished researchers. However, this heightened competition potentially threatens adherence to shared standards. Competitive pressures reshape the researcher's roles and juxtapose them with other research values, such as collaboration and transparency. To navigate this evolving competitive landscape, it becomes imperative to establish new regulations, meticulously implement existing guidelines, and foster a robust commitment to cultivating an ethical research environment. (Mustajoki & Mustajoki, 2017).

An altruistic attitude is not required of the artist, but they are required to highlight their ties to art institutions on the one hand and to their collaborators on the other. According to my experience, these concerns remain highly relevant, particularly when discussing the artist–researcher. Universities' publication requirements have led to texts being produced at an assembly-line pace, which has, in some cases, resulted in ethically questionable practices. As the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity [TENK] (2024) states, "The survey indicates that career pressures, competition for funding and indifferent attitudes pose a threat to good research practices and research integrity" (para. 2).

6.1. Research Ethics

At ISEAS, the most important thing is gaining community members' trust and nurturing it. I have been very open and honest in my research and artistic work at ISEAS while inviting artists, scientists, and community members. I have always explained what I do and why I make art and conduct research as I have planned. With the community members curated for ISEAS, I have always carefully clarified that it is about my dissertation research and that everything created can be shown in art exhibitions. I have always included a video documentary about ISEAS, where the socially engaged art process has come to the fore. I have carefully made all of this known to the community members who will be participating, as well as the fact that I am writing and publishing research articles about the event and that these publications will include the ISEAS photographer's works. I have asked all participating community members for written research permission and made it known that their permission can be revoked at any time. I have also asked the parents of minors for research permits as well as photography and video recording permits. I have made these same things known to the artists and natural scientists who came along.

Research ethics ensure that research is carried out in an ethically sustainable manner. Key principles include the following:

> The research follows the principles that are endorsed by the research community, that is, integrity, meticulousness, and accuracy in conducting research, and in recording, presenting, and evaluating the research results. (Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta, 2023 para. 13)

> The researcher takes due account of the work and achievements of other researchers by respecting their work, citing their publications appropriately, and by giving their achievements the credit and weight they deserve in carrying out the researcher's own research and publishing its results. (Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta, 2023 para. 15)

> Before beginning the research or recruiting the researchers, all parties within the research project or team (the employer, the principal investigator, and the team members) agree on the researchers' rights, responsibilities, and obligations, principles concerning authorship, and questions concerning archiving and accessing the data. These agreements may be further specified during the course of the research. (Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta, 2023 para. 18)

6. 2. How Is Socially Engaged Art Different from the Freedom of the Artist?

The ethics of socially engaged art focus on respecting participants and treating them fairly. The key principles are as follows:

- Respect for participants: Participants must be treated respectfully, and their opinions and experiences must be listened to.
- Voluntary participation: All participation must be voluntary and informed. Participants must be told about the project's goals, methods, and possible risks.
- Valuing the community: The cultural and social values of the community should be respected and their violation avoided.

In socially engaged art, it is especially important that the artist opens up as widely and honestly as possible about the situation in which the art was created and with whom to avoid people feeling that they have been exploited. Kantonen (2005) notes that community art cannot present just one idea because a work of art involves many factors. Community art balances extreme positions and seeks space between several polarities and variables. Community art is the art of compromise (Kantonen, 2005). As I have expressed at ISEAS, it involves working together, and art takes place on many different levels. Since works often arise directly from participants' input, it is important that the artwork clearly states who participated in its creation—the context of socially engaged art is thus honestly opened. It is not necessary to name all people, and especially regarding children, protecting their anonymity is also desirable. However, even then, it is necessary to state in which context and with whom the work was realized, such as the mentioned ISEAS year and possible community, as well as the other artists of the subteam. Kantonen (2005) states that when building exhibitions related to community art, everyone's expectations cannot be completely fulfilled simultaneously, and not all the works completed during the project can be presented equally. In my work, I have always tried to be equal towards all participating community members as well as the participating artists and scientists. Kantonen (2005) observes that questions related to the ownership of works are both legal and ethical questions.

The ethics of socially engaged art and collaborative creation extend beyond the commonly cited principle of artistic freedom, which is often deemed the most crucial aspect of art. We have to understand the difference between the freedom of art when we work in the free field of art as independent artists and the responsibility of socially engaged art when we work in an event where shared work is at the core. We work primarily in the circle of trust in a relationship with many different people. ISEAS can be compared to compost—while the creative process unfolds rapidly, it fosters a rich environment for growth and innovation. Success in collaborative work at ISEAS requires participants to set aside their egos, combine their knowledge in a collective effort, and agree upon and adhere to shared ethical principles. Artists and participating scientists are expected to create socially engaged collaborative art. Still, the artwork needs to respect my promise to community members that the works are honest artistic analyses of socially engaged ISEAS activities. Kantonen (2005) notes that in community art projects, different parties often have conflicting expectations, which vary within groups. As artists, we have to balance expectations related to the subject with expectations related to different ways of presentation.

In collaboration with my ISEAS mentor, philosopher, and all participating artists and scholars in 2020, we discussed ethical considerations relevant to our work within the ISEAS community. Each symposium member contributed their perspectives on these issues, which I documented in my notebook.

The discourse emphasized the connection between ethics and community rules, as well as the rights of individuals. Ethics were viewed as a moral compass guiding actions toward good or evil. Adherence to ethical and moral rules within natural science and general scientific practices was underscored for maintaining good scientific conduct.

- The importance of valuing diverse perspectives and fostering connections, shifting from an individualistic mindset to a collective "we" approach, was highlighted.
- Our discussions encompassed the ethical implications of nature experiences. The dignity and rights of the environment emerged as crucial considerations, questioning whether nature has inherent rights and exploring human responsibilities toward the living environment.
- The justification of artistic interventions and reflections on power dynamics across various levels and stakeholders, as well as creating equal spaces within the symposium and community collaborations were discussed.
- Mediation, the central theme of ISEAS, led to reflections on the challenge of maintaining objectivity and openness to opposing opinions.
- The ethics of using art materials and their environmental impacts were discussed.
- Considerations of bodily and spiritual knowledge arose when engaging with communities as Western science and arts representatives.
- The ethical right to intervene in local nature, culture, and community was justified through the lens of internationality within the village, embracing both locals with rich cultural backgrounds and international visitors. The discussion concluded by questioning the ethical responsibility tied to the global commons and the collective duty to act according to the best intentions.

One of the significant ethical challenges encountered in collaborative work revolves around the trust that everything will proceed smoothly, often stemming from an existing friendship and shared values, enthusiasm, and a like-minded approach with a new collaborator. This dynamic can be akin to the emergence of friendship or even

falling in love, where rational thinking may be eclipsed by excitement, a desire to help, and constant ideation and planning. When a conflict situation arises for one reason or another, this state of trust is threatened. When the parties cannot come to an agreement and do not want to understand each other's points of view, ethics are also at risk. Disputes between people very often escalate into slandering, belittling, and even causing harm to the other party. In such cases, it becomes evident that previously agreed-upon ethical ground rules can be overshadowed by other types of behaviour. We humans are very often guided by egocentric patterns arising from emotions, as Mustajoki and Mustajoki (2017) explain:

> Egocentrism, the power of personal experiences, together with the limited ability to accept otherness, has severe consequences for ethical reasoning. These complicate the ability to conceptualize situations where we find significant discrepancies in attitudes and values. For example, a person who is inclined to see things from the perspective of consequences will find it challenging to accept even the starting point of reasoning of a colleague who prefers ethics based on principles, and vice versa. (p. 221)

Mustajoki and Mustajoki (2017) continue by observing that interdisciplinary collaboration, involving researchers and, from my point of view, artists from diverse fields, challenges conventional thinking and encourages the appreciation of other perspectives. This collaboration often prompts a reevaluation of established notions of good research and accepted scientific methodology. Despite the difficulty in accepting alternative views, acknowledging the influence of self-centred patterns and personal experiences is crucial in decision-making. By recognizing the impact of personal experiences on understanding otherness and striving to avoid self-centred models, individuals can contribute positively to collective ethical dialogue. Understanding that everyone operates from a space of personal stories enhances the ability to transcend the boundaries of otherness and diminishes the influence of self-centred needs in decision-making.

6.3. Ownership of Works of Art

Egocentric patterns are inherent in human behaviour and become problematic when they override ethically grounded choices. Mustajoki and Mustajoki (2017) argue that acting unethically undermines a person's role as an expert. While clear violations of ac-

cepted rules driven by egocentric behaviour are easily identifiable, managing problems in guided ethical dialogue becomes more challenging when egocentric goals fuel the conversation. Recognizing this egocentric feature in oneself is the first step in addressing the issue. While it does not guarantee the avoidance of biased patterns, it allows for minimizing their impact and creating a positive space to foster alternative motivations for engaging in dialogue and addressing ethical concerns (Mustajoki & Mustajoki, 2017). When the artists are strangers to each other and come from different cultures to work at ISEAS, one of the points of my research is specifically how collective work affects the making of art. For the last two art museum exhibitions, the artists, either alone or in small groups, continued the artistic analysis of the socially engaged artistic process and artworks, making new works from their experiences at ISEAS. The works' information must clearly state with whom and in what context the works were created. The ownership of art is either with an individual artist or a group of artists.

> Copyright
> According to Finnish law on state officials (Suomen laki, 1961/404), specific procedures must be followed. Copyright law protects the rights of creators of various forms of creative work.
> § 1 Subject of Copyright (22.5.2015/607)
> The creator of a literary or artistic work holds the copyright to that work. This includes written or oral literary or descriptive performances, musical or dramatic compositions, films, photographs, visual art, architecture, crafts, or industrial design. Additionally, maps, technical drawings, graphical or three-dimensional works, and computer programs are also considered literary works under copyright law (24.3.1995/446, 11.1.1991/34). (Suomen laki, 1961/404, § 1)

6.4. Ethical Engagement with Minors in Socially Engaged Art: The ISEAS Case

Although ISEAS explores how conversational art can generate new ideas within the climate discourse, its socially engaged nature frequently involves human participants – including minors. This study does not treat children or young people as research subjects; rather, it analyses artistic processes that create collaborative "idea spaces". However, for professionals adopting similar models, ethically sound and context-sen-

sitive engagement with minors is essential. Drawing on the *Finnish Frameworks for Ethically Sustainable Youth Research* (Lagström, Pösö, Rutanen, & Vehkalahti, 2010), the following key recommendations are offered:

1. Legal Distinctions Matter

- Minors (under 18 years of age) require special protections under Finnish and EU legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national research ethics guidelines.
- **ISEAS practice**: Written consent was obtained from guardians, and verbal assent from all participants under the age of 18.

2. Awareness of Power Asymmetries

- Adults must actively decentre their authority in intergenerational settings.
- As articulated by Lagström et al. (2010), "Minority is a watershed" – both legally and ethically.
- **ISEAS implementation**: Prior to each workshop, joint ethical dialogue sessions were held in which artists and researchers working with children discussed topics such as climate anxiety and the role of hope in fostering engagement with the future. Young participants contributed actively to these discussions through a range of artistic media, ensuring equitable participation.

3. Agency Over Anonymity

- Professionals must carefully balance the need to protect minors with their right to participate meaningfully. Children and young people should be offered the opportunity to choose how they are represented.
- **Finnish guidance**: One-size-fits-all ethical models should be avoided; instead, ethical protocols must be tailored to suit specific contexts (Lagström et al., 2010; see also the 2009 national researcher survey).

Considerations Before Involving Minors in Art Projects

- Confirm local laws and age thresholds for minor participation
- Co-design rules and expectations with the young participants
- Clarify narrative and artefact ownership: Who controls the content and its use?
- Provide anonymity options: Allow minors to select pseudonyms or abstraction levels

- Assign an impartial advocate (not the artist or researcher) to monitor minors' well-being

ISEAS approach: Teachers are always present during workshops involving minors, as the activities take place within school settings. The responsibility for children's safety and well-being has consistently remained with the teachers, and all events have been co-developed with them. This has been a core requirement of the ISEAS model; artists are not expected to assume physical or ethical responsibility for the welfare of children.

6.5. Ethical and Copyright Challenges in Socially Engaged Art Research

In my research, there are ethical challenges at every stage. How can I ensure that the community members involved are participating voluntarily when the community is a school? For instance, I encountered a situation at ISEAS in which a child did not want to participate in an artistic activity. The teacher wanted participation to be compulsory, but the ISEAS artist said it was unnecessary. Later, the artist gently encouraged the withdrawn young student, who eventually chose to participate. According to the ethics of socially engaged art, participation in ISEAS art events must be voluntary for everyone, and this should be made clear when drafting contracts. No one should be forced to participate in artistic interventions. However, I understand the teacher's objective, as the ISEAS event is often integrated into the curriculum.

Copyright challenges can arise when an artist uses objects or ideas created by community members in their work without proper attribution. Participatory artist and researcher Johanna Lecklin (2018) describes her role as a concept developer, coordinator, producer, enabler of participation, and later processor of the recorded material, asserting, "I am the creator of the artwork" (Lecklin, 2018, p. 168). However, Lecklin acknowledges that things are never so straightforward. She has encountered situations where participants felt exploited and believed that they had lost their copyright in her work. Volunteers who contribute to participatory artworks with different artists around the world often remain anonymous. Such work is typically presented in art contexts, such as museums or galleries, under the artist's name, almost like a trademark (Lecklin, 2018).

When making agreements with community members, I am transparent, explaining that works created during the event could become part of an art museum exhibition.

One ISEAS artist believed that an installation built from elementary school students' crafts should have listed each child's name as an artist. My perspective was that the artist–researcher pair had artistically analysed the objects made by the children, and the installation was their artwork. However, the work information did mention the school's children and other ISEAS artists who contributed to the process. In terms of copyright, the creator and developer of the work's idea is the owner, but in socially engaged art, it is crucial to acknowledge the context in which the artifact was created. Thanks and credit should go to everyone who participated.

Regarding research ethics, challenges have arisen regarding who can present the ISEAS research project at international conferences or publish research articles. Since ISEAS is my dissertation project, I bear ethical responsibility for it. At the same time, ISEAS has invited researchers from other fields to participate. No problem arises when I am involved in writing research articles about ISEAS. However, when other researchers present ISEAS at conferences without informing me or publish papers about ISEAS without my permission or participation, it creates a slippery slope where the ethics of socially engaged art intersect with research ethics and copyright ethics. Can another researcher publish research about another researcher's event by citing their own experience and artistic copyright? "Research is meaningful only after it has been published," say Mustajoki and Mustajoki (2017, p. 63). They continue by saying that ethical issues in publishing arise from conflicts related to the reasons for publishing. Increased awareness of ethics involves understanding why people publish, how they define harm and benefit, articulating publishing goals, and envisioning the research community they aim to build. Addressing these questions serves as a starting point to enhance the strength and resilience of the research community through guided dialogue (Mustajoki & Mustajoki, 2017). This is a significant academic question: Who gets credit for the work?

It must be recognized and understood that as more people gather together, so the possibilities for problems also increase. Researcher Alexis Frasz (2020) provides guidance on mapping the mechanisms of problems and learning from problem situations: "Think about a time you experienced an ethical dilemma in your work: How did it feel? How did you deal with it? What did you learn from this experience about what matters to you?" (Frasz, 2020, p. 7)

In my view, an empathic approach towards nature, animals, plants, people, participants, fellow researchers, and oneself is key. Since it is almost impossible to avoid conflicts, it is important to develop one's own activities after conflict situations to avoid similar issues in the future. In my opinion, empathy is an important tool for this.

7. Introduction to Article and Exhibition Summaries

The following section presents summaries of the peer-reviewed research articles and curated exhibitions that form the core of this dissertation. Each of these contributions represents a distinct yet interconnected facet of the research, addressing the main themes of socially engaged art, art education, ecological sensitivity, and interdisciplinary dialogue between art and science. Together, they illustrate how the ISEAS model has evolved over time through practice-led inquiry, critical reflection, and collaborative experimentation. These summaries are intended not only to document the individual outputs, but also to clarify their role in shaping the overarching argument of the dissertation and advancing its central research questions

7.1. Article Summaries

ARTICLE I

Reference

Juhola, K., & Moldovan, S. (2020). *International art symposium: Educational places and power relations*. *Research in Arts and Education* (Special issue: Researching through artistic research and arts practices: Part I), 23–46. https://doi.org/10.54916/rae.142431

Summary

This article examines the structural elements and mechanisms of art symposia, focusing particularly on the reasons artists choose to participate. Art symposia serve as educational settings by facilitating skill development through international collaboration and by providing art educators with practical tools gained from knowledge exchange. Additionally, the authors explore power relations within symposia, highlighting the significance of dialogue and constructive engagement with clients, funders, and galleries.

The longstanding practice of bringing together artists has a rich historical backdrop, fostering both artistic growth and worldwide dissemination of creative concepts. Drawing on their extensive participation in international events, two artist–researchers

investigate the cultural exchanges that occur in art symposia. Through a range of arts-based research methods—such as discussions, interviews, collaborative art-making, and video documentation—they uncover gender-, culture-, and profession-related power imbalances. According to the authors, each artist retains a measure of power in these spaces; however, societal pressures, especially those affecting women, and different cultural upbringings for various genders shape the dynamics at play. Despite the presumption of equality among participants, the research reveals a notable absence of sexual diversity, echoing findings on gender preferences in face perception (Kranz & Ishai, 2006). While some assert that artistic circles function as gender-neutral spaces, commentators like Perel (n.d.) argue for more nuanced perspectives. Ultimately, the article posits that art has broader societal contributions beyond any single symposium's success, highlighting the pivotal role of art as a driver of social change, especially in underrepresented communities.

An analysis of interviews and video materials further underscores the notion that art symposia act as educational arenas. Artists often participate to refine their own techniques, broaden cultural awareness, and learn from an international network of peers. Many attending artists also teach, integrating newfound insights and methods into their pedagogical practice. In parallel, conversations surrounding and within symposia forge meaningful professional relationships with sponsors, galleries, and other collaborators. By positioning socially engaged art within these symposium contexts, the authors demonstrate how each gathering triggers a continual cycle of learning and teaching, whereby participants disseminate their experiences upon returning home and thereby enrich a shared cultural knowledge base. Consequently, this article affirms that art symposia operate as dynamic environments in which art fosters both individual and collective growth.

Relevance to the Thesis

This article provides essential background for my dissertation, illuminating the conceptual underpinnings that guided the creation of ISEAS. My previous participation in various art symposiums inspired me to establish ISEAS as a forum that integrates collaborative art-making, communal living, and environmental engagement.

Contribution

As the first author, I bore primary responsibility for structuring and finalizing the manuscript, while the research and knowledge were gathered collaboratively.

Reference

Juhola, K., Huhmarniemi, M., & Raatikainen, K. (2020). *Artistic research on dialogical aesthetics: Ethics of gathering*. *Ruukku: Studies in Artistic Research, 14* (Special issue: Ecologies of practice).
https://doi.org/10.22501/ruu.696352

Summary

This article examines the ethical considerations and decisions involved in organizing a symposium that brings together artists, environmental researchers, local community members, and children to investigate environmental themes. The authors discuss how cultural diversity, equality, dialogical practices, and environmental concerns guide such events, highlighting the importance of respectful engagement among participants and with non-human nature. In addition, the article addresses the ethical implications of documentation, data collection, and representation—particularly regarding children and other vulnerable groups.

In 2019, the symposium encompassed multiple interdisciplinary teams focusing on local issues tied to endangered meadows and wood pastures, freshwater pearl mussels, and the circular economy. Communal living and shared daily activities enabled ongoing dialogue, encouraging participants to engage in-depth with environmental topics and ethical reflections. The article details the freshwater pearl mussels sub-project, carried out by Juhola in collaboration with Tony White and Jouni Taskinen, while Huhmarniemi and Raatikainen contributed extensively to the event's ethical frameworks and methodological approaches. Employing a variety of dialogical strategies—presentations, group discussions, mentoring, reflections, and arts-based practices—this research illustrates how environmental science can merge with community perspectives and how participants can strive for coexistence with local ecosystems.

Relevance to the Thesis

Beyond highlighting ethical imperatives, this article is also noteworthy for clarifying how ISEAS was conceptualized and developed, revealing the central processes and principles of its conversational and community-focused model. By emphasizing ethics in socially engaged art–science collaborations, the authors show how dialogical art

practices can deepen community connections and promote substantive conversations about ecological challenges.

Contribution

My role in this article primarily involved developing the theoretical framework and describing the case study on the freshwater pearl mussels sub-project. In collaboration with my co-authors, I shaped the conceptual underpinnings of the research, mapped out the relevant literature, and integrated theoretical arguments to support our findings. I also contributed to detailing the methodological aspects of the project, ensuring coherence with the symposium's broader ethical and dialogical objectives.

ARTICLE III

Reference

Juhola, K., Griniuk, M., & Moldovan, S. (2022). *Empathy in digital participatory artwork*. In M. Sarantau & S. Miettinen (Eds.), *Empathy and business transformation* (pp. 44–59). Routledge.
https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003227557-5

Summary

This article explores the role of digital platforms in participatory art, focusing on how empathy can be fostered in virtual environments—an issue that became particularly relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic. The global health crisis placed unprecedented constraints on travel and in-person gatherings, compelling many artists and researchers to adopt remote communication technologies. The authors emphasize that online art experiences cannot entirely replace face-to-face interactions yet argue that certain prerequisites can enable effective and fulfilling virtual participation.

Through case studies within socially engaged and performance art, the research investigates the potential of digital channels to amplify empathy and interconnectedness in artistic contexts. Arts-based research was employed to evaluate how technology can stimulate creativity, confidence, and resilience. By examining digital empathy and the ways it manifests in participatory art events, the study identifies both challenges (such as technological limitations and the diminished immediacy of physical presence) and opportunities (such as extended reach and cost-effectiveness).

Data for the 'Power of Nature' (PoN) study were collected during the 2020 ISEAS event, where creative practitioners employed photography, video, live art demonstrations, and facilitated discussions to bridge physical distances. The goal of the PoN team in ISEAS 2020 was to foster a deeper connection to nature and expand dialogue and community between humans, non-human nature, and nature spirits. This project aimed to share spiritual knowledge and practices to help participants enhance, communicate, and strengthen the bonds between people and nature, based on the belief that nature holds a hidden spiritual dimension. It also demonstrates how arts-based methods can cultivate empathetic attitudes toward nature.

The findings highlight that structured group work and carefully designed online platforms can strengthen digital participation. In addition, the authors recommend fostering emotional empathy, playfulness, and user-friendly technological interfaces to maintain engagement and enhance the creative process. Ultimately, the research underscores that while virtual art cannot fully replicate the embodied experience of in-person gatherings, it can nevertheless open pathways to collaborative innovation and cross-border artistic exchange.

Relevance to the Thesis

This article constitutes an important part of my dissertation, demonstrating how to foster an empathetic relationship with trees and nature, as well as how community-based art and collaborative activities can be conducted remotely using digital tools.

Contribution

My role was to describe the ISEAS event, including on-site participation, research design, and to contribute to the theoretical framework and collaborative analysis with my colleagues.

ARTICLE IV

Reference

Juhola, K. (2024). *Forest disputes: Socially engaged art and forest science for understanding sustainability*. *Research in Arts and Education, 2024*(1), Proceedings from The Art of Research Conference VIII.
https://doi.org/10.54916/rae.142431

Summary

This study explores the transformative power of activism art in shaping public discourse about climate change and environmental conflicts. Drawing on experiences from ISEAS, the paper centres on an event in Western Lapland that brought together artists and forest scientists to address contentious issues surrounding forest use. Workshop participants engaged with art-making activities that encouraged creative expression, open dialogue, and a deeper understanding of local environmental challenges.

The fusion of art and science at ISEAS is fostered through communal living and active collaboration. By inviting mentors and experts from diverse backgrounds, the symposium creates an immersive context where conversational art serves as both a research method and a socially engaged practice. The findings suggest that arts-based methods, such as performance and collaborative art creation, can illuminate complex or emotionally charged subjects in a way that fosters empathy and constructive conversation.

The paper further underlines the importance of carefully curated group dynamics. These dynamics, shaped by a dedicated team of artists and a forest scientist, were critical in establishing safe spaces where participants felt comfortable voicing their fears and hopes regarding natural resource management. Although the results signal the efficacy of activist art interventions, they also highlight a need for ongoing research into how these processes can be sustained once the artist's presence ends. Overall, this study showcases how a synergy of art and science can deepen engagement with environmental topics and cultivate innovative problem-solving strategies.

Relevance to the Thesis

This article is integral to my dissertation, focusing on activist art and cross-disciplinary collaboration. It provides examples of how arts-based actions can help alleviate eco-anxiety.

Contribution

My role was to plan and execute the workshops alongside my fellow artists and a forest researcher. Having written the entire article myself, I was also responsible for shaping its analysis and conclusions.

ARTICLE V

Reference

Juhola, K. S., Zdanski, C., Peña, H., Kortetmäki, T., & Foster, R. (2024). Nourishing connections: Fostering collaboration on food ethics through art. *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education, 41*(1), 120–140. https://doi.org/10.2458/jcrae.6232

Summary

This article focuses on socially engaged art workshops held during the 2022 ISEAS, themed around food and its connections to environmental issues, climate change, and social justice. By convening artists and scientists in a camp-like symposium setting, ISEAS fosters communal living and diverse activities, promoting international collaborations aimed at addressing pressing global concerns.

The paper centres on a three-day workshop involving 17 high school students, during which the participants used various arts-based methods—including dance, performance, and painting—to explore food values and ethics. Facilitated by both artists and a food ethics researcher, the event underscored how artistic processes can navigate difficult conversations around exclusion, inclusion, and social inequities tied to food production and consumption. The students' nonverbal expressions provided fresh insights into complex issues that might otherwise remain abstract.

Throughout this process, collaboration between artists, scientists, and community members proved vital. The authors conclude that integrating art into school curricula can broaden perspectives, promote dialogue, and advance activist art's aspiration to drive constructive change. By highlighting the unpredictable and innovative qualities of art, the paper affirms the significance of creative expression in cultivating empathy, raising awareness, and fostering multidimensional solutions to contemporary challenges.

Relevance to the Thesis

This article underscores how its exploration of food ethics and participatory arts-based methods advances my dissertation's objectives, particularly by illuminating the potential for diverse arts-based approaches to address pressing issues such as food ethics and global climate change.

Contribution

My role encompassed organizing the ISEAS event, coordinating the workshop, developing the methods, analyzing the data, and writing the article.

ARTICLE VI

Reference

Juhola, K., Kelly, J., & Hopia, A. (2025). The Power of Employing Science and Diverse Arts for Immersive, Sensory Food Education: A Case Study of Tiistenjoki Elementary School. Art Education. Taylor & Francis.
https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2025.2515246

Summary

This study examines how arts-based methods can facilitate nuanced reflections and nonverbal expressions of emotions and values tied to children's daily interactions with food. Focusing on a sub-workshop within ISEAS, held in Lapua, Finland, in August 2022, the project involved three artists and a food scientist working closely with elementary school students to explore themes of empathy for both food and animals.

By incorporating drawing, writing, bodily movement, farm visits, interaction with animals, and singing, the workshop underscored the transformative power of arts-based activities in creating holistic connections. Children's drawings revealed preferences, dislikes, comfort foods, and negative emotions associated with their daily eating experiences. Many of these artworks were exhibited as part of the "Dream Dinner Table" installation at the Lapua Art Museum, highlighting the potential of artistic engagement to generate imaginative ideas and novel solutions.

The collaboration between artists and scientists proved crucial in designing an impactful experience that embraced creative inquiry and emotional development. This

interdisciplinary approach extended beyond individual expression, aiming to deepen participants' understanding of food ethics and broader environmental issues. The authors emphasize that further research into the intersection of art and food science can illuminate how creativity might serve as a potent vehicle for investigating worldwide challenges related to nutrition and sustainability.

Relevance to the Thesis
Given that food is a significant contributor to climate change, incorporating an arts-based exploration of food education is particularly vital when working with minors.

Contribution
My role involved planning and implementing the ISEAS and being part of shaping the article's arguments and findings together with my co-writers.

7.2. Exhibition Summaries

7.2.1. ROVANIEMI ART MUSEUM EXHIBITION CONVERSATION

Supported by the Kone Foundation, ISEAS organised two symposia in Äkäslompolo in autumn 2020 and winter 2021, with the overarching theme of mediation. Divided into three sub-teams—Forest Disputes, Mining Conflict, and the Power of Nature—12 artists and scientists facilitated socially engaged art activities involving 75 local participants. Each sub-team completed collaborative, socially engaged art activities that linked their specific themes to the mediation theme. ISEAS also included a documentary crew, guest lecturers, a philosopher, and a mentor to lead the daily discussions.

In autumn 2020, ISEAS collaborated with community members, documenting the socially engaged art process through photographs (by Touko Hujanen; Figures 12, 15, 20, 21 and 22) and videos (by Linus Westerlund and Amir Abdi; Figure 18). Subsequently, in winter 2021, the ISEAS group revisited Lapland to continue the creative process initiated during the autumn session. Throughout ISEAS, sub-teams collaborated to generate ideas for artworks and the exhibition as a whole (Figure 11).

These ideas were shared and discussed daily among all members during evening sessions, with the mentor playing a key role in assisting each artist and group by asking questions and offering new perspectives.

The exhibition was divided into four distinct areas: three main halls and a vestibule. Within the vestibule, a video by my dissertation supervisor, Timo Jokela at that time, showcased a sculpture created two years earlier and work related to the mining conflict team's work. This sculpture was crafted through dialogue with local residents, discussing Äkäslompolo rivers' cleanliness. In the middle hall, a documentary about the ISEAS process was displayed on a screen, while all three halls exhibited photographs documenting each sub-team's processes. The Forest Dispute team occupied one hall, the Mining Conflict team occupied another, and the Power of Nature team occupied the third hall.

Curating a Collaborative Art Exhibition

The ISEAS 2020–2021 symposia aimed to address contemporary societal challenges, maintaining an ethical stance while acknowledging the unpredictable power of art. As curator, I highlighted the ethical principles of socially engaged art, discussing relevant principles and theories. While these concepts were clear to some participants, such as participating scientists well versed in research ethics, some artists were less familiar with these principles.

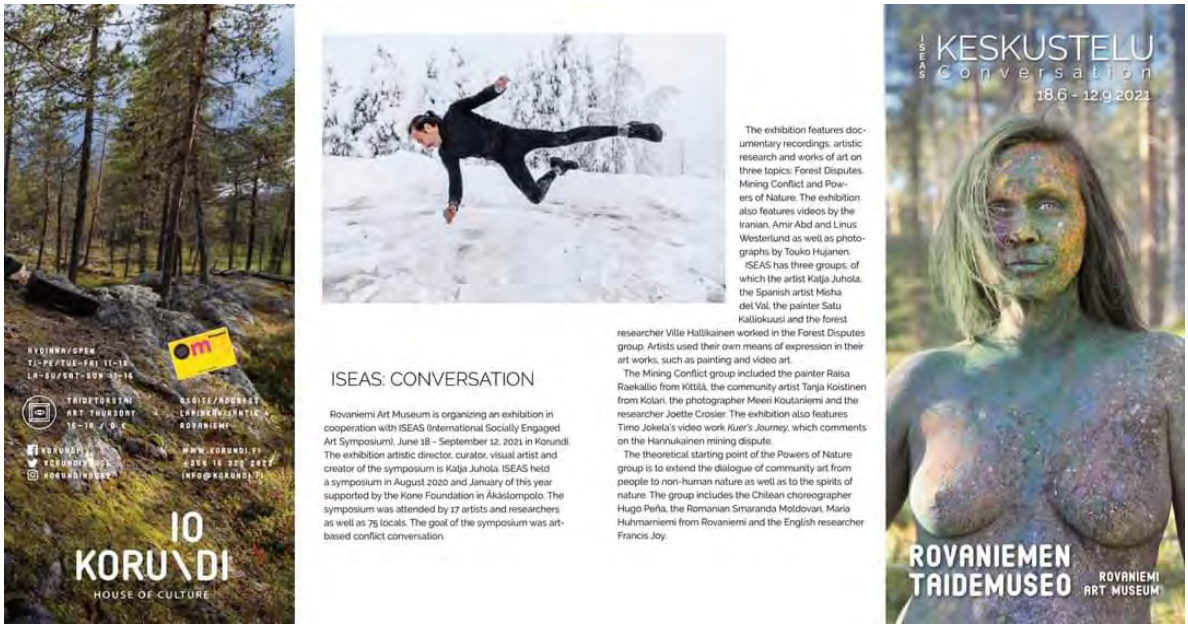


Figure 11. Rovaniemi Art Museum's ISEAS Exhibition Brochure.
Image: Rovaniemi Art Museum, 2021.

Creating works for a socially engaged art exhibition is complex, particularly when multiple artists collaborate to create pieces accepted by all involved. In a group exhibition, one artist's work must not offend or stigmatize another's work. It is always a matter of respecting boundaries and artistic freedom, guided by ethical principles.

The Exhibition as Part of My Dissertation

When designing the works in the exhibition, I considered each artist's planned artworks. As curator, I sought to ensure that the works were honest artistic explorations of the socially engaged collaborative art experience, highlighting the collaboration between art and science. Evidence from the symposium indicated that this gathering supported the participants' skills in conversational and environmentally engaged art, as well as their agency in promoting a sustainable society. Artworks in the exhibition displayed the analyses, interventions, and views of the groups of artists and/or individual artists who worked together during ISEAS. Some artworks were strongly associated with community-produced knowledge and emotion, while others represented artists' personal artistic processes through representations of ISEAS experiences (Figure 12). The exhibition highlighted my curatorial goals in socially engaged art and my anthropogenic perspective through arts-based means, answering my research question about fruitful collaboration between art and science. The aim of the exhibition was to highlight the diverse dimensions of conversational art through the works of both individual artists and groups of artists, showcasing how art-based work can expand conversational art expression in the form of socially engaged art.

A gushing overall, made of basalt and longing.
Snowmobile safari polyester that isolates two wet kingdoms.
Tides of a geography, bound to never come to a halt.
My wrinkled hands simmered by soaked mittens.
Helpless little critters.
The heavy flake gets absorbed in the designer's hat.
Tuomas and Mari also came along.
Cocktail of body fluids and dew.
Everyone leaves empty-handed.
Poem by Misha del Val, 2021.

Figure 12. Photographs by Touko Hujanen, 2020 and 2021; painting by Enrique Misha del Val and Raisa Raekallio, Untitled, 2021, Oil on linen. Image: Katja Juhola, 2021.

Misha del Val wrote this poem as an introduction to the museum exhibition's collaborative painting, which he created with Raekallio, reflecting their experiences at ISEAS.

Forest Disputes Sub-Team

The forest disputes theme delves into the global collapse of biodiversity, the multifaceted uses of forests, their cultural significance, and the extensive pulp mill projects underway in Lapland. In addition to myself, the sub-team included Spanish-born artist Misha del Val, painter Satu Kalliokuusi, and forest scientist Ville Hallikainen. Initiating our workshop, we analysed the conflict's roots, exploring emotional connections or disconnections and gaps in scientific knowledge between people and academic knowledge. We also familiarized ourselves with various forest types and

uses. Facilitating conversational art among diverse groups, we engaged students and a teacher from the Muonio Wilderness Guide School and local nature enthusiasts, along with forestry research experts from Metsähallitus and the Natural Resources Institute Finland (LUKE).

The participants created paintings, photographs, videos, performances, and installations. As artists, we produced both independent and collaborative exhibition works, stemming from shared experiences and employing various media (Figure 13 and 15).

My video artwork *Forest* (10 min 31 sec) consists of discussions held with participants during the symposium. The voices of the researchers, nature activists, wilderness guide students, and artists are included. The colors symbolize the four seasons and the destruction humankind brings to nature—how we treat our forests and ourselves. The loss of natural biodiversity is a real threat to the loss of all life. The

Figure 13. Forest Disputes Sub-Team Room. Image: Katja Juhola, 2021.

Figure 14. Wall: Paintings by Satu Kalliokuusi, 2021. Floor: Stella Polaris Board Game by Katja Juhola and Satu Kalliokuusi, 2021. Image: Katja Juhola, 2021.

Figure 15. Wall: Photographs by Touko Hujanen, 2020 and Untitled by Enrique Misha del Val, 2021, Mixed Media on Paper. Floor: Polar Star by Katja Juhola and Satu Kalliokuusi, 2021. Image: Katja Juhola, 2021.

nudity in the film represents a vulnerable, sensitive, and emotional relationship with nature and the threats against the forest. After the symposium, a video performance was held in Äkäslompolo in August 2020. I was assisted by my spouse, Jukka Juhola, and the symposium artist, Tanja Koistinen.

The conversations included the following participants: Lea Kaulanen, entrepreneur, Äkäslompolo; Ville Hallikainen, senior researcher, Rovaniemi; Student from Muonio Wilderness Guide School, Raisa Raekallio, visual artist, Kittilä; Meeri Koutaniemi, photographer, Helsinki; and Misha del Val, visual artist, Kittilä/Basque Country.

Satu Kalliokuusi created three paintings using natural pigments on mulberry paper:

> I explored the impact of mining toxins on the fragile environment of Lapland. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus, there has been a significant increase in people's interest in hiking and nature. Now is the ideal time to pause intensive forestry practices and reflect on the true value of our forests. (personal communication, 2021)

Together, Kalliokuusi and I created a large board game, *Stella Polaris*, inspired by the Finnish game *Afrikan Tähti* and based on a collective painting. This game involved local forest owners and researchers from Metsähallitus and LUKE, and integrated research and artistic perspectives from all the ISEAS groups.

Polar Star is an artistic board game for 2–4 players, focusing on the natural phenomena of Northern Finland and the conflicts between human activities and the local environment (Figures 14 and 15).

My installation *Paper Forest* (Figures 16 and 17) is the result of discussions held during the ISEAS symposium. The words and phrases I wrote on toilet paper rolls are excerpts from conversations between scientists, nature activists, artists, and wilderness guide students regarding the state of our northern forests. They reflect both the fears and hopes of what humanity is capable of concerning our natural resources.

Figure 16. Paper Forest by Katja Juhola, 2021, Toilet Paper and Ink. Background: Forest by Katja Juhola, Video Artwork 2021. Image: Katja Juhola, 2021.

Mining conflict sub-team

The opening of a massive, open iron ore mine in the village of Hannukainen, in the immediate vicinity of Yllästunturi National Park, has caused a painful conflict between the residents of Kolari Municipal Centre and the Äkäslompolo villages. A new dialogue on the mining project was initiated in art workshops that used walking, painting, photography, and scientific research information. The directors were three artists and one researcher: painter Raisa Raekallio, who lives in Kittilä, socially engaged artist Tanja Koistinen from Kolari, and Finnish photographer and journalist Meeri Koutaniemi. American Fungi scientist Joette Crosier brought fungal material to the work and demonstrated a process related to how nature can slowly break down environmental toxins. Mining activist and water scientist Leif Ramm-Schmidt provided research information on the impact of the planned mine on water sources and other environmental risks. Interactions were essential in the workshop. The participants shared their future wishes and concerns regarding the mining plan verbally and visually. The activity was mostly attended by mine opponents and one representative of the mining project company. The mining conflict team implemented a joint production for the exhibition, which opened a discussion based on the arguments for and against the mining project.

The film *With Bated Breath* (Figure 18) was displayed solely at the Rovaniemi Art Museum alongside the installation by the Mining Conflict sub-team. Every breath we take comes from the vegetation that thrives on our only Earth. *With Bated Breath* is an exploratory documentary that reflects the debates surrounding industrial mining projects and other environmental conflicts in one of the purest forest regions of northern Finland. The documentary highlights how miners, environmentalists, local residents, academics, researchers, and artists gather at ISEAS to initiate dialogues and share their perspectives on the subject, ensuring that the wisest decisions are made for the well-being of people and nature, as well as for future generations.

Artist group Tanja Koistinen, Meeri Koutaniemi, and Raisa Raekallio (Figure 19) constructed an installation about the voices of those whom the plans of Hannukainen mining concern. The long-lasting debate about the uncertainty in the area has raised powerful feelings. The quotes and pictures printed on the T-shirts are from the art workshops in which local inhabitants and a mining representative participated in Äkäslompolo in August 2020.

Figure 17. Paper Forest by Katja Juhola, 2021,
Toilet Paper and Ink. Image: Katja Juhola, 2021.

Figure 18. With Bated Breath, Documentary, Duration 34 min,
Directors Amir Abdi and Linus Westerlund. Image: Katja Juhola, 2021.

Figure 19. Voices, by Tanja Koistinen, Meeri Koutaniemi, and
Raisa Raekallio, 2021. Image: Katja Juhola, 2021.

Power of nature sub-team

The theoretical starting point for the Power of Nature (Figure 20) group was to extend the dialogue of socially engaged art from people to non-human nature, as well as to the spirits of nature, to mediate the disconnection between the two. In the workshops, the participants strengthened their connections to nature and their spiritual experience of nature. They learned to communicate with trees and rocks under the guidance of druid Francis Joy and made drumming trips to meet spirit beings. Dancer–dance educator–choreographer Hugo Peña guided the participants in a conversational connection with natural elements based on bodily movement, expression, and interaction. Artist and art researcher Smaranda-Sabina Moldovan and artist and artist–researcher Maria Huhmarniemi used red clay as an art-based tool for reflection and sharing. In the workshops, the participants experienced bodily communication with elements and spirits of nature, so that the dialogue of community art and the sphere of empathy expanded beyond the human focus. This process was continued by Moldovan, who brought in paintings that conveyed the experience of nature and working with nature. Peña made a dance performance video for the exhibition, and Joy made a sound installation that introduced drumming as a healing practice. Huhmarniemi made a participatory installation with some members of the symposium.

The video *Revelation* (Figure 21) delves into the profound power and vastness of the forest, exploring its relationship with the human body and the body's quest to engage with this immense natural presence. Through this work, the body's attempt to connect with the forest's energies is expressed in both movement and drawing. The video serves as a visual and sensory exploration of how the body yields to and resonates with the elemental forces of nature, portraying a deep, almost spiritual surrender to the natural world. Smaranda Moldovan's *Tree Society 2*, 2021 (Figure 20), is a collective drawing created in collaboration with other ISEAS participants, including Maria Huhmarniemi, Hugo Peña, Misha del Val, and Tanja Koistinen. This work, rendered in ink and charcoal on paper, seeks to depict the intricate social relationships that exist between humans and trees. It contrasts the human tendency to dominate and invade spaces with the natural tendency of trees, which do not seek to conquer but rather to occupy space in a harmonious, non-aggressive way. The drawing reflects this more subtle, healing approach of nature, highlighting the contrast between human and natural interactions with the environment.

Blue Forest (Figure 22) is a work that evokes the serene landscape of Äkäslompolo during the twilight hour known as the blue moment. By employing natural

materials such as branches and leaves to apply paint to the paper, the artist captured the dynamic and fluid energy of nature. These materials introduce organic textures and layers, mirroring the subtle nuances and transformations that occur in the natural world. This isochrome painting transcends a purely human perspective, delving into the relationships between trees, space, and the forces of nature, offering a reflection on their interconnectedness and the intricate balance they maintain.

Figure 20. Wall: Photographs by Touko Hujanen, 2020 and 2021 and Tree Society 2, by Smaranda Moldovan, 2021. Floor: Revelation, by Hugo Andres Peña Lagos, 2021, Duration 2 Min 35 Sec (Video Filmed by Linus Westerlund). Image: Katja Juhola, 2021.

Figure 21. Hugo Andres Peña Lagos, Revelation, 2021. Image: Touko Hujanen, 2021.

Figure 22. Photograph by Touko Hujanen, 2020; Blue Forest, Painting by Smaranda Moldovan, 2021, Acrylic on Paper. Image: Katja Juhola, 2021.

7.2.2. LAPUA ART MUSEUM OUR SHARED FOOD EXHIBITION

What happened at ISEAS in Lapua? In Lapua, Finland, where my parents' family and all my relatives hail from, the sixth edition of ISEAS in 2022 unfolded with a specific focus on food, engaging 97 participants from Southern Ostrobothnia, Finland, ranging from elementary school students to working-age farmers and older people (Figure 23).

For this event, I invited 20 artists, scientists, artist–researchers, co-workers, and documentary team members from both Finland and abroad to partake in an art–science collaboration. Over the course of the 10-day symposium, we lived together and engaged in various activities, including facilitated conversations, village walks, yoga mornings, evening dances, and saunas, all aimed at fostering a conducive environment for creativity. Each participant was committed to working together as equals, with daily events collectively reflected upon under the guidance of ISEAS mentors. ISEAS in Lapua aimed to amplify our voices, and the Lapua Art Museum exhibition emerged collaboratively from our community, involving artists and researchers.

For the symposium, I invited two mentors to support our working teams and facilitate daily dinner discussions. One of the mentors was employed by the Lapua Art Museum, making the museum an integral part of our symposium since its incep-

Figure 23. Lapua Art Museum's Brochure about the ISEAS exhibition (September 9, 2023–January 20, 2024, Curated by Katja Juhola). Image: Lapua Art Museum.

tion. To enhance our experience, I sought an introduction from food researcher Anu Hopia, who shared insights into her research on how our different senses come into play when evaluating food. During the dinner sessions, various thought-provoking discussions were initiated by our mentors, artists, and researchers. Food scientist and philosopher Teea Kortetmäki sparked a conversation on global food justice, delving into its significance on both individual and global levels. Researcher Panu Pihkala initiated a discussion on climate anxiety, exploring how we cope with fears and anxieties, which could manifest differently—from denial to paralysis. In addition to these engaging talks, each of us had the opportunity to present our activities and personal history to the group, fostering an environment of active and enthusiastic participation. The symposium was enriched by the valuable contributions of everyone involved, creating a dynamic and collaborative atmosphere throughout the event.

Our culinary staff prepared vegetarian meals using locally sourced organic vegetables, occasionally incorporating eggs and cheese from a nearby dairy farm, underscoring the importance of food in our daily lives.

ISEAS sub-teams

The symposium involved four communities with a diverse age range, including Tiistenjoki Elementary School, Seinäjoki Secondary School, young farmers from the area, and older members of the Lapua book club. At Tiistenjoki Elementary School, our team comprised Finnish food scientist Anu Hopia, Finnish local artist Sonja Jokiranta, American artist–art educator Joan Marie Kelly, and Indian art student Arun Yadav.

At Seinäjoki Secondary School, I curated the workshop with a team of artists and researchers, including Finnish multidisciplinary artist and researcher Raisa Foster, Finnish philosophy and social sciences researcher Teea Kortetmäki, Chilean dancer-choreographer Hugo Peña, and American artist–art educator Clarice Zdanski.

Our engagement with the farmers featured a dinner table conversation with Finnish food scientist Anu Hopia, philosophy and social sciences researcher Teea Kortetmäki, artist–art researcher Teemu Mäki, Iranian artist Mahmoud Mohammadi, and myself alongside five farmers from the region. After an in-depth conversation about food, we visited three farms, two of them accompanied by Raisa Foster, and the Kalle Fälts dairy farm with all ISEAS participants.

Our sub-teams also collaborated with the Lapua book club, comprising six women aged 73 to 96 years, along with Finnish artist–researcher Teemu Mäki, Iranian artist Mahmoud Mohammed, Finnish scholar Panu Pihkala, and myself. The rich

diversity of participants and activities made the ISEAS food symposium a truly vibrant and enriching experience.

Why food was chosen as a theme

With my background in biodynamic farming and over 30 years of experience in organic farming, the choice of food as the symposium's theme felt natural. The symposium aimed to address interconnected issues—from international politics to agricultural and health policies—all centred around food. Unsustainable practices in the global food system accelerate harmful land-use changes, posing significant threats to biodiversity, especially through pesticide usage that endangers essential pollinators.

A key challenge in agriculture is to efficiently produce food for a growing world population, with food production and consumption contributing significantly to climate emissions. Food ethics and nutrition have garnered widespread attention, particularly among young people, although the quality of information varies, and excessive interest can lead to eating disorders.

The younger generation faces eco-anxiety and feelings of powerlessness, affecting their confidence in the future (Pihkala, 2017). Food is closely linked to pandemics and mental health issues. Art, with its unique language, has the potential to effectively communicate research findings and offer new perspectives on understanding complex challenges.

Haapalainen (2018) highlights the fluidity of participatory art, whose definition is imprecise at its boundaries. Art's meaning lies in the moments, emotions, and relationships it evokes, making it a trans-situational form of expression. Participatory art briefly detaches individuals from their predefined daily routines and customary roles, offering an unstructured and open-ended departure from which to examine current affairs. It can evoke unconventional forms of imagination and unconventional modes of existence—fluid utopian possibilities.

Building the exhibition

The artworks featured in this exhibition were created differently than those showcased in the Rovaniemi art exhibition. Whilst we organised another ISEAS event alongside the Rovaniemi exhibition to refine the artworks, where we used collaborative creative methods, the Lapua Art Museum exhibitions were primarily the result of independent efforts by the artists. However, some collaborative works do exist, such as my collaboration with Linus Westerlund during the editing process of the ISEAS documentary, encompassing two parts: *Tiistenjoki Elementary School* and *Seinäjoki*

Figure 24. Films by Teemu Mäki and Katja Juhola. Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023.

Figure 25. Katja Juhola and Anu Hopia, Dream Dinner Table, 2023: Installation, Drawings on Paper and Textiles, “Menu Cards” with Children’s Own Stories. Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023.

Figure 26. The Lapua Book Club Madams, by Katja Juhola, 2023. Mixed Media on Canvas: Photograph, Appliqué, Color Pigment, and Acrylic. Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023.

High School (2023), 24 min 30 sec. Additionally, I met with Anu Hopia to discuss the structure and content of the 2023 installation *Dream Dinner Table*. I co-created two films with Teemu Mäki (Figure 24), although these joint endeavors were more in name than in practice. We did not plan or physically work together in the same space while editing Linus Westerlund's filmed material. Teemu Mäki handled the editing and design of *Farming Conversations* (video, 27 min 20 sec, 2023), whilst I independently edited *Memories* (video, 16 min, 50 sec, 2023), a film about the women of the Lapua literary circles. The Seinäjoki High School team of Foster, Peña, and Zdanski each created their own works without significant connection to one another.

Whilst I believe that all the works contributed to the cohesion of the exhibition as a whole, I am of the opinion that ISEAS 2021, where the works were planned and developed collectively with the guidance of a mentor, offered a much richer experience and would have likely resulted in a different overall presentation in the context of the Lapua art exhibition as well. However, organizing a symposium demands substantial resources, including energy, time, and financial investment, which unfortunately were not fully available for the Lapua exhibition.

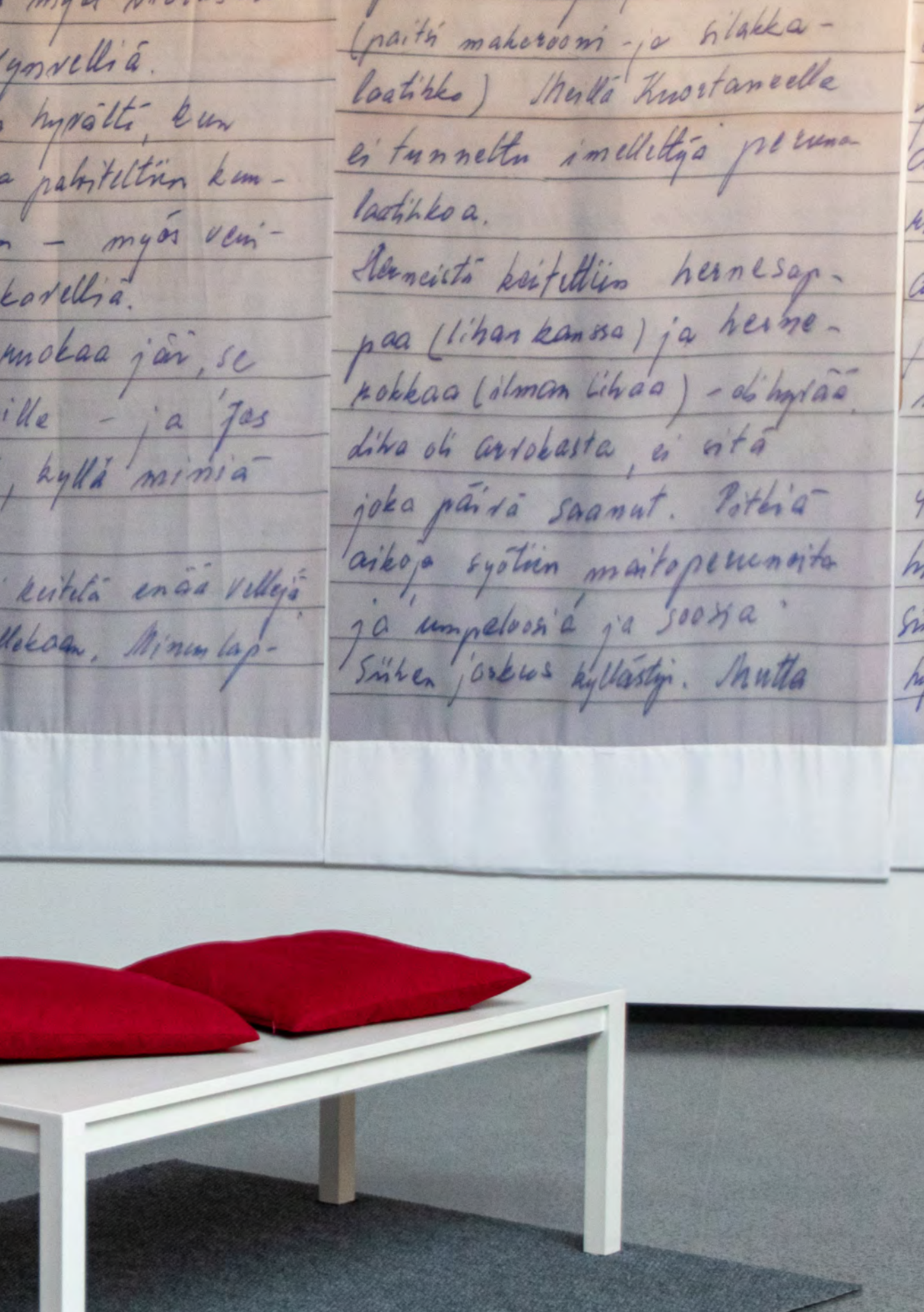
I organised a meeting for artists, researchers, farmers, and ranchers from Southern Ostrobothnia, resulting in a half-hour documentary by Teemu Mäki and myself (Figure 24). Teemu Mäki produced two additional films: one focusing on the eco-crisis with statistical facts, and the other showcasing wordless footage of cows. All three documentaries feature music as an integral part of the content, following specific principles. The music, solo piano pieces by Robert Schumann and Domenico Scarlatti performed by Clara Haskil, adds depth to the narratives and complements the visual storytelling.

The installation *Dream Dinner Table*" (Figure 25) was created by pupils from the elementary school at Tiistenjoki. Artworks related to food served as the starting point for this installation. The children brought their ideas to life in workshops facilitated by food scientist Anu Hopia, musician Sonja Jokiranta, the chief executive officer of the company Luovuuden Lakeus [Plains of Creativity], artist–art educator Joan Marie Kelly, and a training and well-being instructor and art student Arun Yadav. These workshops took place in the rural village of Tiistenjoki in Lapua in 2022. Every pupil from the elementary school participated in these workshops. These artworks are joyfully anarchic and boundary-pushing. Eternal connotations associated with food and community emerged from the works. Process descriptions in the form of menu cards were integrated into the installation. Health effects and traceability were not forgotten either. Happiness, delicacy, sharing, and parties were, however, the most prominent features.

Figure 27. Meeting the Field, 2023, Video Artwork, 4 Min 26 Sec and Favorite Places 1–3, 2023, by Katja Juhola. Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023.

Figure 28. Favorite Places 1–3, 2023, by Katja Juhola. Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023.

Figure 29. Food Memories, Handwritten Letter Printed on Canvas, 2023, by Katja Juhola; Memories, Video, 16 Min, 50 Sec, 2023, Katja Juhola and Teemu Mäki, Filmed by Linus Westerlund. Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023



The artwork The *Lapua Book Club Madams*" (Figure 26) is based on a photograph by Fabio Cito depicting the members of the book club in Lapua. The participants were gathered around a coffee table during the summer of 2022, engaging in conversation with the ISEAS team. Topics discussed included poems with food and nature themes, childhood experiences during wartime, and environmental changes witnessed throughout the members' lifetimes. Those from the ISEAS team present included me, Teemu Mäki, Mahmoud Mohammadi from Iran, researcher Panu Pihkala, photographer Fabio Cito from the documentation team, and videographer Linus Westerlund.

The video artwork *Meeting the Field* (Figure 27) featured a performative sensory exercise that I led for fellow artists and a local farmer. The exercise aimed to deepen their connection to their surroundings, including the countryside and the broader environment. By engaging the senses to heighten awareness and foster presence, it addressed how farmers, often working in tractors with headphones on, might be less attuned to the land. The goal was to connect everyone—both artists and farmers—to the land where our food is grown, emphasizing that we are all part of a larger network and that every action has an impact.

The series *Favorite Places* (Figure 28) consists of mixed media works on canvas, incorporating photography and acrylic. In August 2022, I asked three South Ostrobothnian farmers to identify their favorite spots on their farms and explain their significance. The photographs were taken by Fabio Cito, the official photographer of the ISEAS symposium. The hand-painted texts provided by the farmers were transcribed by me, with a slight modification made to Hannele Suvanto's text with her permission and included the following:

- **Winter Wheat Field**: The favorite place of Johannes Sipilä, who deeply values nature itself and closeness to nature.
- **Home Yard**: The favorite place of Hannele Suvanto, a beekeeper who views home and family as central to her entrepreneurial life.
- **Cow Pasture**: The favorite place of Kalle Fält, who runs a dairy farm and regards the well-being of his animals as essential.

In Figure 29, the canvas displays images of a handwritten letter sent to me by Mrs. Maija Korpi, a member of the Lapua Book Club (National Seniors' Literary Circle). In this letter, Korpi reminisced about the past and her food-related memories.

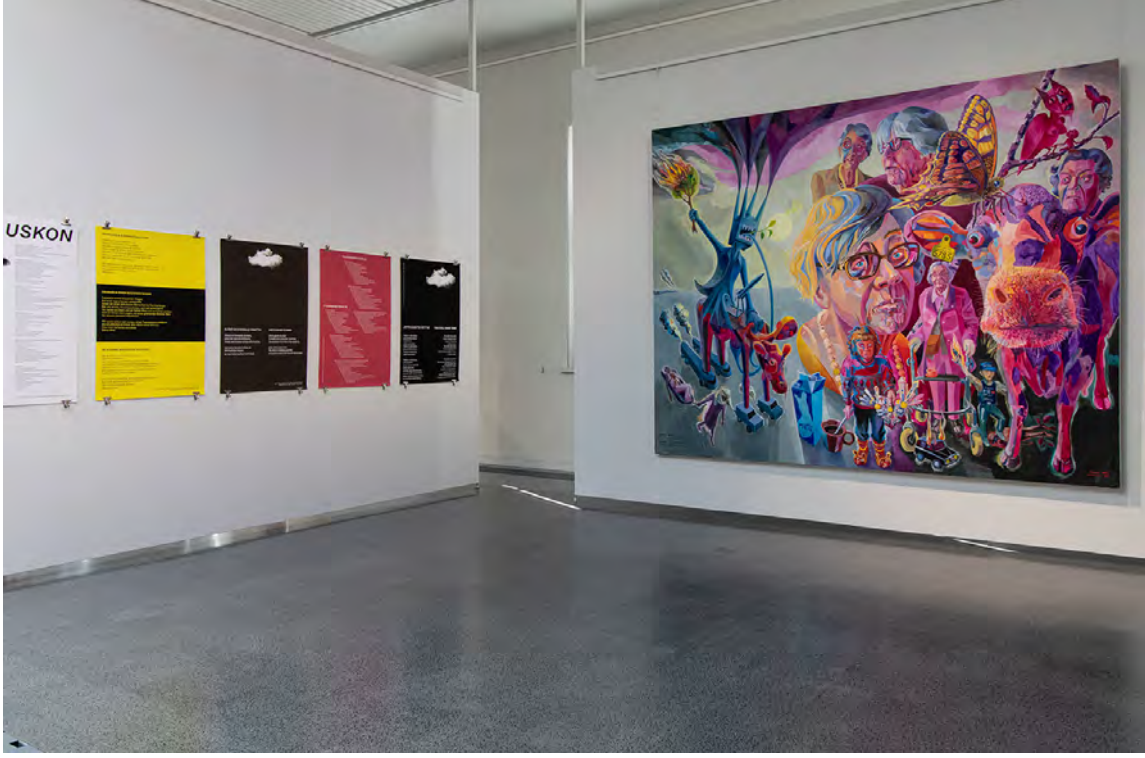


Figure 30. Grannies in the Midst of It All, by Teemu Mäki, Oil on Canvas, 240 x 300 cm, August–September 2023. Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023.

Figure 31. As We Are Told To, by Raisa Foster, 2023, Single-Channel Video Work, HD, Stereo, Finnish, 4 min, 8 sec; I Am What I Eat - Chaos of Emotions, by Clarice Zdanski, 2022. Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023

Through this artwork, as well as the accompanying film *Memories*, the exhibition spanned a temporal journey of over 150 years. It not only bridges the gap between the past and future, but also maintains a significant presence in the Anthropocene era.

In the centre of the painting *Grannies in the Midst of It All* (Figure 30) are portraits of older individuals and a child surrounded by a large monster and an even larger cow. The monster, symbolizing mankind's exploitation of nature, rides a creature resembling a pregnant woman and a cow, drawing life force from it. Chimneys atop the monster's head represent pollution, darkening the sky. The cow, a human creation like the monster, represents the impact of human activity on the environment. Despite some awareness of environmental issues, humankind continues to exploit nature for its own gain. In the lower part of the painting, Mäki portrays his child holding a space robot, symbolizing the uncertainty of the future and the potential for change. The artwork reflects on humanity's role in environmental degradation and the need for introspection and change.

Teemu Mäki created poetry posters for the exhibition. Inspired by my idea of involving a reading circle from Lapua in the project, Mäki suggested reading their favorite poems aloud and discuss them at a meeting. He also shared some of his own poems. For the exhibition, he made poster versions of their favorites and his own, connecting literature to the theme of food for the soul. Many of the poems reflected on nature, highlighting the paradox of admiring nature's beauty while contributing to its destruction through consumption choices, underscoring the need for change.

Clarice Zdanski led the Chaos Painting (Figure 31) workshop, inspired by the Action Painting pioneers of the 1940s to 1960s. In this style, artists use their movements as brushstrokes, creating spontaneous drips, spots, and smears. The emphasis is on the process rather than the final outcome, which aligns with ISEAS's vision. The name *Chaos Painting* connects to the Chaos Dance event at Seinäjoki High School. The participants layered images, colors, words, and more to capture the chaos of responsibly nourishing themselves. They employed various materials, including oil pastels and acrylic paint, on transparent tablecloths, allowing them to work on both sides. Up close, the paintings revealed intricate layers of individual perspectives. Illuminating the finished works aimed to evoke empathy for global food justice issues.

Raisa Foster's video work *As We Are Told* (Figure 31) explored the significant role of food in human life, history, and traditions. Food and eating are central to constructing our individual and collective identities, with associated ideas and values shaping our self-image. Repeated comments, appeals, encouragements, and warnings influence

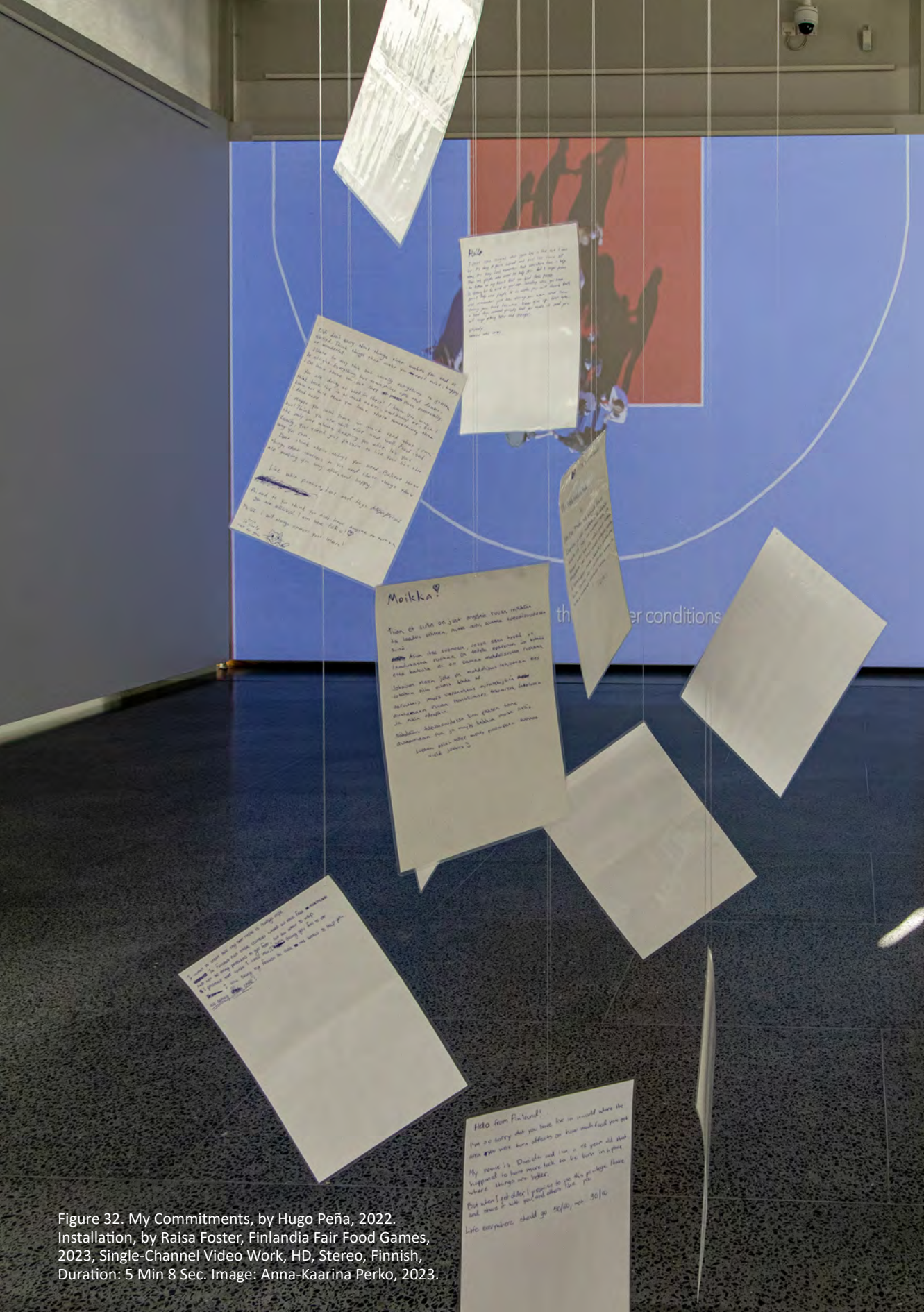


Figure 32. My Commitments, by Hugo Peña, 2022. Installation, by Raisa Foster, Finlandia Fair Food Games, 2023, Single-Channel Video Work, HD, Stereo, Finnish, Duration: 5 Min 8 Sec. Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023.

the mindsets, habits, and manners of children, teenagers, and adults. *As We Are Told* invited viewers to reflect on their personal relationships with food and eating and to consider the origins of these beliefs, values, and habits. This video was a collaborative production with visual art students from Seinäjoki High School.

In Hugo Peña's workshop, the students were encouraged to freely express their thoughts on food, exclusion, and inclusion. The focus was on using the body as a means of expression, allowing the students to convey their individuality and stimulate personal conversations. One exercise involved writing a short letter to a marginalised person, which the students were then encouraged to express through movement and record on their phones. The aim was to help participants form connections beyond their immediate circles, stimulate their imagination, and foster empathy towards those who are marginalised. The results of the exercise varied: Some students were indifferent, while others engaged emotionally. The physical activity also produced differing outcomes: Some participants had more limited mobility, while others expressed themselves with great intensity. The exercise prompted imagination, evoked emotions, and helped the students reflect on their own privileged positions while engaging with issues of inequality. Overall, the workshop heightened awareness and underscored the need for change (Figure 32).

Raisa Foster's video artwork *Finlandia Fair Food Games* (Figure 32) explored the global landscape of fair food production. While many people may access facts about food production through numerous research reports cursorily summarised in the media, few take the time to thoroughly read and interpret them. In contrast, sports have become firmly entrenched in the media and public discourse, with a well-developed sports lexicon familiar to all. The ongoing competition to describe game strategies and the struggle for victory is taken seriously by many.

Finlandia Fair Food Games invited viewers to examine the global playing field of fair food production: Who are the allies? Who is the key player, and who is sidelined? Can we move beyond mutual blame in the food production chain and instead identify a common goal towards solutions that are more socially and ecologically sustainable? This video was a collaborative project with visual art students from Seinäjoki High School, inspired by Teea Kortetmäki's text on food and justice.

8. Findings and Discussion

My main research question emerged from my keen interest in cultivating conversational art within the ISEAS framework. In each of my sub-research endeavors, I underscored that the art of conversation extends beyond verbal communication alone. Through various artistic mediums, we can communicate and explore complex themes. Employing diverse artistic approaches in my methodology, I discovered that art functions as a powerful tool, especially when clear or bold verbal communication is challenging. Art has the ability to unearth emotions and thoughts that might otherwise remain concealed (Nummenmaa & Hari, 2023). Over the span of 10 years, my research material has evolved through active participation in international art symposia, the organisation of seven ISEAS events, and two art museum exhibitions: *Conversation* at the Rovaniemi Art Museum and *Our Shared Food* at the Lapua Art Museum. The creation of conversational art demands the courage to embrace the unpredictability inherent in artistic expression. Building trust emerges as a pivotal aspect of such events. As the creator, facilitator, co-artist, and researcher of these events, ensuring each participant's sense of safety and preventing mockery has been paramount. With over 1000 participants across ISEAS events, I have analysed these arts-based gatherings using diverse qualitative methods.

In keeping with the reasoning of the hermeneutic circle, my ISEAS research has continually developed in response to each preceding event. The research questions—and the learning that has emerged through the responses—have informed the progression of subsequent events. They have also shaped the formulation of new questions. At the same time, I have repeatedly returned to reflect on core themes such as eco-anxiety, the significance of conversational art practices, the broad application of diverse art forms, the dialogue between science and art, and questions of ethics. With each iteration, my understanding has deepened, as previous insights have been recontextualised through new experiences. Through the application of various artistic techniques, I have successfully developed conversational art that fosters a free-spirited atmosphere. This environment has allowed artists, natural scientists, and community members to engage in collaborative artistic endeavors during the events, aligning with the core aspects of my research questions. However, I would like to point out that when it comes to people with different backgrounds and goals, conflicted sitations can happen, but they can be anticipated by acting as openly as possible, and with

written agreements. Navigating conflicts among individuals with diverse backgrounds and goals is an inherent challenge, but proactive measures can be taken to anticipate and manage these conflicts effectively. Open communication, coupled with the establishment of clear written agreements, serves as a crucial foundation for mitigating potential issues. Acknowledging the inherent limitations in fully understanding another person's perspective underscores the need for patience and a forgiving mindset. This becomes particularly pertinent in the context of multidisciplinary events, such as those bridging the realms of art and science. In these settings, where the overarching goal is to discover novel ways of thinking, embracing openness, patience, and a forgiving attitude becomes paramount. Recognizing the inevitability of differing viewpoints and maintaining an atmosphere of understanding contribute to the overall success and harmony of such collaborative endeavors.

My dissertation has delved into the intricacies of international art symposia, particularly emphasizing their structures, mechanisms, and underlying power relations. The initial groundwork involved a detailed examination of my experiences in international art symposia, as outlined in the article "International Art Symposium: Educational Places and Power Relations" (Juhola & Moldovan, 2020). This preliminary exploration aimed to uncover the motivations driving artists to participate in such events and discern the educational spaces they create. Power relations in art symposia manifest on multiple levels. Curators, for instance, hold a great deal of influence by determining the themes, deciding who gets invited, and shaping the overall agenda of the event. This curatorial agency often dictates which voices are amplified and which remain marginal. Likewise, sponsors, institutional frameworks, and selection committees each play pivotal roles in determining the direction and scope of a symposium. In parallel, artists themselves exercise power by virtue of their reputations, behaviours, and aesthetic choices. They can reinforce or disrupt existing hierarchies through their interpersonal interactions, the works they present, and the networks they cultivate on-site. Ultimately, these dynamics intertwine to form a complex web of influence, shaping everything from programming decisions to professional opportunities for all participants.

Addressing the research sub-question, "How do art symposia create places for art education?" the findings reveal that artists are drawn to these symposia as opportunities for skills enhancement, learning from international peers, and engaging in knowledge exchange. Many participating artists, who also serve as art educators, utilise these events as a platform for professional development, expanding their teaching

toolkit. The ethical dimension has been interwoven into my analysis, highlighting the significance of dialogue and networking in shaping power relations within the art world and the academic world.

Motivated by these insights, the subsequent sections of the dissertation outlined the goals established for ISEAS. These overarching objectives include the development of a socially and environmentally engaged art field, bridging gaps between art and science, and facilitating collaborative workshops between artists and natural scientists. Ethical considerations are also inherent in these goals, emphasizing ensuring a positive impact on local communities and contributing to sustainable development. Addressing the sub-question, "What ethical issues and choices are involved in producing a socially engaged art and science symposium?" the dissertation has drawn on data collected during and after the third ISEAS event in 2019. Ethical choices in the preliminary planning phase, promotion of cultural diversity, environmental considerations, and principles governing interactions with participants and the community have been explored. The ethical dimensions of documentation practices, including photo and video representations, have also been underscored.

As the dissertation progressed, it extended its scope to encompass the impact of digital participation in art workshops, which was especially relevant in the global COVID-19 pandemic. The study reflected on the remote participation of a Romanian artist Smaranda Moldovan in the 2020 ISEAS, highlighting the importance of understanding participants' contexts for successful online engagement. While acknowledging the inherent limitations of online experiences, the research has outlined prerequisites for effective virtual participation, emphasizing empathic communication and activating both video and sound connections. The study also responded to the challenges posed by the pandemic and the climate crisis by proposing structured group work to foster sustainable international artistic collaborations. project also illustrates how arts-based methods can foster empathetic connections with nature. The goal of ISEAS 2020 was to deepen participants' relationship with nature and promote dialogue and community among humans, non-human nature, and nature spirits. By sharing spiritual knowledge and practices, the project aimed to help participants strengthen and communicate the bonds between people and nature, rooted in the belief that nature has an underlying spiritual dimension. The research findings extended beyond art, exploring how arts-based methods can cultivate empathy towards nature in broader organisational contexts. The Power of Nature project in ISEAS 2020 emerged as an illustrative example, demonstrating how art can foster a more empathic and loving relationship with nature,

offering a timely response to the global issues precipitated by human actions within the ISEAS team's socially engaged art work.

Another sub-question, explored during the 2020 ISEAS event, delved into how arts-based methods can foster a reliable atmosphere for alleviating eco-anxiety. The research findings showed that within ISEAS, both art and science hold equal significance, and conversational art has proved highly adaptable. While science contributed insights into modern forestry practices, art provided a creative realm for reflecting on and exploring this information. Consequently, this dynamic created a conducive environment for addressing challenging and emotionally charged topics, enabling participants to express their viewpoints.

My methodologies are guided by the vision of creative individuals and natural scientists from diverse disciplines, collaboratively innovating within communities. The fusion of the socially engaged art approach with scientific expertise in forestry and forest ecology was trialed to enhance mutual understanding among individuals and groups regarding forestry and various approaches to forest management. The pivotal finding is that, when everyone, including forest researchers and experts, actively participated in creating art, it forged a space where open discussions about challenging issues became feasible and were encouraged.

Continuing my investigations, in the 2022 ISEAS event, my inquiry focused on the theme of food, particularly exploring how artistic approaches could facilitate reflection and nonverbal communication of emotions and values surrounding the daily food encounters of primary school students. The research outcomes confirmed the efficacy of artistic methods in stimulating reflection and the nonverbal expression of emotions and values regarding children's interactions with everyday food. Recognizing the limited attention spans of young children, it is advisable to utilise a variety of artistic techniques when addressing food-related topics. The partnership between artists and scientists emerged as a crucial element, fostering the development of something novel and distinctive. While the children's artworks did not directly engage with climate political thinking, family and homeland took precedence in the analysis. However, through the drawings, the children showcased their relationships with foods with ethnic or international connections, such as noodles and durian. The artworks portrayed a positive relationship with food, devoid of any anxiety. The installation built from children's artworks, which was showcased in the *Our Shared Food* exhibition at Lapua Art Museum, provided a starting point for discussion. Viewers were invited to reflect on their own experiences, thoughts, and perspectives regarding the artwork's themes

and concepts. Connected to ISEAS 2022 with the theme of food, my sub-question again aimed to explored how arts-based methods can foster a reliable atmosphere for alleviating eco-anxiety. The workshop was conducted with high school students, acknowledging the prevailing climate and political conditions that have left many people feeling shaken and uncertain about the future. Young individuals, in particular, grapple with eco-anxiety and a sense of powerlessness in influencing their destinies (Pihkala, 2017). Given the intricate connection between food, pandemics, and mental health issues, the language of art provides a potentially accessible pathway for understanding research findings and uncovering fresh insights. My research findings underscore the importance of providing youth with opportunities to engage in discussions about complex issues related to the future in the company of their peers, scholars, and specialists. A year later, the exhibition in the same area continued the young participants' reflections. Two students who attended the workshops also participated in a panel discussion, emphasizing the new and meaningful role of art in conveying information. The socially engaged art work continued the dialogue by inviting art museum visitors to engage with all the artworks created by ISEAS artists through reading, seeing, listening, and watching. This ongoing conversation serves to enrich the understanding and appreciation of the diverse themes explored by the artists and encourages further reflection on the relationships between art, society, and everyday experiences.

The following table summarises the sub-questions guiding my research, highlighting key findings, empirical evidence, and the specific ISEAS event or context in which each theme emerged. It serves as an overview of the iterative, practice-led structure of the inquiry.

TABLE: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH QUESTION ALIGNMENT

Sub-Question	Key Findings	Empirical Basis	Event / Context
1. How do power relations manifest within international art symposia?	Power dynamics operate on multiple levels—curatorial, institutional, and interpersonal—shaping participation and decision-making.	Interviews, group discussions, and participant observation. Informal hierarchies and selection processes identified; confirmed through personal experience.	Pre-ISEAS events, ISEAS 2018 & 2019
2. How do art symposia function as educational spaces?	Symposia serve as platforms for peer learning, pedagogical experimentation, and professional growth, particularly for artist-educators.	Observations, interviews, and personal participation. Curator Delphine Manet (March 2019): 'Despite the difficulties… it was such a fantastic and impressive experience of artistic and personal growth that led me to organise my own international art symposium.'	Pre-ISEAS events, ISEAS 2018 & 2019
3. What ethical issues and choices are involved in producing a socially engaged art–science symposium?	Ethical practice requires explicit frameworks for inclusion, documentation, and community engagement.	Two group discussions on ethics. The study builds on the premise that ecological crises demand collaborations between art and science to support critical thinking, decolonial perspectives, and relational ethics.	ISEAS 2019
4. What are the requirements for effective digital participation in fieldwork contexts?	Successful online engagement depends on contextual empathy, technological access, and multisensory interaction (audio–visual presence).	Analysis of remote participation by artist Smaranda Moldovan: 'I had discussions in a video meeting… my experience with white willows linked to feminine presence and healing… the online dialogue grew from that story.'	ISEAS 2020 (COVID)
5. How can artistic methods foster organisational empathy in sustainability work?	Co-creation through art supports emotional connection and collective reflection, bridging gaps in non-profit and community-based settings.	Reflections from the Power of Nature project. Group-based work enhanced belonging and collaboration.	ISEAS 2020 (COVID)
6. How can arts-based methods help alleviate eco-anxiety?	Collaborative, conversational art practices offer a safe and imaginative space for engaging with emotionally charged environmental concerns.	Workshop feedback and drawings by adult students. Conversations emerged during and after the creative process in safe, reflective settings.	ISEAS 2020 & 2021
7. How can children express their emotional relationship with food through art?	Nonverbal artistic methods allow children to articulate cultural and emotional associations with everyday food, fostering empathy.	Artworks and physical movement tasks completed by primary school pupils. Activities included farm visits and body exercises that extended care beyond the human sphere..	ISEAS 2022
8. How can arts-based approaches support food awareness and eco-anxiety reflection among youth?	Multi-modal art enables young people to reflect on food systems and climate anxiety in accessible and meaningful ways.	Participant feedback, video documentation, and curatorial reflections. One year after the workshops, a public exhibition and panel discussion extended the dialogue.	ISEAS 2022 – *FOOD* workshops & *Our Shared Food* exhibition at Lapua Art Museum

8.1. ISEAS's Evolution: What Are the Weaknesses and What Are the Strengths?

This dissertation has investigated the structures, ethical dimensions, and pedagogical potential of international art symposia, with a particular focus on the development and implementation of the ISEAS model. Through a combination of artistic practice, empirical observation, and reflective analysis, the study has highlighted how socially engaged art can foster interdisciplinary dialogue, support emotional and ecological awareness, and promote sustainable ways of working in community and educational contexts.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the research and to propose directions for further inquiry. One area that warrants deeper exploration is the scalability and applicability of the ISEAS model in diverse cultural and institutional contexts. While the model has proven meaningful within the Nordic framework, its transferability to other settings remains to be examined more systematically. The International Socially Engaged Art Symposium has undergone a transformative evolution over the years. Examining its trajectory reveals both strengths and weaknesses:

STRENGTHS:

- **Global Engagement:** ISEAS has successfully fostered global engagement, bringing together artists and scholars from diverse backgrounds and locations. This has contributed to a rich tapestry of perspectives and ideas and their spread as widely as possible.
- **Platform for Conversations:** The symposium serves as a valuable platform for dialogue on socially engaged art. It has facilitated conversations that address pressing social issues, encouraging meaningful discussions and collaborations. The first and most important stage is to bring together artists from different areas and researchers suitable for the chosen theme. The ISEAS residency first shares an introduction to the area of expertise of all participants and then jointly discusses ethical rules when working together in the field of socially engaged art. One of the most important developments has been the inclusion of conversational art throughout the ISEAS process. This has required participants to dare to absorb the unpredictability of art and create a safe atmosphere. I have developed this by inviting a mentor, a philosopher, and experts to initiate joint discussions.

- **Evolution with the Field:** ISEAS has demonstrated adaptability, evolving in tandem with the dynamic field of socially engaged art. This adaptability has ensured its relevance and responsiveness to emerging challenges. In several events, ISEAS has focused its themes on environmental issues, specifically on the challenges caused by climate change. One of its most important dimensions has been the documentary group. In community art, the process is as important as the end result.
- **Community Building:** One of ISEAS's strengths lies in community building. ISEAS has created a supportive network for artists and scientists, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose.

WEAKNESSES:

- **Inclusivity Challenges:** Despite its global engagement, ISEAS may need help to ensure true inclusivity. Efforts should be made to represent a broader range of voices and perspectives, avoiding any unintentional exclusions. In accordance with this purpose, I have kept ISEAS activities in English, such as the ISEAS homepage and the published ISEAS research articles and ISEAS books. Every ISEAS event has involved international actors, but ISEAS has been realised every year in Finland and among Finnish communities.
- **Resource Constraints:** Limited resources, whether financial or organisational, could impede the symposium's ability to reach its full potential. Adequate funding and strategic planning are essential to overcome such constraints. Since ISEAS has been my personal effort and has been completely dependent on my endurance and skills in applying for funding for the event to develop, it will be necessary to obtain more annual funding and recruit more staff to maintain the organisation.
- **Evaluation and Impact Assessment:** Assessing the impact of ISEAS on the field of socially engaged art might be challenging. Developing robust evaluation mechanisms beyond the participants' feedback, could help measure the symposium's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.
- **Accessibility:** The symposium's accessibility, both in terms of physical location and virtual participation, may be a challenge. Ensuring that ISEAS remains accessible to a diverse audience is crucial for its continued success.

- While ISEAS has demonstrated strengths in global engagement, dialogue facilitation, adaptability, and community building, addressing challenges related to inclusivity, resource constraints, impact assessment, and accessibility will be crucial for its sustained growth and influence in the realm of socially engaged art.

8.2. Why Is Art and Working Together on Themes Such as Forest Dispute or Food Important in Times of Environmental Concern?

At ISEAS, the emphasis has been on collaborative efforts across a broad spectrum of disciplines. I have contributed through various actions, such as mentoring, engaging in daily discussions with small groups and the entire ISEAS community, attending to ethical dimensions, and sharing artistic skills. ISEAS activities have consistently included a significant component of quality vegetarian food, as well as strolls in nature, rowing on the lake, mushroom picking, group yoga sessions, communal singing and dancing, sauna sessions, and more. All the activities that I organise have influenced how individuals can form groups, appreciate each other's areas of expertise, and show mutual respect. Art, with its myriad facets, stands at the epicentre of creativity. It must swoop to such depths that every person feels liberated to share their unique perspectives, fostering a climate in which artistic expression becomes a powerful catalyst for change. Natural scientists from various fields and artists, alongside the ISEAS mentor and other experts, have developed novel ways of working to stimulate thought in this era of environmental and climate change. Since ISEAS is primarily an art event, art has consistently played a substantial role. The interventions have been art-focused and purposeful, leading to the creation of an art exhibition after each ISEAS event, thereby expanding the significance of the ISEAS event to a wider audience. The ISEAS event not only centres around the collaboration between artists and natural scientists from diverse fields and bringing new ideas to the forefront, but, being a community art event, the importance of community has always played an equally significant role. In my opinion, in this era of climate change, we cannot solely delegate responsibility to scientists, decision-makers, or even artists. Only through collective effort and cooperation can we confront new challenges and find solutions. In each of its sub-projects, ISEAS has presented research findings on how a

community member, through participating in ISEAS activities, becomes a significant contributor to the event. All participants have collectively created something new.

My research question about the potential of conversational art to enhance ISEAS activities is particularly connected to various forms of art: we have expressed gratitude towards trees and the environment through movement and dance, crawled in the field to smell the soil, and heightened our senses through various exercises. We have depicted our fears and frustrations through drawing, and by painting together, we have addressed a wide array of issues. While humanity has been responsible for causing climate change, it is also capable of rectifying its own impact. I choose not to succumb to paralyzing fear but, on the contrary, to believe in the joy of collaboration with people from different fields. In the face of climate change, creativity is paramount, and art serves as a profound medium through which innovative solutions can emerge.

9. Conclusion: Towards Togetherness

ISEAS has come to fruition and evolved thanks to the strong beliefs and active participation of numerous individuals who share a common interest in the intersection of art and science. With the engagement of hundreds of participants, ISEAS has organically carved out its distinctive approach to addressing local and global issues, particularly those associated with ongoing climate change concerns. Even though we can see in our society occasional overwhelming emphasis on competition, elbow tactics, backstabbing, and self-interest, humans, at their core, thrive when united and cooperating. I believe that the most profound and meaningful occurrences transpire when people come together, particularly those from diverse cultures, religions, and languages. While our natural inclination is towards familiarity and safety, the pursuit of novel and innovative ways of thinking demands breaking free from the shackles of hegemony—a courageous and open-minded approach. Collaboration must extend beyond the confines of individual fields, encompassing various realms of science and art and diverse age groups, religions, and nationalities. Confronting the unknown presents an opportunity for learning and the creation of new thought patterns.

ISEAS has consistently aspired to draw in and on diverse range of participants, considering factors such as age, health, culture, and education. Each ISEAS event concludes with numerous individuals expressing gratitude for the valuable insights gained and the reciprocal learning experiences. Particularly touching encounters involve the special support needed by certain individuals who participated in the 2017 ISEAS event; even in 2024, they fondly remember the occasion and extend warm greetings to the international artists who collaborated with them. Acting as mirrors to one another, we perceive reflections of ourselves, and together, when fostering love for each other and our diverse surroundings, we discover solutions to challenging questions.

The recent pandemic showcased the efficiency of our society when there was a collective will to act. Despite the prevailing fear, we found empathetic ways to forge connections and cultivate a culture of collaboration. As creative beings, humans exhibit a diversity of creativity that flourishes when different people and experiences collide. ISEAS has developed a framework and steps to facilitate this, and through continuous refinement and adaptation to individual needs, it has the potential to spawn even more creative and captivating collaborative projects.

10. Summary of Contributions

10.1. My Role and Independent Contribution

Throughout the course of this research, I have served as the primary organiser, coordinator, and developer of ISEAS. In addition, I am the first author of every research article included in this dissertation. In coauthored articles, the hypotheses, analyses, and conclusions were jointly conceived and discussed, underscoring the collaborative ethos central to ISEAS.

Data collection involved contributions from a professional photographer and videographer, whose documentation was integral to capturing the symposium's artistic and scientific engagements. I also maintained a research diary and solicited feedback from participants in each event. Moreover, my involvement extended to practical tasks essential for making the symposium possible—such as cooking, cleaning, applying for funding, and facilitating workshops—reflecting the multifaceted nature of organizing a community-based art initiative without guaranteed financial support.

10.2. Scientific and Practical Significance

This dissertation makes a substantial contribution to the field of art-science collaboration within the context of socially engaged art by illustrating how socially engaged art can address and respond to pressing environmental issues, including climate change. By showcasing the power of collective action and conversations, the findings encourage researchers, artists, and practitioners to embrace participatory and community-focused methods.

In practical terms, this work offers:

- Examples of diverse artistic activities and art-based research methods, providing inspiration for future projects that merge creative and scientific inquiry.
- Insights into ethical considerations, guiding practitioners to approach cross-disciplinary collaborations with respect and transparency.
- Recommendations for art activism, highlighting how art can serve as a catalytic force for raising awareness, instigating dialogue, and propelling social and ecological change.

10.3. Relationship Among the Publications

The publications that constitute this dissertation are interlinked as follows:

- The first article provides a foundational overview and contextual background.
- Subsequent articles delve into three distinct ISEAS events held between 2019, 2020/2021 and 2022, each detailing artistic collaborations with various communities.

Across all articles, the role of conversational art, community involvement, and shared action is emphasised as essential for tackling complex environmental issues. It is important to note that this dissertation is the outcome of my personal endeavor as an independent artist, who has consistently taken on financial, logistical, and creative responsibilities to ensure the symposium's continuation each year. Despite the intense level of personal involvement, the success of ISEAS fundamentally depends on the voluntary participation of hundreds of individuals whose collective efforts embody the spirit of socially engaged art.

Indeed, *community* in socially engaged art—such as the ISEAS symposium—extends beyond human participants to include nonhuman nature. The event recognises the interconnections between humans, other living organisms, and the environment, reinforcing the idea that meaningful artistic and scientific collaboration requires a holistic consideration of all forms of life.

While the responsibility for conceptualizing research themes and questions remained solely mine, I have also drawn inspiration from previous ISEAS events and conversations with my collaborators. The collaborative writing process for the initial articles was invaluable for my learning. Subsequent publications—where I assumed primary responsibility—continued to be significant learning opportunities, demonstrating that coauthored research is inherently more polyphonic and enriched by the diverse perspectives of each contributor. Ultimately, ISEAS would not exist without the collective commitment of a wide network of participants, reflecting the essence of socially engaged art as a shared endeavor among humans and nonhumans alike.

11. Limitations and Avenues for Further Research

While finishing my doctoral thesis in 2024, I also organised ISEAS 2024, which turned out to be exceptionally successful and impactful—though, due to time and scope constraints, I could not include it in my thesis. Each time ISEAS takes place, it offers compelling new insights and research directions. Nonetheless, I had to keep my thesis narrowly focused, and I plan to present these additional findings outside my dissertation. To continue and thrive, ISEAS requires more robust financial and intellectual resources than I, as a freelance artist-researcher, can provide on my own. One of my biggest regrets is not having been able to offer participating artists more than a single stipend, though I am deeply thankful to the Kone Foundation for their support. However, I believe that most participants did not join for monetary reasons; their involvement reflects a shared desire to shape our future and influence both the spiritual and physical dimensions of the world we inhabit. The 2024 ISEAS not only succeeded in its goals but also nudged the concept forward: for the first time, everyone—artists, researchers, and community members (students from Franklin University Switzerland)—lived together throughout the event. This immersive environment fostered transformative interactions and deepened our collective sense of purpose. I hope to continue building on these experiences, sharing the resulting insights through future work, and ensuring that ISEAS remains a vital platform for addressing the environmental and social challenges of our time.

Ossi Kakko, an expert in forest and mycelium collaboration at ISEAS 2024, described the experience as follows:

> I was able to work as a learning facilitator and community art workshop instructor at the ISEAS 2024 event organised by Katja Juhola. During the week, I informed the students about the ecology of forests and bogs, as well as the impacts of human activity, while we collected sounds from nature and edible and dyeing mushrooms. The fact that the instructors and students lived in a community created for the event, along with the daily shared routines required to maintain the event, brought people comfortably to the same level—so that interaction was not limited to conventional teaching situations.

I was able to work as a learning facilitator and community art workshop instructor at the ISEAS 2024 event organised by Katja Juhola. During the week, I informed the students about the ecology of forests and bogs, as well as the impacts of human activity, while we collected sounds from nature and edible and dyeing mushrooms. The fact that the instructors and students lived in a community created for the event, along with the daily shared routines required to maintain the event, brought people comfortably to the same level—so that interaction was not limited to conventional teaching situations.

I received positive feedback from students majoring in sustainability science about how they had theoretically become familiar with the same topics that I presented to them in the field, but only when they observed these things on site did they feel that they truly understood them in practice. The environment and setting of Mustio Manor were excellent for this purpose. The diverse environment, with its old hardwood trees, oak-walnut groves, rocky terrain, and bogs, offered a very comprehensive view of Finnish nature and Finnish history from a relatively small area.

Participating in the event was a refreshing and positive experience for me, which gave rise to many more ideas about how community art can be used to address environmental issues in a meaningful and experiential way—and thereby support students' personal learning processes.
(Kakko, 2024, December 23, personal communication, Ähtäri; English translation by K. Juhola)

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Articles

Article I

Juhola, K., & Moldovan, S. (2020). International art symposium: Educational places and power relations. *Research in Arts and Education* (Special issue: Researching through artistic research and arts practices: Part I), 23–46.
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International Art Symposia: Educational Places and Power Relations

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Biography

Katja Juhola is a curator, visual artist and the founder and creator of the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS). Currently, Juhola is a doctoral candidate at the University of Lapland in the Faculty of Art and Design. Juhola has been active in the field of art for more than 20 years. She has held more than one hundred exhibitions both abroad and in Finland, and has completed more than ten major social art projects in Finland and five abroad.

Smaranda-Sabina Moldovan is a Romanian artist who works in her hometown of Timișoara. She is a neominimalist artist who uses different mediums from traditional painting to assemblage and installations for her art concepts regarding objects and interactions with consumerism and kitsch. Since 2017 she has been an assistant at West University, Faculty of Arts and Design. Her works have been exhibited in national and international galleries.

Abstract

Bringing artists together has a long tradition of developing artists and disseminating information globally. This study focuses on power relations and educational places in the field of art, specifically at international art symposia.

The study highlights the significance of these encounters for the cultural exchange of artists on the basis of participation in several art symposia by two artist-researchers. Opening up the power relations of these encounters to artistic expression is also explored, with power relations related to gender, culture and vocation discussed. Art-based research methods included various forms of dialogue art, such as discussions, interviews, doing art together and video documentation, which led to a broader understanding. The aim of the article is to explore the power relations in art symposia and problematise the kind of educational space that they offer artists with different cultural backgrounds.

Keywords

socially engaged art, power relations, art symposium, art-based research, dialogical art, feminism, educational places, power dynamics

Introduction

This article is part of artist and researcher Katja Juholas' broader art-based action research on the development of dialogic art in the context of the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS). Juhola is a doctoral candidate of the University of Lapland's Faculty of Art and Design. Juholas created ISEAS, an annual art symposium in Finland, where she acts as curator, participating artist and art researcher (2018, 2019, 2020a, 2020b). She has attended international art symposia since 2013. Smaranda-Sabina Moldovan is a Romanian visual artist and PhD assistant at West University, Faculty of Arts and Design. Her research is focused on consumerism and reflecting social life in art. She has attended international art symposia since 2010.

This article belongs to the field of studies on the relational networks of international art

symposia. These art symposia have many opportunities to help artists from different countries. Previous research on power relations and educational places, such as art symposia, is scarce. As far as we know, no previous research has investigated art symposia. This research therefore constitutes a relatively new area which has emerged from our attendance at several art symposia in Romania, Poland, Italy, Turkey and Finland. At these symposia, we initiated our collaboration by doing socially engaged artwork with local children. We often shared a room, which deepened the discussions and observations of things that happened at these meetings. To illuminate this uncharted area, we examine the relations between all participants at art symposia. There is no overall goal, apart from uncovering new information from the art symposia field that can improve our educational system and gender equality. The contributions made here are extensively pertinent to education.

There is a long history of artists gathering to work together. At the beginning of the 20th century, artists around the world gathered in France to share their knowledge, make contacts, study and work (Amory, 2007; Chuchvaha, 2018; Hage, 2016; Karvonen-Kannas, Kivimäki & Konttinen, 1996; Rankin-Gee, 2011). Today, art gatherings include art residences, academic meetings such as summer schools, conferences and art camps, so-called "art symposia". The term symposium—commonly used for academic discussions or conferences on a given topic—is also popular in the world of visual artists. Art symposia (Ionita, 2018; Juhola, 2018, 2019; Juhola, Huhmarniemi, & Raatikainen, 2020; Raatikainen, Juhola, Huhmarniemi, & Lagos, in press) are short-term intensive gatherings of approximately one to two weeks where artists live and work together. The networking of artists and the opportunity for artistic career development are of great importance to artists on an international level.

This article focuses on a participatory study where we implemented art-based methods of community-based participatory research, which is often used for research that discusses community-identified problems or issues (Leavy, 2017). According to Jokela, Hiltunen and

Härkönen (2015), art-based action research (ABAR) is a community process by nature, with research questions becoming more precise during the activity. In ABAR, development work and research are related (Jokela, Hiltunen, & Härkönen, 2015). Art-based research (ABR) generally expands qualitative research methods. The researcher is often an equal participant, and therefore research data reveal experiences that may not be achieved by other means (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2009, 2015, 2018). The research result is qualitative evidence that emerges because researchers are part of the events. In this paper, the researchers' personal experiences lead to observations, knowledge and conclusions in the subsequent discussions. ABR and ABAR are widely established and accepted in academics around the world (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Hiltunen & Rantala, 2015; Huhmarniemi, 2016; Leavy, 2015, 2018; Jokela, 2019; Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018). Professor Kallio-Tavin (2008) believes that ABR is more than just artistic intervention; she emphasises the role of art in generating research information. She sees ABR as the starting point for a diverse conception of people in changing contexts, where the methods of art bring out tacit knowledge. She highlights the ability of ABR to produce information about the surrounding reality and its social and interactive significance (Kallio-Tavin, 2008).

In this article, our research focuses on power relations. We examine the following: 1. Working methods. We explore the role of art symposia as places for art education. 2. Invitation systems. We study the appearance of curators and reasons for artists to attend symposia. We analyse invitation methods and the use of power in art symposia. We also locate the significance of one- or two-week art symposia in the context of short-term events in the field of international visual art meetings.

On one hand, our topic is related to the abuse of power, social exclusion and repression in contemporary art society; on the other hand, it is about benefits derived from continuous learning and receiving ongoing feedback through dialogue. We consider that every social interaction

has a power dynamic. Because power is such an active ingredient, we believe that we have to observe it, analyse it and reflect on it. Reflection is a purpose and a result of a good artist. In the *combined approach to art places and power analysis* section, we enter this process of education using a social, political and cultural view (Lacy, 2010). As artists, we lean on different art methods to reveal as much as we can regarding underlying relationship dynamics in art society today. As a consequence, learning issues arise during dialogues with other artists. There are many international art symposia around the world, including in South Korea, China, Malaysia, Thailand, India, Russia, Turkey, Tunisia, Haiti, Brazil, Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Dubai, Mexico, Romania, Israel, Poland, Finland, Norway, Germany, Italy (Photo 1), France, Greece, Estonia and Lithuania. These countries host symposia in which we have participated or have been invited to participate. The content of art symposia differs: some focus on sculpture, others on painting or performance, and some are socially engaged art symposia (Cam, 2018; China Art Academy Symposium, 2004; Høxbroe, 2009; ISEAS, n.d.; Tunisia Art Symposium, n.d.). Differences are also created by the funders. When the sponsor is the municipality, the curator is often required to produce the event for local residents as well. The goals of some symposia are to augment the collection of an art museum or a private art collector. In this case, the focus is strongly tied to the collector's notion of art.

Figure 1. Katja Juhola and Smaranda Moldovan during the socially engaged art days of the art symposium in Trabzon, Turkey, 2019. Photographed by Ekrem Kutlu in 2019

Often when artists meet each other at international art symposia, it is a time of gathering with many discussions (Photo 1). Kester (2004; see also Kantonen, 2005, 2010) states that dialogue is one way of creating art, as dialogical aesthetics recognises many ways to interact. At symposia where people speak different languages, we have often sung, danced and painted together to create a shared atmosphere.

Dialogical art is a very important part of ABR in many cases. According to Hammersley and Knowles (2016), dialogical art and research are strongly intertwined as methodological work of a socially-oriented artist-researcher. The artist-researcher works in different socially engaged contexts, regulates co-written and co-produced meaning-making, and challenges assumptions about the distinction between art and research and detached artist-researcher concepts. The

authors point out that “the dialogue reveals the criticism as one important way to ‘become aware’ of other ways to understand internal relationships” (Hammersley & Knowles, 2016, p. 8).

Professor Suzanne Lacy, an American artist, educator and writer, argues that making art involves several levels such as compulsion, profession and spiritual practice (2010). She believes that the efforts that give rise to art are like other spiritual difficulties. However, the artist’s experience and guides appear in the making. Socially engaged art is the expression of values, as well as the reflection of creativity and enlightenment views and practices regarding the social connection of relationships. If things are seen differently, they will change. From the perspective of these changes, we too are changing. We act and every act affects everyone else. As Lacy argues, “We make the art and the art makes us” (2010, p. 299).

Professor Mirja Hiltunen describes educational places that arise through the will to cooperate and share (2009; see also Dewey, 1980). She argues that communal art education arises from the event of encounter and action as a means of encounter: "The intermediate space-born, reflective-aesthetic commonality, is reciprocity" (Hiltunen, 2009, p. 271). Confronting different social realities, based on the fact that each artist brings their own, leads to a multilayer conversation with no benefit in comparing layers, but a conceptual map of the discussion. It is an experimental conversation, just like experimental art (see Gugliemi, 1976). The experimental approach belongs to a methodology of knowledge and existence, structured in various layers, that has developed based on the historical context of each culture. It is a method of research and investigation and is the point of departure for any kind of conversation. It is what creates originality. The conversation between artists with different cultural backgrounds becomes an art experiment, a living art performance, which could be a place for education.

Tom Barone and Elliot W. Eisner argue that art-based researchers must strive to change the world for the better and always take into account in their study societal issues that they in-

evitably deal with, including power relations and thus ethical issues (2012). American curator Nato Thompson argues that the formation of communities, such as a socially engaged artistic community or the art symposia discussed in this article, affects many things (2015). He argues that collective power can move through effective organisational models. In this study, we focus on power relations at international art symposia. Power relations exist throughout society, wherever one individual or group has the ability to coerce, oblige, command, direct or influence the lives of others. When talking about power relations in the art world, feminist thinking cannot be avoided. Professor Simone Beauvoir (1974) argues that women are subjected to social, cultural, historical and economic demands. Finnish society, according to Suominen and Pusa (2018), prioritises education and focuses on the need for equal art education based on human rights in order to minimise negative gender thinking, conceptualisation and stigmatisation. They believe that "equal access to meaningful, challenging, engaging, caring, and ethically sustainable education is a foundational human right for all of our students" and that it is essential to "facilitate education that is truly relevant, ethical, and accepting of all diversity" (Suominen & Pusa, 2018, pp. 33–54). As both of the authors of this papers have participated in symposia in different countries and have also spent a lot of time with female artists from different societies, we want to shed light on how different the art world still is for female artists compared with male artists, and how art symposia can help to create equality.

Betty Friedan, perhaps the most influential feminist writer and activist, and the author of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), describes the American consumer society and the changes that have occurred as a result of the masculinisation of the environment. She concludes with a slogan that warns that it is not about material goods, family or education; a woman needs more, including an identity for herself and her children. In Romanian society, sociologist Vladimir Paști noticed that despite communism, where there were equal rights for both men and women in the labour market, the society remained a patriarchal one. Paști (2003) believes that only

through education can power relations be rebuilt, and that education and power relations are bound together in shaping our future world.

Methods and Data Collection

Participatory art has become established in contemporary art as an artistic practice, which has increased the use of art-based methods in various fields of society (e.g., Bishop, 2006; McNiff, 1998). In this study, we used qualitative methods under ABR, which can be described as an umbrella term for many artistic actions in research (Leavy, 2015, 2017, 2018). We argue that our methods are connected to dialogical aesthetic (Kester, 2004) and the relations (Bourriaud, Pleasance, & Woods, 2002) between artists participating in art symposia. Moldovan has participated in 14 different art symposia and Juhola 11, while they have attended six different international art symposia together. Juhola has filmed events at two different art symposia: the Romania Gernik Art Camp 2015 and the Poland Torun International Art Symposium 2016 (Juhola, n.d.). The video footage includes artists' interviews and the curators' perspectives. Juhola conducted video interviews with the participants who attended the art symposia with her. She recorded all discussions and asked why artists were attending these symposia. Because not all the participants could communicate in English, she sometimes had interpreters join the discussion. Juhola also sent questionnaires for curators on how and why they organised symposia. The results were in line with those of the video interviews. Data were also collected while painting side by side with other artists and while having conversations with other participant artists.

A Combined Approach to Art Places and Power Analysis

From our experience of participating in art symposia as visual artists, we started asking ourselves why we were attending and whether others had the same reasons. Receiving an invitation from a curator to join an event is usually a closed circuit. In order to be invited, somebody has

to suggest that you are a professional artist and have the social skills to fit in a group. Today, the latter means that you are comfortable with what we call artists as businesspeople. According to Dutch curator Anna Tilroe (Versluys et al., 1990), art and concept are being accepted in all forms of manifestation, even in modern media, but the artist is regarded more as a businessperson. The same mechanism can be identified in the art symposia. If we use the business model (Piu, 2012) artists should be chosen for promoting fairness, trust and transparency, according to power relations in business. According to Beaufort's (2012) study, the power issue is perceived differently; women relate to power differently to men. So, if being an artist is being a businessperson, women do not plan to battle for a higher position as men do. Beaufort (2012) also mentions that it is very difficult to generalise, as it is "made more difficult by the fact that many variations in approach are linked to the socio-cultural setting".

Figure 2. Artist group photo at the art symposium at Lake Orta, Italy. In the middle is the sponsor of the symposium and six curators from different international art symposia. Juholas' photo collection 2015.

The best symposia are the ones where many curators are also invited, because that might lead to artists being invited to the next symposium. We have both witnessed artists being presented as curators of other symposia.

In our experience, many art symposia around the world are artist-driven and can be reached by invitation only. Persistence is a challenge, because getting funding is always difficult and implies a form of power being used by funders over curators and by curators over artists (Photo 2). Curators, both men and women, must navigate power relations with sponsors, which can be private or public administrations. Curators need to have good managerial qualities to maintain funds to give continuity to the event. It is often the duty of the curator to produce a public exhibition of the event. This is what the founders of the project and the participating artists expect. For artists (Photo 4), it is a merit and it is significant that the exhibition space is valuable. The sponsor of the event may have similar expectations. We have witnessed situations where the artist has not yielded the expected works and the curator has been very frustrated. When it comes to social art in particular, as in symposia in Finland or Italy, the goal has also been art education. Participating artists have not always understood the aims of the symposia and conflicts have arisen. We argue that part of the reason is that curators are not professional facilitators, but pure-intentioned and voluntary artists who easily find themselves in very difficult and complex situations where the demands and workloads of artists, funders and the curator do not align as expected.

The answers from curators regarding the reasons for organising symposia that Juhola received via email were quite similar: they felt that their own participatory experience was the reason they started curating and organising symposia. Curator Delphine Manet (March 2019) said that “despite the difficulties of collaboration and working and living in a new and chaotic way, it was such a fantastic and impressive experience of artistic and personal growth that led me to organize my own international art symposium”.

The curators saw symposia as engaging, and noted the energy associated with the artists' desire to communicate with one another and share their thoughts. Curators want to invite artists to symposia who are not selfish, but modest, with distinctive and pleasant personalities. According to this opinion, a good symposium arises from synergy and a positive atmosphere, which is also reflected in the art. As curator Ekrem Kutlu (March 2019) put it, "if artists aren't interested in participating to create a synergetic atmosphere, they might as well stay home".

These answers led us to think about power relations that curators have with artists. It is not only the way you do art, but it is also the way you do art together with other artists: how do you participate to build a shared knowledge atmosphere?

Figure 3. Art discussions and a common plan of how to do an art action led by Katja Juhola and ISEAS mentor Mari Krappala during the performative based art symposium ISEAS 2018. Photographer Daniel Fuss 2018

Several reasons emerged from the analysis of the interviews which can connect art symposia to places of education. Joint discussions during the making of art were considered the most important gifts of the symposia (Photo 3), leading to an increase in artists' motivation. Sometimes the reason for artists joining symposia was to get away from home duties, to find new inspiration in other cultures or to be influenced by others. At the art symposia, artists can only focus on art (home and home duties are left behind), and there is a purposefulness and even a spirit of competition in the work. Respondents also pointed out that attending symposia is an intensive way of working, while working in your own studio is a slow and lonely endeavour.

Figure 4. Juhola and Moldovan during the opening of the group exhibition in Doku Sanat Gallery, Istanbul 2017. Photo by Rishi Kapil.

According to the analysis of the interviews and video material, we argue that art symposia create educational places: 1) Many artists are eager to attend art symposia to increase their skills and learn from international artists. 2) Many of the participating artists work as art teachers in their home countries. Participation in international art symposia gives art educators more tools for their teaching work, through knowledge exchange at the symposia. 3) For participating artists, it seems to be significant to have dialogue through, with and around art and meet and make new power connections with clients, funders, sponsorship and galleries.

Giving and Receiving— An Educational Exchange

Figure 5. Istanbul 2017. Juhola and Moldovans' socially engaged artwork with children. Photographed by Juhola 2017.

Socially engaged art (Photo 5), which we can see when artists participate in art symposia, means always learning and teaching, because any social situation is a constant exchange of information. The knowledge gained is returned home and spread to the culture of each artist, making it richer. Art symposia also lead to the spread of a certain type of knowledge that cannot be accessed through articles or remotely, as it comes from the personal lived experience of the artists. A good example is learning new technology and impressions of and approaches to different ways of creating. Contemporary learning theorists (Freedman, Heijnen, Kallio-Tavin, Kárpát, & Papp, 2013) conceptualise learning as a process of participation in meaningful group practices, where moments of understanding and new forms of knowledge emerge from social contexts. Modern learning theorists have further highlighted learning as an inclusive and group practice in which new knowledge is increased and disseminated in social contexts. Knowledge is no longer a static possession; it is constantly and actively obtained, shared and renewed. Scholars and theorists have argued that we have entered a new era in which cultural production is no longer a field of professional experts, but rather a shared field that is constantly being developed by all participants (Freedman et al., 2013).

Art also presents opportunities to learn the conventions of different cultures. In one culture, a persuasive artist may not be appreciated. Some cultures value technical skills, while in others the message of art and the opportunity to open political debates are valued most. British art historian, critic and Professor Claire Bishop (2012) argues that artists today achieve invisible meanings in group dynamics, social situations, energy changes and elevated awareness. As a result, it is art dependent on personal experience, preferably long-term experience (Bishop, 2012).

Figure 6. Turkish artist and curator Ekrem Kutlu showing on the canvas of Polish artist Ania Swoboda his painting technique. Photographed by Juhola 2017.

This research into international art symposia as art education places shows that power relations are determined by sharing between participants (Photo 6). Art educator and researcher Emily Pringle (2011) argues that one understanding of a socially engaged artist in our society is an artist who shares and uses the knowledge he or she knows to facilitate and enable the creativity of others.

Boundaries in Power Relations

Figure 7. Photo 7. Artist Juhola during her performance in Scampia, Italy, 2018. In Naples at the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium 2018, Juhola made a performative experience with participating children where she allowed them to use different foods to cover her seated form. Afterwards, she had a conversation with them about power relations and how she felt during the intervention. Final pieces of art were presented as photographs in the gallery taken by Fabio Cito 2018.

This study argues that power relations exist within each individual artist who participates in international art symposia. We began to wonder whether in art symposia, and in the art world generally, some women are still under pressure regarding their appearance and culturally were taught differently to men. This is despite the fact that we believe that among artists there is generally goodwill regarding equality that is often lacking in society. Symposia are usually representative of different genres and age groups, but lack sexual diversity. The study of Franz and

Ishai (2006) shows that face perception leads to a response based on gender and sexual preference. A good-looking female is perceived similarly by both heterosexual males and homosexual females. There are also studies (Barelds-Dijkstra & Barelds, 2008; Perrin, 1921) which indicate that other factors, such as good behaviour, are part of being considered attractive. Another factor is light skin, which is considered more attractive than dark skin (Hall, 2018; van den Berghe & Frost, 1986). Beautiful people (Jayson, 2011) tend to receive more attention, make more money and be more successful in life. Those who are perceived as more attractive tend to benefit from better jobs, more choices in terms of romantic or platonic partners and, therefore, more power in relationships. Art symposia involve artists, curators and sponsors of all genders, and symposia are a business scene, these participants behave by taking into consideration these factors for their success. Some authors say that they apply equally to women and men (Cowley, 1996), but some disagree, such as the expert in relationships and sexuality Esther Perel (n.d.). We believe that art has more to offer than contributing to the success of a project and can make a cultural contribution to an undeveloped area (Photo 7).

Figure 8. This photograph from Gernik 2016 was taken to support legal abortion in Poland. Artists express their solidarity with Polish women. Photo credit: Gernik archive.

Studies such as the one of The National Museum of Women in Arts show that 51% of artists are women, but only half of them are present in London galleries. The director of Tate, Frances Morris, states on the Tate website that to change the world, women should never be complacent. As modernism took hold in Europe, in Eastern Europe, due to the political situation and the socialist ideological presence, the current that was born was known as socialist realism (Papadopoulou, 2015; Reid, 1996). The art was divided into the official art, realistic art that was used in communist propaganda, and the "proper" cult that was underground, usually far from the capital and held in a restricted environment; these appeared to be different from the countries dominated by the Soviet Union (see Denison, 2009). Artistic creation unaltered by ideology develops theories related to abstract art that are incongruent with regimes. Naturally,

artists that emerge from this kind of background are often in survival mode (Doctor Mirela Pop of Romania, years after leaving the system, still suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder; also see Andronic & Andronic, 2017, p. 122). In these cases, it is clear that participating in these symposia can help female artists see themselves differently by meeting other female artists with different backgrounds (Photo 8).

In art symposia that take place in underdeveloped countries, we noticed that patriarchal traits were more present. In other cultures, roles are more flexible and there are not so many limitations on what you can be or do; they exist but are undercover, with the power shifted to professional and social skills.

The theory of Professor Elisabeth Meyer (2007) reacts in a healthy way, indicating that it is not about gender as two opposite categories, but it is more about the self as a human being. Feminism is not only about "girl power", but rather an equal distribution of power without being rated by gender at all. Other genders are totally absent or well-hidden at art symposia. We agree with Meyer's belief and sustain her method of implementation through art and pedagogy.

Conclusion

We have collaborated as artists on topics of interest regarding artistic practices and developed them for dialogical art. The information gathering strategies implemented during the symposia supported successful deep dialogues. These findings provide additional information about unstable power relations and educational exchange during international art symposia. This conclusion follows from the fact that art symposia are places of art education where every participant can give and receive in an unequal manner. Our results show that power relations exist in these gatherings at many different levels. We see the need for further study of the potential of art symposia to create gender equality. This assumption might be addressed in future studies of Juhola's broader research at the ISEAS, which aims to develop dialogical art as a tool

for researchers and artists.

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Article II

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Artistic Research on Dialogical Aesthetics – Ethics of Gathering

Katja Juhola, Maria Huhmarniemi & Kaisa Raatikainen

International Socially Engaged Art Symposium addressing research ecologies

In the 21st century, artistic and art-based research has become widely established and accepted in academia (see, e.g. Barone & Eisner 2012; Leavy 2015, 2019; McNiff 1998; Sullivan, 2005). Further, collaborations between artists and scientists have simultaneously developed into an active field (da Costa 2008; Scott 2006). Art-based research is one approach to environmental research in which art is implemented as part of the research strategy and methodology. In this article, we discuss socially engaged art and transdisciplinary science collaborations as artistic research and analyse elements of ethics in the art symposium.

Artists have many reasons for collaborating with scientists in the disciplines of natural sciences and environmental studies. As artist-researcher Maria Huhmarniemi (2011) has described, some artists aim to communicate environmental research to the public in order to increase interest in environmental issues, while others work with scientific methods simply for the sake of art. Others have raised discussions about ethical concerns in regard to research methods, with some artists also producing research data, making new interpretations, creating innovations and even solving environmental problems at a local level (Huhmarniemi 2011). The pedagogical turn in contemporary art – whereby dialogical art, i.e. where the artist involves her or his partner in the meaningful process without pre-defining the end result (see Kantonen 2010), has been established and educational learning strategies have been implemented in informal and outdoor sites – has also influenced art and science collaborations (see da Costa 2008). This transdisciplinary field of art, research and activism collaborations has tremendous educational potential. In the field of education, this transdisciplinary collaboration is often referred to as STEAM (see Harris & Bruin 2018), i.e. learning that uses science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics for dialogical and collaborative learning.

Established in 2017 in Raseborg, Finland, the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS) is held annually. The symposium is curated and coordinated by artist-researcher Katja Juhola, who invites international and national artists to work collaboratively with various local communities (Juhola 2018, forthcoming). Juhola has been conducting a cyclic development research on the symposium as a socially and environmentally engaged art event. Thus, this article is one part of an ongoing art-based action research process. Cycles of planning, acting, reflecting, evaluating and re-planning are repeated in order to deepen the understanding of the studied phenomenon (see, e.g. Jokela 2019; Jokela & Huhmarniemi 2018). An underlying aim is to develop the art world to have a greater impact on global society and community or environmental issues through art. The symposium is influenced by dialogical aesthetics and theories of conversation pieces (Kantonen 2010; Kester 2004) and community-based art education (Helguera 2011; Hiltunen 2009; lleris 2015, 2017; Jokela 2013, 2016; Thompson 2015). Juhola (2018) has declared that the ISEAS gathering itself is her artwork, which follows dialogical aesthetics; in addition, dialogical art occurs in collaborations among invited artists and the local community.

In 2019, Juhola invited a group of artists and environmental researchers and experts to collaborate during ISEAS. The study topic was the relationship between humans and nature, which followed a recent discussion on post-humanism and new materialism (see Connolly 2013; Demos 2016; Youatt 2007). The participants formed three teams to focus on three locally relevant sub-themes: meadows and wood-pastures, the circular economy and freshwater pearl mussels (described in this article). Each team engaged with local communities, including kindergartens, schools, the Martha Society, which promotes well-being and quality of life in the home and carries out cultural and civic education in Finland, and a local farm. Docent Mari Krappala supported by mentoring each group's work with its theme. A documentary team of two videographers and one photographer followed the teams to provide research data and materials for presentation in a book, exhibitions and social media. The video presented here illustrates the work done by all three teams (Video 1).

The authors of this article initiated their collaboration in the spring of 2019 while planning for ISEAS. All authors took part in ISEAS interventions. Huhmarniemi and Raatikainen worked together in the meadows and wood-pastures team. Juhola worked in the freshwater pearl mussel team. Juhola (2018) has been conducting long-term art-based action research on developing dialogical art methods in the context of ISEAS. Huhmarniemi's (2011, 2016, 2019) research on collaborations has included

Video 1. Whole ISEAS including three interventions. Video is 26 min 18 sec. Videographed and edited by Amir Abdi and Linus Westerlund.

artist participation in environmental discussions. Raatikainen (2018) has performed interdisciplinary research on the conservation of agricultural biodiversity and has also been training and performing as a dancer, which has resulted in increasing the mutual understanding of knowledge and art-based research methods between the authors.

The aim of ISEAS 2019, titled in Nature, was to create an art process and production in situ in collaboration with other symposium participants and community members. Each participant brought their own expertise, knowledge and know-how, albeit with no previous artworks: at ISEAS, artworks are always the result of event-specific collaborations and are preceded by common discussions and design (Juhola 2018) (photo 1.). According to Kester's (2004) dialogical aesthetics, art takes place within a community dialogue. Social art cannot exist without the 'I' and the 'you'; dialogical art is created in human relationships and encounters (Bourriaud 2002). The phenomenon being studied can be presented in the form of an exhibition, although it has been created in the form of a dialogue within the community during an art intervention (Kester 2004).

The three goals set by Juhola for ISEAS 2019 were 1) to bring environmental research into the communities' worldview, 2) to cope with local natural conditions and 3) to ask people how to live in an equal relationship with non-human nature, including animals, plants and non-living objects. As the overarching topic of the teams' work

was the human–nature relationship, ISEAS addressed the concept of research ecologies from multiple perspectives. On one hand, all groups applied scientific, ecological and environmental knowledge and, thus, discussed their artistic work using ecological terms. On the other hand, most of the practices of the symposium were reasoned through the lens of ecological sustainability and environmentalism.

While issues of political ecology were explored in the artistic research in the symposium (Raatikainen, Juhola & Huhmarniemi, forthcoming), the ethics of the gathering are considered in this article. The need for ethical principles governing artist gatherings became topical in the 2010s. For example, the #metoo movement showed that the art and cultural fields engaged in practices considered unethical in the 2020s. We are aware that art symposiums can potentially support gender equality and marginalised artists, but they can also fail entirely. In addition, we ponder the aspects of ethics in relation to the participants. For example, our intention was to invite locals in the dialogue, empower and inform them and avoid treating them as mere sources of inspiration and information. Research and guidelines surrounding ethics in artistic research and community action research were considered relevant for developing ethical principles for the socially engaged art symposium. While there are similar art gather-

Photo 1. Participants of ISEAS are having a meeting in Solhem residency kitchen. Photograph Fabio Cito.

ings around the world, there is a dearth of research literature on the ethics or impact of art symposiums. This study is largely dependent on Juhola's previous experiences in several international art symposiums around the world; the previous knowledge is based on practical knowhow rather than evidence-based research.

In this article, we analyse the artistic research practices and ethics of the gathering. To explain the research ecology of ISEAS 2019, we present the work process of one team, which focused on endangered freshwater pearl mussels. We asked questions about the kinds of elements employed to support the dialogue, how we gained knowledge from the team and community members and what kinds of ethical issues emerged during the cross-disciplinary symposium and in interaction with the local communities. The analysis is based on the research data collected during the symposium. Some of the dialogues, such as team mentoring sessions, group discussion and debates on ethics and final evaluation were documented in research diaries, shared memos and voice recorder; documentation varied. The symposium participants and some of the community members, including school children, provided written reflections and/or evaluation of their experiences. The documentary team also contributed a rich selection of documentary photographs and three edited videos to the research data: one video of each intervention. The elements

Photo 2. Artists, researchers and environmental experts are having presentations and discussions. Photograph Fabio Cito.

of ethics in the symposium are discussed under the following themes: 1) an ethical standard in relation to the aims of the symposium and producing the event according ethical principles of community art, 2) artists' and experts' respect for each other as well as for non-human nature, 3) the aim for a relatively low environmental footprint and a meaningful handprint and 4) awareness of power relations in art symposiums. In addition, we pondered why the gathering was called a symposium.

Socially engaged art as a research inquiry for political ecology: Ethical aspects

ISEAS 2019 drew on contemporary place-bound and socially engaged artistic practices to create situations of dynamic sharing, cooperation and social practice (Bishop 2006; Bourriaud 2002; Doherty 2004; Helguera 2002; Irish 2010; Kester 2004; Thompson 2015). It is typical for socially engaged art as research inquiry to provoke discussion, tackle issues that are not usually verbally discussed and educate (Lacy 1995; Smartt Gullion & Schäfer 2018). Some long-term socially engaged art and science collaborations are well known for their educational impact. For example, the bioartist Brandon Ballengée has been conducting research on frogs in so-called eco-actions with community members. He believes that transdisciplinary art practices and participatory biology programmes may successfully increase the public's understanding of ecological phenomena (Ballengée 2015). Media artist and art scholar Andrea Polli has studied weather conditions and public engagement with weather and climate science (Polli 2011). This kind of artistic work has been around for decades. For example, in 1998, artists Rikrit Tiranvanija and Kamin Lertchaiprasert purchased a rice field in northern Thailand to create a testing ground for meditation and ideas, such as ecologically conscious systems that do not rely on gas or electricity. Their artistic production called for self-sufficiency and sustainable practices (Thompson 2012). The existing literature offers evidence of the positive impact of art on involving participants and audiences in environmental discussions and sustainable ways of living.

Based on the previous research and principles of dialogical art (Bishop 2006; Doherty 2004; Kester 2004; Thompson 2012), our aim was to develop the concept of ISEAS to focus on recent philosophical paradigm shifts, such as new-materialism and post-humanism (Bennett & Patrick 2010; Demos 2016; Plumwood 2002; Wolfe 2009). Moreover, discussions about artistic research underscored a focus on 'experimentality', 'materiality' and 'post-philosophy' (see Seppä, Kaila & Slager 2017). In this

study, we agreed that the aims of artistic research are to create case studies through art and dialogue and then discuss, evaluate, publish and further develop them in research. The strength of artistic research is seen as the ability of art to surprise us and the task of artistic research to take a new direction, avoid frequently asked questions and uncover matters not yet explored (see Seppä, Kaila & Slager 2017).

Professor of art history Grant Kester (2004), who coined the term 'dialogical art', emphasizes that the art of dialogue arises from human interaction and reflection on ways in which to change the world. He also maintains that interaction and dialogue do not necessarily aim to produce speech but other forms of art and that discursive interaction is based on empathic identification. Empathy can create a space of shared knowledge in which listening is also important (Kester 2004). There is abundant research on the ethical dimensions of community art, including dialogical art, and discussions on how to involve community members in the planning process, how to treat participants equally and how to empower and create long-term relations and processes (see, e.g. Hiltunen 2009; Kantonen 2005; Kester 2004; Kwon 2002; Lippard 2010). Ethical issues concern the relationship between the artist and the work of art and the group or community involved in the production of the work as well as relations with other partners and the art world (Kantonen 2005). A professor in art education, Timo Jokela (Forthcoming) has noted that ethics in dialogical art in communities are often multi-layered and involve questions of ownership of culture and power.

In ISEAS 2019, we applied research ethics in addition to ethics of community art. Generally recognised ethical research principles include minimising harm, respecting autonomy, protecting privacy, offering reciprocity and treating people equitably (Hammersley & Traianou 2012). Patricia Leavy (2017), a pioneering author of arts-based research, writes about the ethical substructure of research. She explains that research on socially engaged art projects contains three ethical dimensions: the philosophical refers to the value system and addresses the question 'What do you believe?' The practical dimension of ethics focuses on 'What do you do?' and a reflective ethical dimension combines these two aspects and addresses the question 'How does power come to bear?' (Leavy 2017, p. 25).

The artistic research in ISEAS focuses on the field of political ecology. According to art historian T. J. Demos, '…environmentally engaged art bears the potential to both rethink politics and politicize art's relation to ecology, and its thoughtful consideration proves nature's inextricable binds to economics, technology, culture, and law at every turn' (Demos 2016, p. 8). The existing research on political ecology lies on a continuum

ranging from politico-economic analyses to more ecology-oriented research and creative mixtures of the two (Sneddon 2000). It has been influential in transcending some of the intractable tensions within sustainability debates, including the key role of the capitalist economy and the long-term futility of 'sustainability talk' (Sneddon 2000). A telling shortcoming of the sustainability-oriented disciplines introduced in the 20th century has been their inability or refusal to grapple with the structural dimensions of human–environment relations (Sneddon 2000). Insights from political ecology have shown that the basic assumptions of sustainability thinking have engendered cautious optimism, indicating the need to expand academic interpretations and prescriptions beyond a narrowly construed pragmatic approach to sustainability (Sneddon 2000).

The anxiety caused by environmental crises has been recognised, and the phenomenon has been discussed in research (Pihkala 2017, 2018; Searle & Gow 2010). Empirical evidence has demonstrated a relationship between environmental concerns and symptoms that are indicative of depression, anxiety and stress (Searle & Gow 2010). Eco-anxiety is typically caused by the sudden deterioration of the local living environment, climate change and the threat of a sixth mass extinction of species. Women, children, young people, people with mental disorders and people with pro-environmental orientations are at particular risk of eco-anxiety (Searle & Gow 2010; Pihkala 2018). Eco-theologist Panu Pihkala (2017, 2018) has stated that while it is essential to express loss and threats, hope and action should be emphasised in education. The need to generate hope has also been discussed by art curators and researchers since the 1990s (see Lippard 1995). According to Pihkala (2017), the strength of art-based environmental education is the opportunity it provides for deep, if not existential and spiritual, experiences that are in touch with the body and mind, ideologies and emotions. Hope and the human potential to act respectfully towards the diversity of non-human nature were at the core of the practices at the symposium. The strategy for supporting hope and interactive relations towards non-human nature was agreed upon at the beginning of the symposium.

Huhmarniemi (2019) has argued that in conducting fieldwork for art–science collaborations, certain ethical concerns must be highlighted. She has outlined ethical principles based on a study of international art and science symposiums and similar gatherings in the Arctic. They include for example, a need for collaboration between artists and scientists in a variety of disciplines, including the natural and social sciences and humanities, in order to study the ways in which environmental problems are bound to society and culture. Huhmarniemi (2019) also notes that an art curatorial

practice must be developed, as artists too often limit their process to artistic aims. If the gathering is intended for international artists, they should collaborate with local artists and local knowledge holders, as place-specific art and science collaboration should also benefit locals (Huhmarniemi, 2019). Huhmarniemi also notes the need for art–science collaborations that focus on new solutions, science communication through contemporary art, increased dialogue and interaction in multidisciplinary and artistic environmental research, development in artist education in these fields and activist strategies that guide societies towards consuming fewer natural resources through art–science collaboration (Huhmarniemi 2019).

Ethical principles and theories applicable to dialogical art, artistic research, and art-science collaboration were discussed in ISEAS 2019. The concepts were clear to some participants; For example, participating researchers were well aware of the ethics of research, but some artists were less familiar with these principles. Posthumanism was a new concept for many members of the group and opened the question: "What can it mean for our practice?" Focusing on creating encounters in the community and in nature was a common goal and participants committed to the above approaches.

Freshwater pearl mussels: Making public art

The freshwater pearl mussels project was an intervention that artist and art researcher Juhola designed for ISEAS. She wanted to create a permanent public art piece for locals in a prominent place – the village's swimming beach – where nearly 100 years ago, local young men would dive into the river to catch mussels to give their betrothed a pearl to wear on her finger. The river environment has changed over the years, and river pearl mussels have become locally extinct. However, the intervention at Juhola's request focused not only on freshwater pearl mussels but on all mussel species in Finland and their importance to biodiversity and aquatic ecology. The Mustionjoki River is the only remaining river in Finland where these species still exist (Lopes-Lima et al. 2017).

Juhola found it important to commit a freshwater pearl mussel researcher to the symposium. Only a few researchers in Finland are familiar with the subject. While contacting them, Juhola found it challenging to find environmental scientists who were willing to participate in the symposium. One probable reason for the caution among natural scientists is that one- to two-week intensive symposiums are not a familiar way of working for them.

The intervention began under Juhola's lead in the spring of 2019, when students learned from a group of researchers doing scuba diving on the lower reaches of the Mustio River, where they reduced the number of live freshwater pearl mussels. The research team was led by research diver Panu Oulasvirta from Alleco Ltd, who also introduced to the students the life cycle of the freshwater pearl mussels and the reasons leading to their extinction. However, Oulasvirta did not have time to attend the symposium in the late summer.

The freshwater pearl mussels team included Finnish artist and art researcher Katja Juhola, British artist Anthony White and Finnish researcher Jouni Taskinen from the field of aquatic ecology, who could only stay for three days. In this intervention, the artistic and scientific work was mainly conducted separately. Taskinen's teaching focused on the aquatic ecology of the river environment, and the artists Juhola and White collaborated with local sixth-grade children through art. The experience was exciting for all parties involved, but as they set off to the local beach, the children, artists, the researcher and the class teacher relaxed. The intervention resulted in a fruitful, artistic and scientific interaction, deepened by Taskinen playing with clay with the children and demonstrating how mussels are moulded. With the help of Taskinen, the children, artists and teacher learned how mussels filter water, how many different species are found in the local river and what factors drove the endangerment of the freshwater pearl mussel. As the working process was divided into three parts, there was ample time for discussion.

Juhola's discussion of the event with the teacher was a meaningful intervention. They conversed about the impact of the artistic intervention, reflecting on and evaluating its progress. The teacher stated that this project was one of the best she had witnessed throughout her long career as a teacher. The children were able to immerse themselves, i.e. the Swedish-speaking children spoke in Finnish and English; thus, various learning aims were achieved in the process. The children learned about science when Taskinen demonstrated an experiment of studying the filtration capability of mussels using water tanks, and they created science-related art with the artists. The teacher considered the process to be fruitful. At first, the children were sceptical, but they eventually expressed joy, enthusiasm, playfulness and motivation (photos 3–5 and video 2).

The close-knit, outdoor learning environment, including the bodily, tactile, and multi-sensory experiences, was beneficial for learning (see Graham 2007). The children were also allowed to swim, which made them group themselves tightly together, which was a noticeable change during the week. As a public artwork, the students created a sculpture out of clay with artist Juhola (photos 6–7). It represented the bottom of the

Photo 3. Professor Jouni Taskinen is showing how the mussels are cleaning the water. Photograph Fabio Cito.

Photo 4. After two hours with the help of the mussels the water is clean. Photograph Fabio Cito.

Photo 5. Children are searching mussels with the guidance of Professor Taskinen. Photograph Fabio Cito.

Video 2. Video 5 min. 42 sec. about Freshwater pearl mussel -team to working with local 6:th grade school children. Video by Amir Abdi & Linus Westerlund.

Photo 6: The pupils created a sculpture out of clay with artist Juhola. It represented the bottom of the river, where the mussels live. They placed the mussels in the proper position. The final piece is a concrete sculpture. Photograph by Fabio Cito.

Photo 7. The children learned about science when Taskinen taught them about an experimental way of studying mussels, and they created science-related art with the artists Juhola & White. Photograph by Fabio Cito.

river, where the mussels live. It was interesting to see how they placed the mussels in the proper position. A plaster mould and concrete were cast on the completed sculpture. The final piece was a concrete sculpture that will eventually be covered with moss, as it stands on the beach, and will be accompanied by an informative sign about the importance of river mussels in purifying river water (photos 8–9).

Under the guidance of English artist Anthony White, the children painted two different rivers on two large canvases (photos 10–11). One was blotchy and dirty with no mussels; the other was yellow, light and clean and contained mussels. As a way of depicting a polluted river, the children used the front of a dirty cloth to write about aspects of their lives that they did not like. To depict a healthy river they then used the front of a clean cloth to write about the positive aspects of their lives. The work was exhibited in the gallery alongside mussels that the children had made out of clay. On the final day, under the guidance of Juhola, the children wrote a memo about the project, which was also shown at the exhibition.

Professor of art education Timo Jokela (2008) performed an extensive study of community-based public art projects in schools and villages, which brought together

Photos 8-9,
Katja Juhola contributed to the final statue.
Photographs by Jukka Juhola.

Photos 10-11, Pupils making the artworks with artist White. Photographs by Fabio Cito.

teachers, pupils, parents and other community members. He explained that this kind of work can create a hub of information and action, a showcase for learning and community spirit, a meeting place for the school and community, a forum for symbols that encourage cultural identity and democracy and a meeting place for young citizens. The process of creating public art for one's own environment empowers communities (Hiltunen 2010; Jokela 2008). The dean of the Utrecht Graduate School of Visual Art and Design, Henk Slager (2016), described the ability of art to comment on people's living environments in a way that produces deeper meaning. He referred to the concept of critical spatial practice, signifying the coming together of art, architecture, planning and design to create a commitment to urban processes and the politicisation of space (Slager 2016).

The Mustionjoki beach is a popular gathering place for villagers during the summer, so creating a permanent work of art with local school children was conducive to Slager's perception of critical spatial practice. The work highlights the importance of keeping common spaces clean and how this can be variously affected. This project was also a process of empowerment that spread its message more broadly through the contribution of social media and the children's families and exhibitions.

In Taskinen's final evaluation that he contributed in a written format based on a given evaluation criteria table, he alluded to the dialogical impact of ISEAS and said that he would use the same method in his courses in the future. Taskinen also mentioned that the project increased his interactions with artists. He found the intervention successful in terms of collaborating with the artists and school children involved. This

Photo 12, Exhibition view in Galleri Perspektive September 2019. Photograph by Fabio Cito.

Photo 13, Exhibition view from the opening day. Photograph by Fabio Cito.

project opened his eyes to the potential of collaboration between natural scientists and artists, e.g. in nature conservation (awareness and engagement of children). When asked how artwork influences ecological awareness, he stated that the site-specific artwork will have a major impact by increasing the awareness of children and local people. Art researchers Barone and Eisner (2012, p. 136) have noted that 'The end result will then be a politically powerful work of arts-based research that stands on firm ethical grounds, an aesthetically powerful work of arts-based research with potential to change the world for the better'(photos 12–13).

Elements of ethics in the symposium

ETHICAL STANDARD IN THE AIMS OF THE SYMPOSIUM AND FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ART

According to Leavy (2017), ethical dimensions of research on socially engaged art includes ethical standards in the aims of researchers as well as transparency in their intentions and beliefs. This study was based on the notion that ecological crises call for artistic interventions and activist art and science collaborations to bring critical and creative thinking together to produce strategies that make it possible to live in a humbler way, to decolonise nature and to deepen human relations with non-human nature (see Demos 2016; Scott 2006). While activist art strategies are demanded for art, scientists have urged similar forms of eco-activism (see e.g. Gardner & Wordley 2019). The purpose of ISEAS 2019 was to develop dialogical art, and the symposium served as a way to address the challenges of contemporary society. Thus, ISEAS 2019 had an ethical stance, but at the same time, the power of art was accepted as unpredictable.

There were many ethical aspects to agreement within communities: all community members needed to understand that they were committing to an artistic inquiry involving documentation. Articles would be written about ISEAS, and the work process was to be presented in art galleries and on social media and reported in a book. All these activities required written permission, informed consent, from the participants or from parents in the case of child participants. Schedules also had to be agreed to in advance so that the artistic intervention did not unduly interfere with normal day-to-day work. From an ethical standpoint, Slager's (2016) critical spatial practice also had to be considered. It was important to inform all the villagers during the process

and beforehand through newspapers and social media of what was happening in the public spaces and who was working there and why.

When the artists and scholars arrived at the symposium, they entered a place-bound and relational situation that differed from their everyday life circumstances: everyone was free from their accustomed conventions and routines of life at home and common work environments with their families, relationships and duties. Special attention was paid to dialogue and being bodily and mentally present, which created an atmosphere of mutual respect. The participants arrived at the symposium without detailed preliminary plans, and they designed interventions through dialogue. It was soon realised that the success of the planned projects required the commitment and willingness of all the participants to make themselves available to their team members. There was a need to understand that the power of art is its alienation, as the value of disorder, repetition, quirkiness and disturbances in artistic interventions is central (see Bishop 2012).

As artist Pablo Helguera (2011) stated, successful socially engaged art projects are linked to a local artist's networks and a profound understanding of the participants arising from the artist's long-term work. One crucial aspect of ISEAS is its long-term relationship with the community through the work of the curator Juhola; the artists and researchers only had a short-term engagement with the community as visitors. Juhola, as the curator and one of the artists, is a member of the community. The art historian and researcher Lucy Lippard (2010) maintained that the strongest community art, i.e. art with an ethical reasoning, is made in the artists' own communities. Moreover, the curator and art history educator Miwon Kwon (2002) stated that artists benefit from locality at the beginning of these art projects. Juhola brought her knowledge and networks into the process. Additionally, some of the participating artists were also locals in the region or had lived there for several years. Furthermore, many researchers who worked in the communities underscored the importance of research interaction with community members. Trust among the community is based on common ethical values: thrust increases the sense of responsibility for common research goals (Gordon 2017).

In this symposium, ethical choices were discussed by the artists and environmental experts on the first evening of the gathering (photo 2.). Juhola wrote up a memo based on this discussion and shared it with the team members. In addition to noting ethical methods of interaction with community members, the need for hope and support for the children's agency was discussed. The participants agreed that in an eco-crisis, it is necessary to emphasise hope while collaborating with children (see

Pihkala 2017, 2018; Värri 2018). In this first discussion on ethical aspects, it was noted that the participants had a right to use their own names: the authorship of the artists' and researchers' ideas would be respected and honoured. In the final discussion, it was agreed that the participants also had a right to remain anonymous in their reflections of the symposium.

ARTISTS' AND EXPERTS' RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER AND NON-HUMAN NATURE

Kantonen (2005) highlighted the conflicting expectations of participants in the ethical aspects of community art, arguing that even within groups, expectations can vary. In her view, a balance can be struck between intimacy and respectful distance. In ISEAS 2019, each artist, researcher and expert, including the members of the documentary team, gave presentations on the first evening of the symposium, thereby creating a foundation for mutual understanding. During the week, structured group discussions and reflections were conducted every evening. These discussions fostered mutual respect in the gathering.

In the evaluation discussion, which was based on an evaluation criteria table published by Huhmarniemi (2011), the team members were asked to reflect on whether they felt that their expertise had been valued, used and/or misused. This discussion was very interesting. The participants did not admit to recognising any misuse of their skills and expertise, even though art and research are commonly respected as self-worth and applied use is often questioned (see Erkkilä et al. 2016; Lampela 2012). In the freshwater mussels project, the team members had their responsibilities for the joint group, while in two other teams, there was more integration in the work of the artists, environmental researchers and experts (see Raatikainen, Juhola & Huhmarniemi, forthcoming).

Most of the artists and experts at the symposium found the gathering to be fruitful for their skills and future work. Many felt that the symposium also positively influenced their own relations with other people and non-human nature. As one of the participants described, she felt connected to other people and re-connected to nature and herself. The evidence from the symposium showed that this gathering had the ability to support participants' skills in dialogical and environmentally engaged art as well as their agency to act towards sustainable society.

The ethical interaction with non-human nature was one of the features of this gathering. Environmental crises have challenged the humanistic perspective (Foster,

Mäkelä & Martusewicz 2018; Jickling & Sterling 2017; Värri 2018) and have awakened the requirement to move beyond anthropocentrism and to have feelings of empathy and respect towards non-human nature. Post-humanism refers to ideologies in which anthropocentrism is to be avoided and in which the agency and rights of living and non-living nature are recognised. In the workshops, the agency of non-human nature was highlighted. For example, the project highlighted the observation of the ability of river mussels to clean water and the discussion of their role as a keystone species in aquatic ecosystems. The responsibility of humans towards non-human nature was also stressed. Thus, the tension between post-humanism and humanism featured in the workshops of the symposium. With the guidance of Taskinen, different species of river mussels were examined and studied before being returned, unharmed, to their natural environment.

ECOLOGICAL FOOT- AND HANDPRINT OF THE SYMPOSIUM

ISEAS 2019 aimed for a low ecological footprint (which describes one's negative impact on the planet) while multiplying the ecological handprint (which presents contributions towards a sustainable future). A low ecological footprint was targeted through vegetarian and mainly organic food, modest housing and environmentally friendly art materials. Transportation around the venue was mostly achieved by walking or cycling, and environmentally friendly natural and recycled materials were used to create the artworks.

While most of the conditions in the symposium promoted ecological sustainability and environmentalism, the long-distance travel required by some participants was discussed in regard to its harmful ecological footprint. Flights were taken from Germany and France, although some of the artists were originally from Asia and Chile: thus, the ISEAS gained an international and very heterogeneous group of artists with a relatively low ecological footprint. The emotional burden caused by the flights as well as many everyday elements of life were discussed several times at the symposium. While research has shown that, for example, many conservationists undertake environmentally harmful activities in their private lives, such as flying and eating mass-produced meat, and have no better knowledge of pro-environmental actions than reference groups (Andrew, Colea, Brendan & Fisher 2017), the symposium participants reflected on the environmental impact of the symposium and their lifestyles. While the methods of travel are part of the ethics of the gathering, it is important to consider the positive

impact gained from the participants' physical attendance and their capacity to act on behalf of the environment (in relation to the harmful environmental impact of long-distance travel). During the symposium, the significance of the participants' willingness to come from abroad was interpreted as cultural richness and charm for community members. One of the principles of ISEAS is to share dialogical tools and methods with artists working in different countries (Juhola forthcoming). In ISEAS 2019, this sharing was aimed at multiplying the ecological handprint through the empowerment of the team members and the sharing of knowledge among them. Raatikainen, Juhola and Huhmarniemi (forthcoming) have discussed the case study as a way to enhance human–nature connectedness and environmental awareness as well as the capacities and capabilities for acting towards environmentalism.

Although artistic research in an art symposium is an open-ended process, each ISEAS results in an exhibition, a book and analyses of the process in research articles, with the aim of increasing the impact of the gathering through extensive visibility. Ethical principles must also be followed in these phases of the project. In 2019, the documentation and reflection of the process, including fragments of dialogues, were presented in two exhibitions after the completion of the workshops. The work of the documentary team was essential for the exhibitions, for gaining research data and for increasing transparency in the representation of the process. The members of the documentary team were well informed about the aims and strategies of the teams. They participated in pre-arranged evening discussions and reflection sessions and were aware of the purpose of the documentary as research data for Juhola's art-based action research to develop art symposiums. Permission for documentation was obtained from the team and community members as well as the participating children's parents. One final aspect of the impact of visibility was the use of social media. The original intent was to include a social media expert in the gathering to increase the transparency of the process for the community. Unfortunately, due to a cancellation, ISEAS did not have someone to commit to communication via social media only. However, social media was utilised in communicating the process and results of the symposium to locals, the art world and academics.

A crucial concern is whether collaborative projects can influence political decisions on one hand and transform the participants' and audience's values and worldviews on the other. In this project, we collected research data on school pupils' experiences, and the participants wrote their reflections at the closing phase of the process. They concluded that more people should learn about mussels and the water in which they live. In addition, the project had felt like an experience, a fun break from school routines.

> -I think that the most fun was swimming a lot and having school on the beach. And it was fun to learn a lot. It has been fun to learn through artwork.
>
> -Tuesday, I had become pleasantly interested in the colourless mussels and wanted to know more. We made art with clay that day. We made a mould of plaster and clay, then we expected them to dry so we could put cement in the mould to make a statue. It was messy and stuck everywhere. Happy day came.

While it is impossible to evaluate the transformation of values from the scope of this article, it can be noted that experiential and multi-sensual learning are seen as a pivotal method for education for sustainability (Värri 2018).

POWER RELATIONS IN AN ART SYMPOSIUM – AND WHY IS IT CALLED A SYMPOSIUM

As artists and environmental researchers and experts were seen as equals in the symposium, we see it fitting to discuss the role of the curator and the mentor. Curator Juhola sought a heterogeneous group to attend this year's symposium, which marked great diversity in terms of gender, age, cultural spectrum (including geographical), field, etc. The idea was to find a group that was culturally diverse and cross-generational and that could serve each other so that they would leave with the feeling that they had received more than they gave (see Juhola forthcoming). The analysis of the reflections of the team members shows that this happened and that the curatorial choices achieved this aim.

The concept of ISEAS included the presence of a mentor who talked with each team several times. Mentor Mari Krappala has been involved in every symposium. During a short period of time when previously unknown factors worked towards a common goal (see also Krappala 2018), mentoring supported the processes of creation, clarifying details, seeking new directions and reverting activities to one's own history, art direction or tradition. Krappala mentored the teams individually, in small groups and as a whole, and the research practice included various forms of dialogue. She worked in a similar way as in Moon's (2013) description: her mentoring method consisted of asking challenging questions and supporting interactions within the teams. Some of the teams found the support of the mentor very helpful and constructive, although others reported that the mentor was less helpful for their process.

ISEAS is considered a symposium. The word 'symposium' is commonly used to refer to a conference or meeting aimed at discussing a particular subject in the academic world. It is also commonly used in the art world for art gatherings or art camps. It is reasonable to ponder whether 'symposium' is the correct name for this socially and environmentally engaged transdisciplinary gathering. In universities, similar interdisciplinary gatherings are called international summer/winter schools or intensives. Also, in the international art biennial 'Documenta', such gatherings are called intensives. However, ISEAS is not a primarily academic event, neither is it targeted for students. This also led to a more equal power position than, for example, teachers would have with students and directors with actors in other gatherings, such as intensives and summer schools.

Huhmarniemi (2019) used the concept of fieldwork in reference to site-specific art and science collaboration. This concept is also used by the Finnish Bioart Association in relation to international art and science gatherings focusing on bioart practices outdoors (Beloff, Berger & Haapoja 2013). As a concept, fieldwork does not emphasise collaboration and dialogue: fieldwork can also be done on its own. In ancient Greece, the symposium was a gathering after the meal, and it included drinking, music, dancing, presentations and conversations. ISEAS 2019 included all of these activities: spending evenings together was an essential element of the symposium. Here, alcohol consumption, or lack thereof, was not considered problematic; it was a part of the get-togethers in the evenings for some of the participants. While presentations were part of the official programme, dancing took place around a campfire, in keeping with the premise of ISEAS as a dialogical artwork, as suggested by Juhola (2018).

The strength of the concept of symposium as the title of the event lies in its recognisability: local community members and many funders and artists are more familiar with the concept of an art symposium than that of an intensive or artistic fieldwork. Local recognisability is an important factor, since the participation of community members is key to the success of the event.

Finally, the ethics of the research report must be noted. While analysing the research and reflecting on the process, we committed to discussing the challenges and successes of the process. We respect the participants' right to remain anonymous or act under their own name, depending on the content of the data. We also demonstrated our values and attitudes in an open manner by explaining our relationship with the research topic and the intentions of the research (see Jokela & Huhmarniemi 2018). The other artists and environmental experts were also given the opportunity to read and comment on the manuscript.

Summary and conclusion

Artists, researchers and environmental experts were invited to work with locals in a socially engaged art symposium. Three interdisciplinary teams focused on locally current topics: endangered meadows and wood-pastures, freshwater pearl mussels and the circular economy.

In this symposium, the participants collaborated on an issue of common interest to contribute to environmentalism and good practices in dialogical art. The implemented strategies supported successful, sensitive and deep dialogues during the symposium, including living tightly together and sharing days with community members, with evenings that included discussions around the dinner table and campfire. The pre-set goals were achieved. The aims were 1) to bring environmental research into the communities' worldviews in an experiential way, 2) to cope with the local natural conditions, promote hope and agency and connect with the community and cultural landscape and 3) to study, along with community members, how to live in an equal relationship with non-human nature.

The purpose of this article was to analyse the research practices and ethics of the gathering. We conclude that many ethical choices must be made in the preliminary planning phase of the gathering, and when defining the themes and aims for an event. Additionally promoting cultural diversity and equality in curatorial practices, producing the event in a dialogical process and considering an environmental footprint of the forthcoming symposium must also be considered. During the gathering, ethical principles need to be considered in relation to the artists' and researchers' physical and mental presence and respect for each other and in interactions with the participating and surrounding community according to the ethics of community art and artistic research. Human interactions with non-human nature must focus on hope, positive agency and foster of capacities toward environmentalism. Special attention must be paid to ethical working practices in regard to children if project's topics have a potential to cause adverse emotional and psychological impacts, such as eco-anxiety. Additionally, an ethical manner of photo and video documentation, data collection and represenation is an important element of ethics in an art symposium.

We also conclude that further research is needed on socially-engaged art-science collaborations that have educational aims, as well as aims to contribute to ecological handprint and capacities of artists and researchers as educators for sustainability. The importance of dialogue art in the Symposium on Socially Engaged Art should be

further explored and the elements used to enhance the art of discussion. In addition, power relations in art events such art symposiums could also be researched. The role of the curator as a facilitator of community collaboration should also be studied more.

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Article III

Juhola, K., Griniuk, M., & Moldovan, S. (2022). Empathy in digital participatory artwork. In M. Sarantau, & S. Miettinen (Eds.), *Empathy and business transformation* (pp. 44–59). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003227557-5

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4 Empathy in digital participatory artworks

Katja Juhola, Marija Griniuk and Smaranda-Sabina Moldovan

Introduction

In a digital era, particularly with the new emphasis on digital communications due to COVID-19, we need to enhance our creativity, confidence and resilience to handle unexpected situations. We will focus on practices in creative participation and how to utilise digital channels to communicate and increase empathy and creativity in real time in different participatory contexts, such as art performance, art symposia and art events. One part of our study arose from the human–nature dialogue and how this exercise was conducted using online participation. We present digital empathy from the position of an artists' ability to connect and share experiences and feelings with the audience or co-participating artists through technology used during art events. The *Power of Nature* (PoN) study case shows that researchers will meet nature as an equal participant, as posthumanism or transhumanism describes it (Valera, 2014).

This study extends the long-term arts-based action research of Finnish artist researcher Katja Juhola and Lithuanian artist researcher Marija Griniuk. The third author is an art educator and artist researcher Romanian Smaranda-Sabina Moldovan, who participated as an artist of Juhola's long-term research in the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS) and the *PoN* workshop. People will have to change their consumption habits. We see digitalisation as an opportunity to form a new community activity that includes nature as a participant. Our study presents cross-border and arts-based action research into communicating empathy and compassion through digital connections in participatory art. We explore the patterns of challenges and possibilities in digital communication in art. Artists' responses can play a meaningful role in enhancing and communicating empathy in digital connections involving humans and non-humans. In the artwork, these responses interconnect towards the emotionally safe and welcoming common space of creativity, despite the difference in the backgrounds of the involved participants and facilitators. Thus, art can be used to develop empathy because it is based on the kinship of the common functions of both practices: response, emotion and connection (Peloquin, 1996). According to Trott's (2017) definition, radical innovation is based on introducing new technology to service production. We see using

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digital channels in art practice or curating as filling these criteria. However, according to Sarantou (2020), challenges tend to inundate processes. Sarantou argued that overcoming challenges requires innovative strategies supported by empathetic art-based approaches (2020). This provides new opportunities for re-examining and adapting the most effective ways to expand artistic practices.

We present two case studies: socially engaged art and performance art. We used the arts-based action research (ABAR) method to develop two different kinds of research. In both studies, digitality embraces empathy. The first case study is the August 2020 *International Socially Engaged Art Symposium* (ISEAS), which featured international online participation for the first time. ISEAS shows how arts-based methods can create emphatic attitudes towards nature. The second case study presents the performance *Territory* by Griniuk, realised in 2018. Here, performance art meets digital channels to communicate empathy and interconnectedness between the artist and the audience using visual or audio outcomes in real time during the performance.

We ponder what factors could strengthen the conditions for success in digital participation and provide recommendations on how to make it more motivating and successful using empathy as a key tool. Arts-based research (ABR) (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2017, 2018; McNiff, 1998; Rolling, 2013) uses art as a tool to access research results. Art can be used to illuminate things that might otherwise be hidden or difficult to express verbally. ABR is inherent in the researchers' interests and methods of art. ABR can be used through conversational art (Bhabha et al., 1998; Kantonen, 2005, 2010; Kester, 2004). Juhola's research focuses on developing an intensive art symposium (ISEAS) (see Table 4.3). Griniuk steps into the context of technology-based participation in real time during a performance from the perspective of a performance artist. Embodied experience is at the core of her study as bodily sensations happen in the action space. Griniuk's research focuses on developing methods through which these moments of bodily involvement and creative enlightenment can be transferred to digital sociomateriality during an art event in real time. Both cases share performative and participatory acts of art.

We aim to jointly find new digital methods and recommendations to enhance motivation within participation based on developing empathic ways in the field of socially engaged art (SEA) and performance art. Our research question arises from the current global social and artistic context and pro-force technology-based innovations: How can digitality be applied to art workshops and artistic fieldwork? We also examine how arts-based methods could be used in the wider field of organisations, where art could be used as a method to develop empathic actions towards nature.

How empathy can be used to develop a participatory artwork

Digital empathy comprises five types of empathy (Friesem, 2016b). These five different types of empathy layered our structural stages of constructing a digital-art event. Kester (2004) argued that empathic vision is an essential part of dialogical

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aesthetics in participatory art. He suggested that empathy is a necessary basis for communicating and understanding race, sexuality or ethnic origin, which is essential in cross-border and cross-cultural art events. Empathy towards nature (see Table 4.1) is the ability to consider 'Others'– non-humans, and thus, 'ecocentric orientation' was developed (Lithoxoidou et al., 2017). As posthumanism sees all living beings on an equal footing, the 'ecocentric orientation' makes people's needs less important to secure other living beings.

Thompson (2012) claimed that SEA had revealed numerous tensions over the past 40 years, primarily by shaking the foundations of art discourse and sharing techniques and ideas in fields far from the forms of classically perceived art. In the 1990s, Lacy (2010) highlighted the struggle between the SEA and more traditional art. Lacy argued that participatory art is a competitive option where artists connect with a wide and diverse audience, and each group contributes to the discussion. Lacy's art pattern is based on the relative aesthetic (Bourriaud et al., 2002) and the dialogical aesthetic (Kester, 2004).

Performance art focuses on participatory practices centred on the artist's role as a facilitator. Schechner (1977) claimed that performance is artistic action, consistent with a ritual, where transformation happens in a liminal space. Participatory performance is discussed by Bishop (2004) as artwork in which the audience can become a collaborator and transgresses the threshold of spectatorship. In this study, we used 'participatory performance' and 'art' to describe artworks containing participation and interconnectedness between all involved in real-time action, including nature. Kinaesthetic empathy (Kim, 2015) as empathy-in-movement is applied in performance artwork. Miettinen et al. (2016) stated that the storytelling narrative function is a crucial tool that facilitates empathic processes, primarily in service design.

McKenzie (2001) argued that a liminoid space is a meeting between technology and performance. Liminoid space includes cultural, organisational and technological performances, which are digitally remediated and united in the performative space (McKenzie, 2001). Trott (2017) introduced technology-based innovation,

Table 4.1 Definitions of empathy used in this study, developed by the authors of this study based on the previous research (Friesem, 2016a; Kim, 2015; Lithoxoidou et al., 2017).

Term	*Explanation*
Digital empathy (Friesem, 2016a)	Empathy between humans immersed in digital and media activities.
Kinaesthetic empathy (Kim, 2015)	Empathy is based on encounters with aesthetic objects or experiences and one's feelings relating to them.
Empathy towards nature (Lithoxoidou et al., 2017)	Empathy in which humans put nature needs above their personal interests to promote environmentally friendly values.

Katja Juhola: International Socially Engaged Art Symposium

REVIEW ONLY - DISSERTATION SUBMISSION
PROPERTY OF TAYLOR AND FRANCIS

which can be applied to techno-performance (McKenzie, 2001), focusing on the cyber-spatiality of bodies immersed in interactions by technological means. This technology allows the performer or artist facilitator or a curator-facilitator and participants to experience bodily sensation in playing the performative action, which happens in this liminoid space. Hobye and Lowgren (2011) showed that connectedness and empathy within the digital performance space have three key points: the performer strategy, the social play in the performance space and the narrative built in the interactions (Hobye & Lowgren, 2011). According to Salen and Zimmerman (2004), sounds and images impact the motivation to participate in social play, which is determined by a safe and non-judging environment that allows empathic connections between the facilitator and participants. Both of our cases show narrative playfulness that has been created using empathy to create a truthful atmosphere for creating something new.

Methodology

ABAR was developed at the University of Lapland (Hiltunen, 2008; Jokela, 2019). ABAR comprises research cycles due to its action research approach (Arslan-Ari et al., 2020). Each cycle operates independently and evolves based on the evaluation and results of previous cycles. The research question also evolves as research progresses. ABAR learns during each cycle, and its research questions can be reformulated. Each cycle of ABAR involves the design, artistic implementation, reflection, analysis, publication of research results and setting new goals (see Table 4.2).

This study is based on a loose collaboration between two separately developing ABAR processes (see Table 4.3). One of them is to develop art–science symposia as socially engaged art by artist-researcher Juhola; the other ABAR process involves Griniuk's performance art research based on various digital devices whose importance is to contact the public.

PoN research data were collected while participating in ISEAS 2020. ISEAS includes photographers and videographers, facilitated conversations every day, art in action, and reflections collected afterwards from the participants to be analysed from the perspective of digital participation and emphatic action towards nature. The data also include participants' written reflections, collected via email by Juhola, Juhola's recorded conversations and research diary. Juhola also participated in one of the third *PoN* experiences during ISEAS.

Table 4.2 ABAR. Common steps for the researchers Griniuk and Juhola, developed by the authors of this study.

Step 1	*Step 2*	*Step 3*	*Step 4*	*Step 5*
Defining the goals for the research cycle	Planning the artistic event to test and gather the data	Realising the artistic event and gathering data	Analysing the collected data and extracting the results	Defining the goals for the new cycle

Katja Juhola: International Socially Engaged Art Symposium

REVIEW ONLY - DISSERTATION SUBMISSION
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Table 4.3 ABAR cycles in the research by Griniuk and Juhola, developed by the authors of this paper.

Griniuk's ABAR cycles	*Description of the cycles*	*Juhola's ABAR cycles*	*Description of the cycles*
1. Pre-study 2015–2019 Cycle 2019–2021	Defining the framework of the study, test performances and presentations using electro-encephalogram (EEG) (Griniuk, 2021d, in print). Exhibition at the gallery Kilo (Rovaniemi, Finland) was followed by an article based on reflexive research as a strategy (Griniuk, 2020).	1. Pre-study and cycle 2013–2016	Participating in eight international symposia. Organising the first art symposium in Finland 2014. Organising the first ISEAS 2017. One article was written about these experiences (Juhola & Moldovan, 2020).
2. Cycle 2020	EEG and DIY electronic instruments on the body as the tools for connecting with the audiences during live events (Griniuk, 2021b).	2. Cycle 2017 and 3. Cycle 2018	ISEAS 2017 had a case study in nine locations (Juhola et al., 2018). The 2018 ISEAS with performance art focused on collective methods of improvisation (Juhola, 2020).
3. Cycle 2020–2021	The role of the artist as a teacher. EEG as a monitoring tool. Performance pedagogy project The Nomadic Radical Academy (Griniuk, 2021a; Griniuk, 2021c,).	4. Cycle 2019	ISEAS in Nature 2019 resulted in five articles, themed around reconnecting to nature, ethics of gathering, creativity within knowledge engagement and circular economy (Juhola, 2019; Raatikainen et al., 2020; Juhola et al., 2020; Huhmarniemi & Juhola, forthcoming; Juhola, 2021).
4. Cycle 2021	Collaborative performance. EEG as the tool for communication and documentation during the performance (Griniuk & Mosich, 2021).	5. Cycle	In August 2020 and January 2021, ISEAS in Western Lapland resulted in data gathering to develop arts-based methods for environmental conflict mediation.

Moldovan's research was conducted using autoethnographic methods; while participating online in ISEAS 2020, in 2021 she attended ISEAS in person and gathered data through her experience, which was analysed and further developed in the visual arts and presented in the Korundi art museum. Griniuk's data

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were collected as video and photography, alongside the artist's notes from 2018 during the performance art event.

ISEAS Power of Nature

ISEAS 2020 was held in August 2020 in Äkäslompolo, Western Lapland, Finland, and focused on developing conversational art in meditating conflicts arising from using natural resources. ISEAS's goal was to design, experiment and evaluate artistic, interdisciplinary, community-based and artist-driven approaches. ISEAS is based on multi-level conversations. All research data were collected and analysed with written permission.

The team *PoN* workshop focused on strengthening people's relationships with nature. Empathy towards nature was an essential tool. The work began with online meetings in early 2020. The team included Finnish artist Maria Huhmarniemi, English shamanism researcher Francis Joy, Romanian artist Smaranda Sabina-Moldovan and Chilean dancer–choreographer Hugo Peña. The planning was curated, guided and facilitated by Juhola during the online meetings on Messenger. Due to COVID-19, Moldovan participated in the 2020 symposium online.

The goal of the *PoN* team in ISEAS 2020 was to enhance connectedness towards nature and expand dialogue and a sense of community between humans and non-human nature and nature spirits. This project focused on sharing spiritual knowledge and practices that would help participants enhance, communicate and strengthen links between people and nature by Joy's (2018) understanding of how nature has a hidden spiritual side. Arts-based methods were created by Moldovan together with her team. Workshops started by Joy explain how to communicate with trees and continue by Peña inviting participants to dance with nature. These artworks are related to affective learning in the contemporary art field (Snellman, 2018). The team decided to use the same practices in Romania and Lapland and to share their experiences via online video meetings. Moldovan explains her experience in the feedback on ISEAS:

> I began my experiment by searching for trees with interesting shapes in their crowns. The crowns initially had a decisive impact on my choice of tree for my first experience. After that, I was getting closer and closer to the triangular 'tree gate'. I felt warmth and a feeling of levitation, although I knew that my feet remained on the ground. My hands, positioned in front of my body, perceived a new, trustworthy atmosphere. As I came out from under the crown, its influence diminished, and slowly, the ordinary air of the place was reinstated.
>
> Later, I had discussions in a video meeting with the team and participants from the workshop. Meanwhile, I discovered that my experience of the white willows near the water could be linked to the feminine presence and white elements that help to treat depression. An online dialogue with the participants started from the story of this experience. I started mirroring

Katja Juhola: International Socially Engaged Art Symposium

REVIEW ONLY - DISSERTATION SUBMISSION
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> the shared images using visual metaphors [*as explained in Anderson & Anderson, 2009 , and presented in Figure 4.1*] The identification created a bond between the participants. I used happiness and optimism in communication. Creating a joyful environment in a virtual space was necessary for everyone to avoid fearing the pandemic spread globally.
>
> (Moldovan, August 2020)

A participant in the Lapland workshop described their feelings as follows:

> I approached the tree carefully, walking around and feeling the plough. Then, I introduced myself to the tree. The tree was an old pine tree with

Figure 4.1 (From top right, clockwise) Hugo Peña during a tree connection. Photo credit: Touko Hujanen, 2020. Smaranda-Sabina Moldovan meditating under the white willow. Photo credit: Marcello Maggioli, 2020. Screenshots during ISEAS 2020. These photos were made during the same workshop reproductions made by the PoN team in Äkaslompolo. Smaranda-Sabina Moldovan archive, 2020.

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> several small pine benches underneath. I hugged a tree and asked the tree if he could advise me on next weekend's 'Vision quest' in Rautavaara. The tree replied that he would communicate to the trees that would help me there. He himself cannot help me in any other way. I felt a tree stroking my hair.
>
> In the second session, we had to feel the wood and go around the wood still feeling. We had to wrap around the tree. I felt like it was a sexual dance with a tree.
>
> (Anonymous participant, August 2020)

After the symposium, all ISEAS artists were asked for feedback on Moldovan's online participation. The feedback strongly highlighted empathy for Moldovan and admiration for her positive attitude. The artists had experienced participation in the symposium as a self-reinforcing experience, and they found it very unfair that Moldovan could not participate physically. However, all ISEAS residents stated that Moldovan was present among them; although they had not physically met her, they felt that she was already their friend and part of a very personal reinforcing experience, as explained in the two quotes:

> Many times, I wondered what it would feel like to be there myself, participating online. However, she [*Moldovan*] always looked brisk and good-natured, although I might have been sad and felt like a true outsider if I had stayed home and hung out from there.
>
> (Anonymous participant, October 2020)

> Smara's online participation was also a reminder of the real world in the symposium's universe; there is a world in the background that is now controlled by a coronavirus. Yet it also reminded us how important it is for humans to be social, near others and participate online, at least, so that we can all be together somehow. I see us, and that is what ISEAS represents to me – being together as people.
>
> (Anonymous participant, October 2020)

This experience enhanced our creativity, confidence and resilience in approaching unexpected situations. Our biggest challenges were technical issues (i.e., stable internet connection, telephone signal). The ISEAS 2020 allowed us to experiment with digital tools and observe how empathy between artists was present in digital communication in art. The empathic response of all artists to the ABR methods (storytelling, dialogical art, sharing images and videos) played a meaningful role in finding a way to enhance and communicate empathy in digital connections.

Digital performance

The performance *Territory* at the festival Terytoria in Torun in Poland in 2018 explored communal territory and sensual, mental space. By remediating interhuman connections through technology, the performance integrated innovative

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performance practices from the perspective of the foreign artist participant, who interacted with the audience of the international performance art event. This enabled the artist to connect with the audience despite language barriers or feelings of unfamiliarity with the artist's culture of participation.

Performance is built on the concept of interhuman embodied interactions (Dourish, 2001). It is inviting, motivating and playfully focused on connecting with the audience and inviting it into active cocreation of the artwork, even in events and environments unfamiliar to the artist. Developing an encouraging, motivating and empathic space of interaction and participation is at the core of participatory performance. Including digital and electronic channels to make the moments of interconnection visible or sonified in real time can reduce doubt within participants' decision-making on whether to join the performance (Hobye & Lowgren, 2011). Actively and non-verbally engaging the participants in performative action can make artworks completely accessible to international audiences, thereby bypassing the obstacles to equal participation commonly posed by linguistic or cultural barriers.

The performance created an empathic connection with the participants and highlighted how every decision they made could affect performance. Griniuk utilised digital channels and wearable devices connected to physical actions and movements to remediate empathic connections with her audience (see Figure 4.2). These costumes are based on work by Steve Mann (1997) and include sound, multicoloured lights and other electronic devices mounted on the performer's body.

Territory explores the remediation of interhuman connectedness by incorporating DIY technology into the aesthetic outcome based on image and sound. The performance was realised as a solo performance facilitated by one performer. It comprised vocal and movement-based sequences, accompanied by sound based on the distances between the performer, surfaces, objects and audience members. Griniuk presented the performance in which electronic devices with motion and distance sensors were attached to her body, which responded to the distances between the performance body and the viewers using sequences of light and sound. Additionally, the viewers could play a tune on the performer's body using an electronic device that sent a weak electric charge throughout the body of the performer and the body of the interacting audience member. The performance created a dialogical space where communication took place by electronic means and where the public influenced the course of the performance. Griniuk also appeared to be vulnerable, where trust and empathy for dialogue matter (Figure 4.2). The performance was designed to highlight the prevailing networks in society that are also controlled by electronic means.

Recommendations for digital participation in international contemporary art

Technology has entered and occupied a huge part of our creative and communicative processes. We proved that empathy relates to the artistic area, as the intentionality, stratification and concretisation of the creator's intentions relate

Katja Juhola: International Socially Engaged Art Symposium

REVIEW ONLY - DISSERTATION SUBMISSION
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Figure 4.2 Territory by Marija Griniuk (2018). Video still. Credit: Centre of Contemporary Art, Toruń, Poland. Editing: Marija Griniuk.

to the viewer's or participant's reaction at an intimate, subjective level (Peloquin, 1996). Our findings showed that empathetic human connections can be formed using current technology.

Digital empathy is a new concept designed to emphasise social, emotional and cognitive practices as part of digital and media literacy. It is classified into five different stages: empathic concern, cognitive empathy, projective empathy, affective empathy, psychological empathy and aesthetic empathy (Friesem, 2016b). Our two case studies revealed similar structures between empathy phenomena in works of art that arise from empathic pre-planning, encounters with another artist during artwork and reflection on works. Our analysis shows that there are benefits to using digital tools in art activities. We suggested that third-sector organisations could leverage the kinship between art and empathy

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to create functional new ways of working digitally based on the following findings.

First, an online art experience can never replace a face-to-face one. However, we found that there are certain prerequisites for the successful involvement of participants through virtual channels:

1 Understanding the reasons and contexts of all the participants involved is core. This impacts the desire for successful outcomes of online meetings. Participants' attitudes and motivation for active participation are among the most important prerequisites.
2 When we cannot use senses other than seeing and hearing, an empathic way of working is required. Sharing one's background and situation helps to create an empathic approach: the willingness to communicate and share experiences is crucial to this. Cognitive empathy and affective empathy are part of the process and should be fully developed.
3 Visual images and conversations can increase the imaginative, empathic spectrum of connections among group members. Activating both video and sound connections in virtual events is important.
4 Optimism is part of the empathic concern and is a great tool for creating a safe environment.

Second, regarding the pandemic and climate crisis demands, we find new ways to continue sustainable international artistic work. One way to develop online participation could be structured group work in which participants would not be alone but would work together in small groups in the same location and interact with other groups in other locations.

1 *PoN* showed how art could develop and enhance an empathic and loving relationship towards nature from the perspective of pluriversal experience in a participatory project.
2 We find this action of empathy topical, as we live in a period in which human actions have caused widespread problems worldwide.
3 Third, motivation to be actively involved in participatory artistic action is enhanced through utilising digital channels to remediate the embodied interaction in sound-or image-based artwork cocreated with audience members or participants. This impacts the feeling of togetherness and projective empathic connections among all in the performative space.

Last, during participatory art events, when the interconnections between the artist and participants are remediated into the artistic outcome in real time, bodily or online, the artist or curator should aim to focus the attention first on developing emotional empathy among the group, and second on playfulness in interhuman connectedness. When discussing the importance of digital channels for communication – whether from online participation in an art symposium or a live performance event – connections between people are visible while using

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all the senses the real-life, non-digital contact between the involved individuals are of value. When the senses are in focus, there is a shift towards valuing moments of real contact. According to discussions in research and development towards process innovations (Trott, 2017), culture and context in organisations directly influence the implementation of novel processes, led by face-to-face interactions between individuals. In other words, innovation happens between people, not between organisations as institutions. Therefore, moments of real contact drive the innovation processes in art, and for these moments to be frequent and beneficial, participation must be designed as a positive experience. This was especially evident in the *PoN* workshops that occurred in Lapland Forests, where poor internet connections limited Moldovan's participation. However, participant feedback supports our claim to use empathy to increase connection with nature. It also confirms that while digital participation is possible, it requires empathy, tools and forward planning to be successful. It is explained in the two following extracts:

> My own experience with the workshop was that it was very revitalising and liberating. I received good advice from Francis' contribution both to strengthening my own nature connection and to guiding the client in finding their own nature connection. I found Hugo's dance rehearsals very invigorating. They took root for a moment, focused on the body and nurtured creativity. I would have liked Hugo's part to continue for longer. For me, Smaranda's role remains unclear, or I just do not remember it anymore.
>
> (Anonymous participant, July 2021)

> I remember that the workshop created an 'agreed' space for the group to spend time in the forest, rush free. The simple, clear instructions helped me to focus and be present, without thinking I had to do anything anywhere else. The exercise gave me the chance and the space to open up and connect to my experience, sensations, emotions and thoughts in a natural environment, which I found very beneficial regarding relaxation and gaining clarity. The workshop also made the group, I believe, come together by connecting with a common set of values.
>
> (Anonymous participant, July 2021)

The core goal of digital participation is to create a feeling of a united space and togetherness in the same process. Kester (2004) argued that the dialogical aesthetic is conversational art. The conversation can vary from a digital performance with an audience to non-verbal connections with trees. Lacy (2010) stated that performance also provides a sense of immediacy, feedback, boundary-blurring and direct communication from the empathic action between audience and performer. Schwarz (2002) highlighted the value of the non-judging environment for quality participant involvement. Therefore, motivation for active participation can be designed around clarity in communication and a safe, empathic and non-judging place.

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When involving technology, the core issues are that the technology should be functioning (Trott, 2017) and that all should know how to interact using it. Salen and Zimmerman (2004) argued that interactive and playful activities are essential in adapting to a digital space. It is important not to lose optimism due to the complexity of actions or technological errors. When technology meets art, it needs to be contextualised. Fluency is required in the instruction part before participants enter the digital space of artwork and after participation. This enabled the clarification of how each individual experienced the participation.

The two cases discussed in this chapter suggest that empathic connectedness does not depend solely on technology, and the facilitator should strategise it regarding the narratives built into the invitations to interact (Hobye & Lowgren, 2011). These values are central to the concept of ISEAS and participatory performance environments, where playfulness and the motivation to engage actively are key. We recommend that the same practices be more widely adopted in different organisations. ISEAS can be considered a third-sector organisation, and as an output of this experiential development research, we can provide a broader understanding of how other third-sector organisations also benefit from our results. More research should be conducted on human and non-human relationships through art and aesthetic means.

Summary 1: Lessons learned that can contribute to the organisational or business context

This study showed the parts of online art and technology-based interactions in performance art that succeed in creating a sense of togetherness, although all the senses cannot be utilised within this format. Notably, highlighting empathy can partially mitigate this. The desire to participate is enhanced by creating a non-judging, communication-based environment. The empathic responses of all artists to the ABR methods (storytelling, conversational art, sharing images and videos) played a significant role by enhancing and communicating empathy in digital connections. Empathic connections by utilising technology can lessen creativity barriers for participants and communication barriers for artists.

Summary 2: Contribution to organisational or business knowledge or practices

Both case studies created a sense of togetherness using digital tools. Focusing participation on group work rather than solo tasks promotes community feelings, particularly in non-profit or voluntary organisations. Regarding art projects, community building through group-based activities can induce longitudinal connections and collaborations among all the members. Our recommendations include dialogue-based participation in art projects in GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) and NGO organisations, where the artist needs to remain flexible and ready to adjust and respond to participants' interactions. Also, we

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recommend involving artists in organisations so that the collaboration meets the expectations of both the artistic goals and the organisations.

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Article IV

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Forest Disputes: Socially Engaged Art and Forest Science for Understanding Sustainability Challenges

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores activist art's potential in promoting environmental awareness and community engagement, drawing from the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS). Focused on a Western Lapland ISEAS event, the study highlights art workshops addressing forest use conflicts facilitated by artist-scientist teams. These workshops offer a secure space for participants to express environmental concerns, fostering creative expression and dialogue. The study suggests that art-based interventions powerfully promote environmental awareness and community engagement by creating safe spaces for collaborative dialogue. Through ISEAS experiences, the paper demonstrates how activist art facilitates meaningful community engagement, fostering a deeper understanding of environmental challenges.

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Introduction

Since 2017, I have been organizing the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS). This project has required a tremendous personal effort but was only possible with the cooperation of many people. In January 2019, I began my doctoral studies at the University of Lapland's Faculty of Arts and Design, with my research topic being ISEAS. I consider the ISEAS my work of art, as I have previously stated (Juhola, 2018; Juhola & Moldovan, 2020).

When I started my research, I decided to bring the ISEAS into a northern context. Previously, I had consistently implemented the ISEAS in my neighbourhood in southern Finland, in Mustio, Raasepori (Juhola, 2018, 2020a, 2020b; Juhola et al., 2020; Juhola, 2021; Juhola et al., 2022). For the ISEAS in Äkäslompolo, we focused on locally topical issues related to the use of natural resources and the theme of mediation. We implemented three art-science interventions at the ISEAS: *The Northern Forest Disputes* and *The Hannukainen Mining Conflict*, which both addressed conflict situations and *The Power of Nature* (Juhola et al., 2022), which was an artistic workshop focused on shamanism and tree connections, to restore participants' relationship with nature. Seventy-four people participated in all three interventions held at the ISEAS in 2020 and 2021. The experience was both challenging and rewarding. I am grateful for the opportunity to have brought the ISEAS to a new context and engaged with many people. The ISEAS symposia are a mix of conversations, yoga, nature walks, sauna evenings, dancing, art-making and discussion. The event catalyzes creative acts and personal empowerment, but it can also bring conflict as any gathering with many people. Collaboration is key, and ethical guidelines must be followed. Conversational art, a form that uses dialogue and communication as a tool, is promoted at the ISEAS. Conversational art takes many forms, such as meditative practices, performance, painting, photography, and walking (Bourriaud, 2002; Gablik, 1995; Kester, 2004; Manresa, 2021).

At ISEAS, the synergy between art and science takes shape as artists and naturalists collaboratively develop a socially engaged art concept centred around a specific predetermined theme. In this instance, the theme was the northern forest disputes. Each participant contributes their unique expertise to the collective effort. For forest scientists, this expertise stems from decades of research on utilizing Finnish forests. At the same time, artists bring their distinct areas of specialization to the table, from performance art to painting. Lectures by a philosopher and other scholars were given to initiate joint discussions about community, collaboration, and the interplay between art and science. These discussions took place before and while working with community members. With a mentor's help, strangers could collaboratively build an artistic-scientific concept implemented in groups with local participants (Juhola, 2018; Juhola & Moldovan, 2020). In this paper, I examine the collaboration between art and science and its potential as a tool to achieve a deeper and broader understanding of environmental conflicts of forestry. My research question pertains to how arts-based methods can facilitate a trustworthy atmosphere for alleviating eco-anxiety.

Forestry in Finland

Finland's economy has long relied on forestry, with industrial exploitation beginning in the late 19th century. Today, the felling of Finland's forests serves not only the wood products and paper industries but also produces fabrics, medicines, chemicals, healthy foods, feed, plastics, cosmetics, smart packaging, and biofuel transport (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland, n.d.). To meet its climate goals, Finland must reduce its felling by about one-fifth to around 62 million m3 by 2035, assuming forest growth remains constant (Lehtonen, 2023). However, disputes often arise over prioritizing forest uses, such as timber production, outdoor recreation, tourism, biodiversity retention, and reindeer herding (Muttilainen et al., 2022; Saastamoinen, 1982). Multiple-use forestry aims to balance these competing demands as different ecosystem services conflict. In effect, human demands for forest resources have exceeded planetary boundaries.

Theory

My primary goal in the ISEAS interventions was to facilitate the creation of art in collaboration with artists, scientists, and people who participated in workshops on forest disputes, guided by the theories of dialogical aesthetics, socially engaged art, and conversational art. According to Grant Kester (1998, 2004; see also Bourriaud, 2002), art activism is a powerful tool for making social change and creating social justice. Similarly, Gregory Sholette

(2022) points out that the beginning of the 21st century has been an exceptional era for art activism worldwide. Art activism is as vital in protest culture as it was in the 1960s and 70s. Art and science collaborations in organizations hold potential for personal and organisational development, but outcomes are hard to measure. Customized to organizational culture and participant motivation, they can benefit all parties (Schnugg & Song, 2020). The art and science cooperation movement (Art & Science Collaborations, n.d.) has also contributed to activism art. Cooperation between art and science has here played an important role in the ISEAS, as art activism is focused on environmental issues (Juhola et al., 2020; Juhola 2019, 2021; Juhola et al., 2022; Raatikainen et al., 2020). The approaches of the ISEAS workshop were guided by thinking about eco-social equality as part of a broader paradigm of equality, where all life is seen as equal to human life. The Anthropocene perspective (Demos, 2017) thinks that humans have influenced climate change and the mass extinction of species so catastrophically that one can speak of a geological epoch. Eco-justice pedagogy (Martusewitcz et al., 2011; Foster et al., 2019) discusses a new approach to how art education can break established notions of human supremacy in relation to the rest of life. After all, we are all dependent on each other. Only humans can change their actions to take other lives into account, and this is precisely where art education and art activism have the opportunity to influence.

Since 2017, curator and researcher Taru Elfving has been organizing small-scale incubators on the island of Seili, where she has invited artists and researchers to think together about planetary and local intertwined challenges and the sustainability of work practices. The starting point for the discussions has been an encounter in the field, i.e., located near the research object and the subject of the dialogue, allowing this encounter to guide and challenge thinking actively. The place thus defines the shared and divergent perspectives that emerge in the group. It creates a material-meaning basis on which those who work with different concepts and methods in the field can have a dialogue. The questions of observation and localized knowledge, which connect art and science in many ways, are cross-examined in relation to what is identified and recognized as communities relevant to work. (Elfving, 2021). Art historian Miwon Kwon (2002) argues that socially engaged art has the potential to affect societal and environmental issues, and to demonstrate its power in the pursuit of a more intense engagement with the outside world. She sees socially engaged art as more inclusive of non-art spaces, non-art institutions, and non-art issues.

Similarly, Professor Claire Bishop (2012) argues that socially engaged art arises from the artist's desire to influence society and its structures, involving people and communities in a debate, collaboration, or social interaction. For Bishop, the artist is less an individual producer of discrete objects than a collaborator and producer of situations, and the work of art is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term project with an unclear beginning and end. At the same time, the audience is repositioned as a co-producer or participant.

Socially engaged art (SEA) is an intervention brought by an artist through artistic means to change, bring out, and even influence people's way of thinking. It can have activist meanings and political targets. According to Pablo Helguera (2011), "SEA is a hybrid, multi-disciplinary activity that exists somewhere between art and non-art, and its state may be permanently unresolved. SEA depends on actual – not imagined or hypothetical – social action" (p. 8). Community artist and writer François Matarasso (2019) explains how participatory art can help us live through difficult times by enabling us to express pain, anger, and hope, make friends and find allies, imagine alternatives, share feelings, and be accepted. Collaboration with scientists and other artists has opened a new and exciting way of creating my art. The ISEAS has developed to be an activist art event with an impact that has been meaningful for people who have participated (Juhola et al., 2020; Juhola 2019, 2021; Juhola et al., 2022; Raatikainen et al., 2020).

Methodology

Art is often created by hand and requires physical effort, which aligns with a pragmatic philosophical orientation. Pragmatism, a philosophical perspective that shapes my research, is knowledge based on practice and experience–information that can be understood through one's own experience (Dewey, 2005). The pragmatic approach is not founded on theories but on the individual's active participation and interaction with the world. Vid Simoniti states, "socially engaged art 'embraces' the pragmatic view. To put this point more clearly, I now argue that the existence of good socially engaged artworks favors the pragmatic view, since only this view can explain their artistic value" (Simoniti, 2018, p. 76). In the ISEAS, the art of conversation

plays the greatest role. It is typical for art-based research (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015, 2018; McNiff, 1998) to use different art forms. Because the ISEAS is based on the fields of expertise of artists and scientists, I have invited and curated varied arts-based methods each year. Typical of art-based research (Jónsdóttir, 2017; Leavy, 2017) is that art has boosted nonverbal knowing and knowing with nature. The ISEAS has always used photography and video to document the experiences of the ten days of the ISEAS. This study follows ethical principles where written research permits have been requested from all participants.

Case Study Forest Disputes

The Forest Dispute team included four members: forest scientist Ville Hallikainen from the Natural Resources Centre (LUKE), and three artists, including me–the founder of ISEAS, Katja Juhola, and two other artists–Finnish painter Satu Kalliokuusi, as well as Spanish painter and performance artist Misha del Val. The team organized socially engaged art events with the participation of two local forest owners, researchers from the state-owned forestry company (Metsähallitus) and LUKE, as well as 25 Muonio Wilderness Guide School students divided into two groups. The participants engaged in activities that involved forest science and art. The group explored the forest and its sensory experiences, where each small group created artworks that depicted their understanding of the forest conflict. Every day started and ended with conversations facilitated by me.

On the first day of our program, the participants consisted of twelve students and a teacher, for whom we had carefully organized an immersive six-hour workshop that seamlessly blended the disciplines of art and science. After introducing everyone in the morning, Misha del Val asked the whole group to follow him into the forest (Figure 1). He asked them to listen to the sounds and focus on the sounds that could be heard. When footsteps touched the ground, the wind blew through the treetops. He asked them to focus on the sense of touch, how the wind felt on their faces, and how the ground felt under their feet. How did the ground floor of the forest feel when stepping with the toes

Figure 1: Muonio Wilderness School students embark on a sensory journey with Misha del Val's expertly guided open meditation, setting the tone for the day's activities. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020.

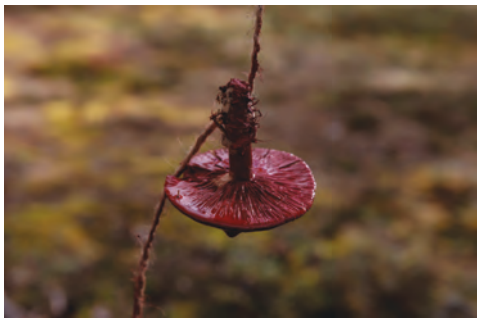

Figure 2. Part of the installation related to the question: What does forest conflict mean to you? Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020.

Figure 3. Artistic presentation of how money is stronger than biodiversity. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020.

Figure 4. Triangle with two sides: scary and joyful. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020.

and the heel? The exercise ended with Misha asking all the participants to sit or lie quietly in the forest, and to smell the forest with their noses–to put their noses deep against the ground, smell the forest and be fully present with all their senses. I think I even tasted the ground of the forest.

After the sensory opening task, we went to the forest with art materials, and divided participants into four groups. I gave them only 20 minutes to create an artwork depicting, in one way or another, the small group's experience of what the forest conflict meant to them.

One group made a moving mobile strung between two trees with string, with a red-painted mushroom, beard moss, toilet paper, and a red-black painted stone hanging together. The group explained that the conflict meant fear to them, which was represented by the stone; the power of money, which was represented by the toilet paper; the loss of the purity of nature, which was represented by the beard moss; and the narrowing of diversity, which was represented by the red mushroom (Figure 2).

Another group made a scale representing the loss of biodiversity (Figure 3). The third group made a warning triangle, and a tree with loose roots (Figure 4). The fourth group made a small performance in which the narrative followed the forest company's desire to cut down forests, and the feeling of berry and mushroom pickers that their forests are being destroyed. After completing the work, the group discussed together, and the feeling of success was palpable, even though the time was minimal.

After this task, we continued with the same small groups to the forest sites chosen by Hallikainen. He also asked the group members to photograph typical things from each forest site with cameras (Figure 5). During our excursion, we visited three forests with different management approaches, each providing unique insights into the complexities of sustainable forest use. Our first stop was a national park forest that had been protected for a long time, where we marvelled at the sight of hundreds of year-old trees in various stages of growth, along with rotting wood and fallen logs. Hallikainen pointed out a tiny 15-cm-tall pine tree (Figure 6), and asked us to guess its age. We were surprised to learn that it was already 20 years old, and at this growth rate, it would not be able to sequester much carbon from the atmosphere. Hallikainen explained that while carbon is stored in forests that are in their natural state (Figure 7), they no longer function as carbon sinks. When trees fall, they release carbon, and he emphasized the importance of decaying trees for maintaining biodiversity (WWF, n.d.).

Our next destination was a commercial dry canopy forest where pine trees and reindeer lichen grew. Here, the trees were about three meters tall and the exact age of 20 years. Hallikainen used this example to highlight the importance of light for rapid pine forest growth and carbon sequestration, indicating that forest clearcutting is the best method for achieving this goal. The third forest site was a mixed forest near the river. Hallikainen suggested that thinning cutting is particularly profitable in a forest like this.

Our discussions eventually led us to consider the complex use of forests. Hallikainen invited us to think about forest succession and management schedules from the perspectives of timber production, carbon economy, biodiversity, and outdoor recreation (nature tourism or local users). In environmental matters, plastic and concrete are being replaced due to the serious environmental problems that arise from their use. However, what can replace plastic? Often, the answer is paper. And what about concrete construction? The answer is wood construction which inevitably means harvesting wood from forests. According to Hallikainen, multiple forest use can only achieve some of these goals because our forests are not large enough for all of them, and the only way forward is to reduce consumption. In the last forest destination, del Val asked all of us to choose a tree and hug it with our eyes closed, imagining that this tree represented all the Earth's trees; that we were in contact with every tree in the world through this one tree (Figure 8–11). We gathered into a circle to share our experiences. The participants felt that the exercises had enabled them to express their feelings creatively, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

On the second day, when we were with the next group, we repeated the same activities, except for the small art workshops I had planned. This was due to time constraints. Following the forest visits, Satu Kalliokuusi conducted a collaborative painting workshop at the tepee in the local cafeteria, Karilan Navetta. The participants were encouraged to express their emotions from the day using paint. Once the painting workshop concluded, we returned to the forest to engage in a tree-hugging session led by Misha del Val. I took the lead in facilitating a discussion about the day. The feedback we received from both groups was similar:

Figure 5. Students photographing typical objects from the forest. They were also guided to imagine how this forest would look after 100 years. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020.

Figure 6. 20-year-old pine tree in a nature conservation forest. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020.

Figure 7. Ville Hallikainen lecturing the students about the multiple uses of forests. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020.

Figure 8–11: Misha del Val guides tree-hugging meditation after visiting the different forest types. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020.

> A big thank you to everyone for today. It has been, to say the least, versatile and varied from the theory-based studies that we have had so far in other studies. This day of more conscious presence just hit the spot. A day of mixed feelings. And quite a lot has already been said, what I have been thinking myself. The pain of the world is strongly present in me, but today I realised that no matter how much I carry this pain, it does not contribute to anything, but I must be more conscious to find out about things myself and make the actions and changes that I want to see in the world on a micro level myself, but also at the same time to accept that some things are not in my hands, but I can still be the example that shows the direction. (Anonymous participant, 2020, n.p.)

The third workshop took place in the same location as the previous days, but this time it had a more researcher-oriented focus as the state-owned forestry company (Metsähallitus) and LUKE's experts were invited at the suggestion of ISEAS forest researcher Ville Hallikainen, featuring a discussion between local forest activists Lea Kaulanen, and Juha Antikainen. Art's presence was a new concept for the invited experts and researchers. It was important for the experts that they could initially present their own expertise by visiting different forest types and their role as initiators. The Metsähallitus team, consisting of Kirsi-Marja Korhonen, Kristiina Vuopala, and Kari Koivumaa, presented the forests and their management activities, while Rainer Peltola from LUKE talked about ecosystem service research related to berries and mushrooms (Peltola, 2017). The workshop was designed with the same themes as those used for the students. It began with an introductionary tour, followed by a sensory exercise led by del Val (Figure 12). The group then drove by car to explore the different types of forests that Metsähallitus had chosen. After spending the day in the forest and discussing governmental forestry use in Lapland, the group returned to the tepee to participate in a painting workshop (Figure 13-17). The workshop involved pairing up researchers and artists to paint a large canvas while reflecting on the day's discussions. This painting was the basis for the artwork for the Rovaniemi art exhibition. It was co-produced by the Forest Dispute team as a large Stella Polaris game imitating an Afrikan Tähti (Figure 18). It also incorporated research knowledge from each of the ISEAS groups. After the painting workshop, I facilitated a conversation in which everyone, including the forest team members, reflected on the day's activities and feelings.

> I feel good. I always thought of being a person who likes to be with people, but being with people and doing something together, creating something together, is in my opinion the highest level of being together, like when you create something new, as a piece of art or a common understanding, that we have made. I am a communicator and I have been doing this work with conflicts for 30 years now; every day I learn something new. And although I am quite good, there is a lot of room for improvement. And this kind of work actually gives you a new kind of perspective that is enjoyable. (Anonymous participant, 2020, n.p.)

Result and Discussion

In 2020, I received a grant from the Kone Foundation for ISEAS, and now in 2023, the Kone Foundation has introduced a grant program focused on various forest projects. This intervention addresses a crucial issue in our society. It underscores the participants' eagerness to engage in discussions about forests, related threats, and the dissemination of forestry research information. It promotes transparency regarding contemporary forest management practices, our societal objectives, and the decision-makers involved. Artist and researcher Laura Beloff (2020) argues that the natural environment has increasingly been the focus of contemporary artists during the last decade. For example, there has been a visible boost in artistic practices that address the natural environment, biology, biotechnology, and the arts and sciences in general. Art is often intuitive and reflects the reality of its creator. Science is based on facts and, as in this case, on Hallikainen's many decades of career as a forest researcher. In my view, we succeeded in creating an atmosphere where the discussion was easy and created a deeper and broader understanding of the multiple uses of forestry.

In ISEAS, art and science played equal roles, and conversational art was versatile. Science provided knowledge about modern forestry practices, while art offered a creative space for contemplation and exploration of this information. Accordingly, it was possible to create a comfortable environment for dealing with difficult and emotional topics, and

Figure 12: Members from Metsähallitus (a state-owned forestry company), and Luke (the Natural Resources Institute Finland) engage in a tree-hugging meditation led by Misha del Val. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020.

Figure 13. Reflective painting done in artist–science pairs. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020

Figure 14. Reflective painting done in artist–science pairs. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020

Figure 15. Reflective painting done in artist–science pairs. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020

Figure 16. Reflective painting done in artist science–pairs. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020

Figure 17. Reflective painting done in artist science–pairs. Photo: Touko Hujanen, 2020

Figure 18. The ISEAS exhibition of Conversation in Rovaniemi Art Museum 2021. The Forest Dispute team coproduced the work as a large Stella Polaris game imitating an Afrikan Tähti. Artists: Katja Juhola and Satu Kalliokuusi. Photo: Katja Juhola, 2021.

provide the participants with the opportunity to share their own points of view. Consequently, my methods are driven by the aspiration of creative individuals and natural scientists from diverse disciplines working together to innovate within communities. Professor Juha Varto aptly notes that artistic activity is recognizable through its creators (Varto, 2017).

Ville Hallikainen's perspective underscores that while approaches such as participatory planning (Boukherroub et al., 2018), and the analytic hierarchy process (AHP) (Kurttila et al., 2000) have led to more structured discussions regarding the diverse needs and perspectives surrounding various forest management methods, they have yet to offer a definitive solution for achieving 'forest peace.' Consequently, he stresses the importance of delving deeper into the viewpoints held by different stakeholders and individuals concerning forest values. Hallikainen posits that community art-based methods may serve as a supplementary 'soft' tool for comprehending multifaceted aspects. At the ISEAS symposium held in Äkäslompolo in August 2020, the fusion of the community art approach with scientific expertise in forestry and forest ecology was tested. This was done as a means to enhance mutual understanding among individuals and groups concerning forestry, and the myriad approaches to forest management (Hallikainen, forthcoming). The key conclusion is that when everyone, including forest researchers and experts, participated in creating art, it established a space where open discussions about challenging issues became possible.

Environmental anxiety is a natural reaction to the severity of the eco-crisis (Pihkala, 2019). With art-based methods, we were able to deal with the emotions caused by the climate crisis and thus, hopefully, ease the anxiety and give people hope to act towards a better future. The students at the Muonio Wilderness Guide School stated that the sensitive art-based approach to the forest that del Val guided them through was something that they could use in the future when guiding tourists on forest trips in the north. The members of Metsähallitus and LUKE saw that art has the potential to approach science-based reality in a different way than the typical. According to them, environmental conflicts are difficult to explain because they are emotional, and scientific proof cannot change reality based on emotions.

> Finally, I will say that forest conflicts have often been local, like the Muonio Forest conflict in Western Lapland, and emotions are strongly involved in it, and it should be. Scientific facts should not be used to suppress emotions. Scientific facts can structure thinking. For example, in Inari, even though we worked there for five years, we didn't solve it with scientific facts; we were only given a few tools at most to structure the matter. In the end, conflicts are resolved by people's conversation, understanding, consideration of feelings, and development of different expressions. (Hallikainen, August 2020, n.p.)

Art brings people who have different opinions closer together, which makes it possible to open a dialogue that can, in the best case, increase the understanding of a person with a contrasting opinion.

The Centre for Artistic Activism shares much knowledge about art and activism (Center for Artistic Activism, n.d.). One of their researchers, Stephen Duncombe, states that

> Our current "post-truth" environment also provides fertile ground for artistic activism. Even for those committed to telling the truth, it has become clear that the simple presentation of facts falls upon deaf ears, and if facts are to be heard and heeded, they need to be made into engaging stories and compelling images that capture attention and resonate with ways people make sense of their world. (Duncombe, 2018, p. 2)

The ISEAS event highlighted the participants' concerns and lack of trust in the decision-makers. The locals participating in the events were grateful but, at the same time, said that they felt that the representatives from Metsähallitus were lying and suppressing information. They also experienced frustration for their limited influence:

> This kind of interaction is really important to me, because, of course, my fears are partly ignorance and incomprehension. But yes, I am also aware that my concern is well-founded. Nice to hear that Metsähallitus' interest is not just in attacking old forests and turning them into pulp and toilet paper for the Chinese.
>
> For me, this day has concretized the reasons why I left social sciences and came here to study and to see things from the grassroots level and not from an academic ivory tower. I have the same feeling that if we can't even in Finland,

> which is one of the best societies in the world, take care of our natural diversity, how can we get such a big ship to turn as quickly as it should turn in relation to the boundary conditions of climate change and the time spans in which those changes should take place. (Anonymous participant, 2020, n.p)

Still, as an artist, researcher, and activist, I cannot help but think about how much my own work matters. It seems that there is so much information and disinformation that so many things are drowned and lost in this flood.

Grant Kester (2018) pondered the same thing:

> In most of the projects that I have researched, moments of agonism, dissensus or confrontation co-exist with moments of provisional consensus or empathy. These are better understood as phases within an unfolding process, than as singular experiences. (Hagoort & Kester, 2018, p.4)

When discussing social art practices, the outcomes can encompass personal experiences but also extend to a broader influence on social discourse. This influence is often expressed through various mediums, including published research papers, documentary recordings such as the ISEAS video documentary published on the ISEAS webpage (www.iseasfinland.com), as well as photographs and art exhibitions, as seen in the Rovaniemi Art Museum Korundi. The feedback that I received from the museum was very positive. According to the museum, the ISEAS exhibition 'Conversations' was well-received, with many visitors spending a lot of time there.

Anyhow, the most important result of this event was to acknowledge that there is no way to satisfy all demands and desires for forests. You always must make choices and prioritize needs. Only by reducing consumption can we achieve a more sustainable future.

At the ISEAS, socially engaged art is based on working together. It is guided by conversations, where the artist also acts as a mediator of the conversations. Discussions can occur in the middle of working together or as reflections, where the subject raised by the artist is discussed in a safe atmosphere. The workshop spanned approximately 6 hours for each of the three groups. Through a collaborative effort between art and science, participants gained a deeper understanding of the theme, specifically forest disputes. Art provided a means to tap into personal emotions, as it evoked concerns about potential losses, such as one's cherished berry and mushroom patches, or the decline of biodiversity. In parallel, research findings added practical insights, exemplified by the discovery of a tiny, 10-centimeter pine tree already twenty years old. The post-workshop reflection discussions, which had become customary, held significant value. This is because, at its finest, art liberates individuals to comprehend the situation at hand from a holistic perspective.

According to Matarosso (2019), humanity involves awareness; we do not suffer silently but ask why we suffer. We invest in the meaning of our internal and external experiences. We consciously and unconsciously express important beliefs, values, morals, and experiences as we do. We are empowered when others see things as we do and feel threatened when they do not. Because our beliefs, values, and thoughts are invisible and intangible, we create, for example, art to give them an external, mediated existence (Matarosso, 2019). This is precisely how the meaning of activist art is summarized; I have allowed the community members to express and illustrate their feelings about important things.

Conclusion

This article is inspired by the potential of artists assuming the role of activists. I scrutinized a workshop at the intersection of art and science, focusing on the Forest Disputes project. Three artists and a forest scientist were integral to the initiatives.

At the ISEAS, the fusion of art and science results from intensive communal living. In support of the success of artistic endeavors, I extended invitations to mentors to reside with us, and experts from diverse fields were welcomed to deliver lectures to participants. The concept of conversational art in the ISEAS has been delineated as both a research method and a socially engaged working approach. Additionally, I elucidated how art-based methods can foster dialogue, and the nonverbal expression of sentiments and values linked to environmental conflicts. Emphasis was placed on the significance of cultivating group dynamics for the triumph of an art event. This exploration illustrates this by facilitating ISEAS workshops, establishing a conducive environment for addressing challenging and emotional subjects becomes feasible. These workshops serve as a platform, allowing participants to share

their distinctive perspectives. Consequently, my methodological approach is molded by the collective aspiration of creative individuals and natural scientists across various disciplines to innovate collaboratively within community settings.

I recounted the experiences realized in these art workshops, detailing expressions of fears and threats associated with utilizing natural resources. Further research is imperative to comprehend how to perpetuate the process initiated by the artist in situations where the artist is no longer available.

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Article V

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Nourishing Connections: Fostering Collaboration on Food Ethics through Art

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ABSTRACT
This paper explores collaborative workshops conducted at the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS), concentrating on the convergence of art and science in the realm of food values and ethics. With 20 artists and scientists participating, ISEAS employed arts-based methods to investigate food-related themes within diverse communities. One team, comprising three artists and a food ethics researcher, collaborated with 17 secondary school students in Seinäjoki (Finland). Their three-day event utilised various arts-based methods to address food ethics issues, such as availability, equity, sustainability, norms, and food justice. Integrating scientific and artistic knowledge, the study showcases the effectiveness of conversational art-making, revealing the role of art and science in fostering awareness of ethical dimensions in food production and consumption. The study highlights the potential of conversational art as a potent tool in community projects, as it facilitates dialogue on challenging topics beyond verbal communication. The paper underscores how art and science can collectively engage communities by encouraging transformative thinking and action.

KEYWORDS: Art And Science Collaboration, Art Education, Socially Engaged Art, Art Activism, Food Justice, Participatory Art, Community Art, Food Ethics, Conversational Art

This paper presents socially engaged art workshops centred on food values and ethics. The International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS), founded by Finnish artist-researcher Katja Juhola[1], organised a 10-day symposium to address environmental concerns and promote social equality through the collaborative efforts of artists and scientists. With six successful editions organised annually, each bringing together approximately 20 participants, ISEAS fosters a cohesive collective that encourages sharing diverse expertise and collaborative projects within smaller subteams and distinct communities. The 2022 ISEAS edition explicitly focused on food and engaged 97 people in Southern Ostrobothnia, Finland. Four workshops were conducted with people of different ages: primary school students, secondary school students, working-age adults and seniors' book club members. ISEAS has always been an art event that brings together actors from different fields, and the outcomes are explicitly the result of collaboration between multiple actors. The core of Juhola's broader research interests is collaboration between various fields of science and the arts (da Costa, 2008; Scott, 2006).

Food and Environmental Anxiety

The theme for ISEAS 2022 was food, which is crucial for all forms of life. Food production is a complicated process that affects our living conditions, culture, and identity (Lang & Heasman, 2015; Rozin, 1996). Cultural food habits significantly impact human and planetary well-being, and understanding the current situation of food production and consumption is essential in finding solutions and promoting cultural change. The prevalent food values in affluent societies have normalized environmentally detrimental dietary patterns, portraying them as usual and associating, for example, meat consumption with being necessary, normal, natural, and friendly (Piazza et al., 2015). In affluent societies, food has become an increasing source of both pleasure and anxiety (Coveney, 2000), not least due to the rising social media–based presence of diverse and conflicting norms and expectations about how people should eat and look. Simultaneously, the possibility of people achieving adequate nutrition is highly unequal worldwide. Even in wealthy societies, food insecurity–first world hunger–has become a current phenomenon (Riches & Silvasti, 2014). The distribution of wealth is highly unjust in food supply chains, leaving farmers to struggle with profitability whilst multinational corporations become more powerful (Lang & Heasman, 2015). Increasing talk about responsible

1 Juhola, a doctoral student at the Finnish University of Lapland Faculty of Art and Design, has focused her research on ISEAS https://iseasfinland.com/ since its inception in 2017, continuously developing it in subsequent symposiums.

consumption and ethical food purchasing is partly misleading, since the responsible shopping basket is often the privilege of well-off people in a position to freely decide (Kortetmäki, 2019). The current issues with sustainability and injustice present structural problems that are so complex that they are nobody's fault, making them much harder to understand and address (Kortetmäki, 2019).

Growing food is one of the main reasons for climate change (White & Yeates, 2018) and can thus create environmental anxiety. Panu Pihkala (2017) sees environmental anxiety as a broad phenomenon not limited to a specific age group or cultural status. Pihkala maintains that climate anxiety can appear as a desire to deny the problem or as a general feeling of inferiority. Still, most people cannot influence the issue and just try to live with it (Pihkala, 2017). The present climate and political conditions have left many people feeling shaken, with little or no faith in the future. Young people suffer from eco-anxiety and a feeling of powerlessness to influence their future (Pihkala, 2017). Indeed, food is linked to both pandemics and mental health problems. The language of art may provide another way to access research results and find new keys to understanding compared. Our research findings indicate the significant importance of providing youth with an opportunity to engage in discussions about complex issues regarding the future in the company of their peers, as well as with scholars and specialists.

Emancipatory Potential of Art Education and Activism

Work in ISEAS can be compared to art activism as well as critical-activist research, which aims to create a movement to displace old ways of thinking and thus allow the birth of a new kind of activity; the collective seeks what is possible in terms of what emerges when our taxonomic certainties are deliberately shaken (Rolling, 2013). Gregory Sholette (2022) argues that the early 21st century has been an extraordinary period for art activism, with movements from *Occupy* to *Black Lives Matter* drawing on adherents' artistic skills. In his view, the last time art activism was as vital in protest culture was in the 1960s and '70s. Demos (2017) states: "In this regard, contemporary visual culture at its best can play a critical role in raising awareness of the impact, showing the environmental abuse and human cost, of fossil fuel's everyday operations, mediating and encouraging a rebellious activist culture" (p. 56.). In an era of environmental concern, surrounded by pandemics, wars, and a flood of information, it is clear that these issues need to be addressed. Everyone does it in their way, but each way also has its consequences, of which people must be aware (Pihkala, 2017). By becoming ethically aware and considerate, community members

can empower others to address ongoing issues of environmental degradation and injustice, including food inequalities and the ecological challenges associated with current food production and consumption practices. Anniina Suominen (2016) sees opportunities in art education to influence environmental concerns with a participatory, empowering, and activist-oriented pedagogical attitude that challenges individuals and communities to rethink familiar principles, functions, and practices. Suominen claims that art education is most meaningful when it aims at the growth of the individual and society. This thinking is in line with art activism. When we want to change the current situation, art can guide us. Suominen continues that the foundation of art education must be ethics, justice and thinking based on radical democracy.

According to Mira Kallio-Tavin (2020), one of the goals of art education is to develop ethical and critical judgement by bringing students into dialogue with the world and its challenging questions about the relationship between human and non-human animals. Karen Hutzel and Ryan Shin (2022) state that when facing global issues and divisions, art educators must reflect on established views beyond local or regional contexts. From their point of view, despite debates on the impacts of globalization, the global world remains a relevant educational concern. Educating students well means preparing them economically, socially, critically, and culturally for a globalised world. The nurturing of this kind of new ecological citizenship, necessary for cultural transformations, also requires diversifying those modes of communication that are considered legitimate ways to express one's concerns and values in society (e.g. Latta, 2007). Socially engaged art can promote food-related communication and self-expression diversification, thereby contributing to the broader task of building more inclusive communities. Pablo Helquera (2011) suggests that a successful description of socially engaged art is *emancipation*, which means that its participants willingly engage in a dialogue from which they glean critical and experiential richness. To feel enriched after an event, they may even demand ownership of the experience or the ability to repeat it with others.

Conversational Art and EcoJustice in Socially Engaged Practice: Theoretical Foundations and Application in Food-Related Projects

ISEAS's leading theory is conversational art in socially engaged art practice. Suzi Gablik (1995) and Grant Kester (2004) both theorized using conversation in the making of art. Kester argues that conversation is not only verbal but can also be methods, such as action painting,

dance, or improvisation, as occurred with the project the ISEAS (2022) Secondary School Team created around the theme of food. In a conversation with Carolyn Merchant, Gablik (1995) discussed the intersection of science, art, and the ecological revolution, highlighting how our civilization's dominance over nature may lead to collapse and reorganisation, ultimately creating order from chaos.

According to Juha Varto (2017), artistic research is based on creativity and involves the search for new forms. Artistic research is rooted in sensory experiences and the world around us. As Teemu Mäki (2017) notes, it can offer knowledge that cannot be easily verbalised or placed within a literary context. Artistic methods can provide an alternative to verbal conversations, enabling participants to access hidden places and under-utilised faculties. The ISEAS event with Seinäjoki Secondary School students on the theme of food provided the soil for a versatile examination from personal, social, and ecological justice perspectives. EcoJustice education is grounded in a set of theories and pedagogical practices (Foster & Martusewicz, 2019; see also Martusewicz et al., 2014), based on the understanding that humans are deeply dependent on the living network of all diverse and complex systems of more-than-human life. EcoJustice education is based on critically analysing unsustainable values, attitudes, and ways of living in (post-)industrial societies. It aims to revitalise natural and cultural commonalities and conceive of a more responsible relationship with Earth (Foster et al., 2019).

Socially Engaged Art

Socially engaged art is a form of art where the process of creation unfolds within and among communities. It goes beyond merely producing objects, as the artist aims to address or improve social conditions. Creativity is harnessed within a social context to effect socio-political change or provide educational opportunities (Helguera, 2011; Thompson, 2015). Socially engaged art, and more specifically conversational art, activated within the context of EcoJustice could enable people to think about and work out the complex nature of food, the dysfunctionality of the current food production and consumption systems, and trying to eat *right*. Foster (2022) highlights the potential of socially engaged art to facilitate encounters with otherness and promote acceptance of diversity. In the ISEAS 2022 interventions, the collaboration between art and science on food ethics provided a platform for students to engage in activist art and raise their voices on the issue.

Nato Thompson (2015) describes socially engaged art as offering physical engagement spaces over time, creating "prolonged encounters of difference and affinity that transpire in the world and between people" (p. 145). These engagements between people through art are an essential way of creating new conversations. It is meaningful to understand conversation's power and value in socially engaged art forms. By using playful practice, it is possible to create a new kind of creative pedagogy that considers the surrounding natural world and our lives equally, where art can be used to visualise otherwise invisible life-sustaining networks. Art-science activism and pedagogy can build new communities and open new corridors (Flynn & Reed, 2019). In ISEAS, a collaboration between artists and scientists, youth were allowed to discuss and implement their ideas in an environment where scientific knowledge meets the freedom of art.

A Case Study Using Arts-Based Research to Explore How Conversational Art Can Develop Greater Awareness and Understanding of Current Global Food Issues and Encourage Communication

The underlying methodology in the Seinäjoki Secondary School case study was arts-based research (ABR). ABR produces research material with the help of art. Patricia Leavy (2019) states that art has the potential to be immediate and lasting. With that, she means that art can grab our attention and change our view of life. It has the potential to affect our intellectual consciousness as well as our emotions. Researchers engaging in art use art as a way of knowing. The methodology can also be used to analyse tacit information. Art–especially conversational art (bodily movement or chaos painting as described in this case study)–can go deeper into our feelings than verbal conversations. In the 21st century, artistic research and ABR have become widely established and accepted in academia (e.g. Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015, 2019; McNiff, 1998). Jaana Erkkilä (2017) states that each artist has their area of strength which can be on a theoretical level or seen in, for example, the use of colours whilst painting. When talking about the task of art, artist-art researcher Teemu Mäki (2017) emphasises *all* the arts, not just the visual arts. This methodological choice was part of a broader study that Juhola has carried out in creating ISEAS and having organised four interventions with the same theme of food, while ISEAS has been held six times since 2017 with various themes and many kinds of interventions.

ISEAS promotes an equitable exchange of expertise between science and art. Over the years, ISEAS has facilitated discussions on

environmental issues and themes of equality within 17 communities, involving several hundred individuals. The significance of ISEAS extends beyond its international nature and cross-cultural exchange of ideas; an immersive and intensive mode of operation characterises the symposium. Previous studies have highlighted the fruitful synergy between art and science, which has the potential to inspire novel modes of thinking (Juhola, 2018, 2019, 2020a, 2020b, 2021; Juhola & Moldovan, 2020; Juhola et al., 2020; Juhola et al., 2022; Raatikainen et al., 2020). Participation in ISEAS offers a comprehensive experience that fosters the emergence of shared understanding. Through modest communal living, participating artists, food professionals, and food researchers share time and space with other ISEAS artists and scientists, creating opportunities for dinner table conversations that facilitate the exchange of ideas and perspectives. The symposium provides diverse activities encouraging social interaction, including sauna baths, nature walks, joint conversations, yoga mornings and late-night dancing (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. *Morning Joint Exercise, Which Is Voluntary for All ISEAS Participants (Image: Fabio Cito, 2022)*

Figure 2. *One of the Daily Dinner Table Discussions. Food Researcher Anu Hopia Presents her Research Area (Image: Fabio Cito, 2022)*

The ISEAS structure follows these methodological steps: collaborative planning between art and science to integrate ABR methods in socially engaged art, participatory work, reflection, and artistic analysis. This approach is exemplified by the artworks created by ISEAS artists, which are based on socially engaged projects, such as those conducted with secondary school students. ABR is a methodology that can be used by researchers without artistic studies. Still, in the ISEAS Secondary School subteam, three out of four members were professional artists, who analyzed their experiences with the ISEAS project and created artworks at the Lapua Art Museum based on these experiences.

In 2022, the collaborative nature of the workshops fostered a deeper understanding of the complex social, cultural, and environmental factors contributing to the food theme. The artistic results of the ISEAS art workshops with the students were exhibited at the Lapua Art Museum in the autumn of 2023 until the end of January 2024. The symposium documentation, including video and photo documentation, recordings of discussions, produced artworks and exhibitions, and various forms of participant reflections, constitutes a rich body of research data. All participants signed written release forms granting permission to use their research, including photos and videos. Participants understood that the works of art would be exhibited in the art museum and that articles would be written about the event. The vibrant environment of ISEAS, resembling a camp-like setting, provides a platform for artists and natural scientists to come together to cultivate innovative approaches.

Studying Food Ethics with the Help of Art and Science among Seinäjoki Secondary School Students

This paper focuses on one of the interventions during the 10 days of ISEAS 2022. More specifically, it examines the collaborative work between the art-science ISEAS subteam and 17 secondary school students over three days in August 2022 in Seinäjoki, Finland. Three days of workshops were conducted by an international, multidisciplinary team composed of members whose work and philosophies matched the aims of ISEAS 2022. Before going to the school, the team spent several days designing activities that suited their fields of expertise. Hours of brainstorming and reformulating ideas resulted in a unified, cohesive approach that could also embrace unpredictability.

These workshops were intertwined with other artists and researchers associated with the ISEAS collective, emphasising the interconnectedness within the broader framework of ISEAS itself. The three-day workshop at Seinäjoki Secondary School, addressing food values and ethics, utilised diverse arts-based methods (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015, 2018; McNiff, 1998; Suominen et al., 2017). Led by a team of artists and researchers, including Finnish multidisciplinary artist and researcher Raisa Foster, Finnish food system researcher Teea Kortetmäki, Chilean dancer and choreographer Hugo Peña, and American artist and art educator Clarice Zdanski, the intervention incorporated body awareness tasks, movement practices, visual arts and philosophical research. Exploring food-related values and ethics (Rawlinson & Ward, 2017) involved discussions, writing, movement, performance, painting and drawing.

Research Process

The first workshop started in the gym, with a "Silent Circle" (Figure 3) and icebreaker and movement exercises led by Foster and Peña. The table and tablecloths were then brought out to the centre of the gym, and the group moved freely around them using movements and gestures from previous exercises (Figure 4). They also engaged in drawing and colouring activities led by Zdanski to express their thoughts and feelings. The movement-based practice continued with the food ethics researcher reading passages from her research on food justice aloud in Finnish.

Figure 3. *Day 1 of the Workshops as Foster and Peña Start the Introductions, With Students, Art Teachers and ISEAS Team Members Participating in the Exercise (Image: Fabio Cito, 2022)*

Figure 4. *Day 1 of the Workshops: Dance Sequence With Tables, Chairs and Tablecloths (Image: Fabio Cito, 2022)*

For the second day's work, the students were divided into smaller groups to go through the station circuit. Each station was rotated every 20 to 30 minutes, with separate gyms for Foster and Peña to conduct movement and contact exercises. Foster asked the young people to express norms and expectations they personally encounter about food

on Post-it notes, revealing demands and expectations arising from family values, social, political, identity, health, and appearance-related concerns.

Figure 5. *ISEAS Exhibition at the Lapua Art Museum, Our Shared Food. The Image Includes Foster's Video Installation Because We Are Told To and Zdanski's I Am What I Eat – Chaos of Emotions (Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023)*

The students' notes highlighted the various requirements young people must navigate with regard to eating-related norms found on social media or from family members (Figure 5). Examples included: "Don't eat before going to bed," "Avoid saturated fats," "Don't snack," "What was the food at school like?" "Take more food," "Soft drinks ruin your teeth," "Do not talk with food in your mouth," "Why don't you eat bread anymore?" and "Taste everything." After the writing session, the group improvised a performance vignette where one student stood in place with an expressionless face and other students affixed the Post-it notes onto their bodies and read the sentences aloud. These Post-it notes illustrate the complexity of how people perceive and think about food and the various (also conflicting) demands that young people must navigate.

Figure 6. *ISEAS Exhibition at the Lapua Art Museum, Our Shared Food. The Picture Includes Peña's Two Artworks: Video Installation Empatia and My Commitments (Images: Hugo Peña, 2022)*

In Peña's workshop, students were prompted to create original graphic content on topics such as food, exclusion and inclusion, using their bodies as a means of expression. One exercise involved writing letters to marginalised individuals, embodying the words through movement, and capturing expressions on mobile phones (Figure 6). The goal was to encourage connections beyond familiar circles, while fostering imagination and empathy. Students were not given prior information about particular cases of injustices but, rather, called to think about the case they address by themselves. Despite varied responses, the exercise effectively stimulated imagination, emotions, and reflections on privilege, emphasising the need for students to contribute to addressing inequality. The workshop provided a unique opportunity to raise awareness and instil a sense of restlessness for positive change. Kortetmäki utilised a circle to distinguish food-related privilege/disadvantage and asked students to draw inclusion and exclusion to stimulate contemplation and make the justice concept more relatable to students (Figure 7). The task successfully elicited diverse responses, and Kortetmäki saw it as a way to make marginalised individuals more visible, countering the invisibility often linked to injustice. Students did not receive prior information about food in/justices, as Kortetmäki wanted to see what kinds of cases students came up with themselves, but when the drawings were briefly discussed in each group, Kortetmäki provided some concrete information about existing injustices regarding, for example, unequal access to food.

Figure 7. *In the Picture, Students and Kortetmäki Are Drawing Ideas About Factors That Create Inclusion and Exclusion in the World (Image: Tuula Muhonen, 2022)*

Zdanski's Chaos Painting Workshop drew inspiration from mid-20th-century action painting, emphasising the act of creation over the final product. The workshop aimed to capture the chaotic emotions related to nourishment and respecting bodies, humans, creatures, and the environment using various art materials. Students covered tablecloths chaotically on both sides, enriching the complexity of the images reflecting their thoughts and feelings. The seemingly haphazard images are especially gripping when illuminated, which allows the intricate details in the layers upon layers of drawing and painting done on both sides of the translucent non-woven fabric to be revealed, thus confronting viewers with deep-rooted emotional issues associated with food justice on a global scale (Figure 8).

Figure 8. *Students Involved in Chaos Painting (Image: Fabio Cito, 2022)*

The final ISEAS workshop featured filmed performances, a highlight integrated into the *Our Shared Food* exhibition at the Lapua Art Museum. One performance involved an inclusion/exclusion game symbolising social inequality, where participants formed a circle, leaving a few outside. Filmed from above with a drone (Figure 9), it provided a unique perspective. The workshop concluded with all participants forming a circle, observing silence, and expressing their emotions in one word, adding a reflective and poignant conclusion to the event.

Figure 9. *On the Final Day, Foster Leads Students in a Game of Inclusion/Exclusion, Where Those Who Form the Circle Must Keep the Others out (Image: Fabio Cito, 2022)*

Figure 10. *From the Our Shared Food Exhibition at the Lapua Art Museum, Two Students From Seinäjoki Secondary School Participated in the Opening and the Panel Discussion for the Finlandia Fair Food Games Video Artwork. Foster Subsequently Recorded a Sports Commentary-Like Narrative About Global Competition Related to Food Justice (Image: Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023)*

Integrating Art and Science for Food Ethics: Insights and Recommendations from ISEAS 2022

The workshop focused on food-related values, beliefs, and ethical matters, including food justice–a vital aspect of environmental justice and sustainability movements that seek to ensure equitable access to nutritious food for all whilst advocating for fair conditions in food production and trade. After the event, Juhola solicited feedback from the participating students and teachers. The feedback was mainly positive and underscored the significance of the theme and the results achieved. One participant shared:

> I chose this red paper to write down my feelings because it often reflected my emotional state during the project: anger, guilt, bitterness, and sadness. I experienced these emotions when discussing inequality, the world's grievances, food-related ideals, and rules. During the project, these feelings were released in the Chaos painting section and writing Post-it notes. (Anonymous participant, 2022)

Another participant commented:

> The experience was good and positive in every way. And I don't regret joining the project. The project was very versatile, and a lot of different types of things were done in it. Some were pleasant, and others were not. The whole thing left positive feelings. (Anonymous participant, 2022)

The exhibition at the Lapua Art Museum showcased the artistic analysis by ISEAS artists of their socially engaged experiences with secondary school students (Figure 10). Foster and Peña further developed video works from the material of their workshops, whilst Zdanski highlighted the paintings created by the students as they were and included a small model of an installation on the theme of inclusion/exclusion that had figured in the brainstorming process. Both approaches are correct and equally valuable in socially engaged art exhibitions. The exhibition, organised a year after the workshops in the same area, also continued the reflections of the young participants. Two students who attended the opening also participated in a panel discussion, emphasizing the new and meaningful role of art in conveying information.

In the ISEAS 2022 interventions, art and science collaborated on the theme of food ethics, highlighting the importance of inclusion and exclusion in our current state of living conditions. Our work with Seinäjoki Secondary School students led to recommendations for organizing socially engaged art projects. To address our research question "How can conversational art be used as a tool to develop a greater awareness and understanding of current global food issues and to encourage communication on them?" This study affirmed and illuminated that art professionals from various fields collaborate with natural scientists to foster discussion and inspire action in addressing environmental concerns. The strength of art lies in its ability to surprise. The creative process involves embracing chaos and acceptance at each stage. Innovation requires exploring new territories and adopting novel approaches.

As a result, we suggest the following elements in your ABR approach:

1. Explain the concept in advance, highlighting the value of art and the unexpected.
2. Embrace improvisation and be willing to adjust plans as needed.
3. Include various artistic disciplines:
    - Use bodily movement, choreography and performance art for ice-breaking activities.
    - Integrate performance art with scientific material to make it engaging.
    - Employ visual arts to create environments, set scenes and give form to ideas.
4. Use diverse ARB methods for expressing emotions and thoughts.
5. Foster conversations.
6. Respect all participants.
7. Collaborate with authors and teachers.
8. Document activities and gather feedback on interventions.

Conclusion

ISEAS in August 2022 invited artists and researchers to collaborate on the theme of food, promoting interaction and exchange. The participants, organised into groups, engaged in arts-based activities and dialogues that address the connections of food to environmental issues, climate change, and social justice. This article focused on one of the teams, three artists and a food ethics researcher, who collaborated with 17 secondary school students from Seinäjoki. Their three-day event applied various artistic methods to explore questions of exclusion and inclusion within the context of food justice. Through this collaboration, students expressed their views on challenging topics that may be difficult to express verbally.

Creating a socially engaged art-science event embraces the is related to its possibility for it to grow larger than itself. As Lea Kantonen and Raisa Karttunen (2021) state, the process of socially engaged art or artistic work generally cannot be predicted. Goals and expectations can be set for artistic work, but the final result or effects cannot be known or determined. When actors from various art fields and people from different cultures and disciplines are brought together, something new will inevitably turn out, and this has been the case with ISEAS since its inception. ISEAS activities are intensive and short-term, and even though ISEAS teams spend a great deal of time together planning their

interventions within local communities, improvisation always plays a key role in the actual performance of these interventions. Improvisation allows finding something new and unexpected (Levine, 2013). With ISEAS, the unexpected is expected.

This case highlights the potential of art to act as a collaborative framework between artists, researchers and communities and advocates its inclusion in school curricula. The dynamic nature of art allows new perspectives to emerge, and non-verbal expressions such as movement and colour can effectively convey complex concepts. Activist art fundamentally seeks to bring about change by expanding our ways of thinking and improving our understanding of our relationship with nature. More research is needed on making cooperation between art and science part of everyone's curriculum.

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Article VI

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The Power of Employing Science and Diverse Arts for Immersive, Sensory Food Education

A Case Study of Tiistenjoki Elementary School

Katja Juhola, Joan Kelly, and Anu I. Hopia

In this article, we present how arts-based methods can facilitate the exploration of children's everyday food experiences, emphasizing nonverbal expressions of feelings and values. Through a case study of an international collaboration in food and socially engaged art (SEA) led by Finnish artist and researcher Katja Juhola, our study highlights the intersection of art, community engagement, and food education. With a strong commitment to diversity and respect for all participants, Juhola's research planning revolved around the theme of food, particularly relevant in an area where agricultural work is central to family life.

Part of the International Socially Engaged Art Symposium (ISEAS)[1] initiative, the 2022 Lapua event brought together 20 artists and scientists from Finland and abroad, culminating in an exhibition at the Lapua Art Museum. Juhola's research (2018, 2019, 2020a, 2020b, 2021; Juhola et al., 2020, 2022) focuses on the integration of SEA within conversational art, aiming to provoke social change through artistic practice. This approach emphasizes the role of conversation and communication in the artistic process, often seeking to generate new perspectives or insights through dialogue and interaction. SEA represents a dynamic form of creative expression deeply rooted in communal contexts, fostering collaboration across diverse media (Kester, 2004; Kwon, 2002; Matarasso, 2019; Suominen, 2018). This collaborative ethos extends to making kin (Haraway, 2016) of natural elements, such as animals, plants, and nonliving elements. The study aimed to address environmental issues with elementary school students, utilizing arts-based methods in collaboration with natural science and artists (Trickett, 2021; see also https://sciart.org.uk).

Food and Dining as a Sensory Experience

Food and dining offer a rich sensory, cultural, ethical, and emotional experience engaging both the mind and body. Research by Auvray and Spence (2008) indicated that humans perceive food through vision, hearing, smell, touch, and taste, forming a holistic experience with flavor, appearance, texture, sound, and aroma. Spence (2017) noted that perception of food begins with these sensory modalities before actual tasting, entwining with emotions, memories, and social interactions (Herz & Schooler, 2002). Sensory receptors detect stimuli, translating them into sensations like sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch. These stimuli often interact, leading to cross-modal perception, where all five sensory modalities combine and influence each other (Lawless & Heymann, 2010). Our brains process these perceptions, integrating them with past experiences, knowledge, expectations, values, and attitudes. Ultimately, these stimuli transform into experiences, shaping preferences or aversions toward food. Food experience thus emerges as an emotional and cultural phenomenon, weaving individual sensory perception, personal characteristics, and experiences into a unique response.

Conceptual Framework: Dialogic, Relational Collaboration

Art inspires new ways of thinking and encourages creativity and innovation. It can provide a space for experimentation and exploration, prompting us to see the world as nonverbal expression in new and different ways. Conversational art (Bhabha, 1998; Gablik, 1995; Kester, 2004) entails the artist creating a space or environment that encourages dialogue in its many forms. Art can apply new processes and inspire new ways of thinking through the iterative process of appraising, evaluating, examining, editing, reaching conclusions, and realizations (Botella et al., 2018). In conversational art (Kester, 2004), the artist creates a space or environment intended to encourage dialogue in various forms. This is exemplified by the interactions of primary school students, whether through drawing, engaging in bodily movements, interacting with farm animals, or initiating conversations with an art museum visitor. These activities align with the principles of socially engaged art by emphasizing shared goals and collaborative practices that foster meaningful connections and participation.

In conversational art, the artist creates a space or environment intended to encourage dialogue in various forms. This is exemplified by the interactions of primary school students, whether through drawing, engaging in bodily movements, interacting with farm animals, or initiating conversations with an art museum visitor.

Dialogical aesthetics is often associated with "relational aesthetics," a term coined by French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud (2002) in the late 1990s in his translated work of the same name. Relational aesthetics emphasizes the importance of social interactions and human relationships in contemporary art and views art as creating connections between people and fostering social engagement. Artistic practice becomes an invaluable spectrum of methodologies to craft for the context when there is no existing infrastructure for engagement between communities and researchers (Kelly, 2019). Numerous examples of collaborative projects between art and science exist (Ballengée, 2015; Hediger & Scott, 2016; Muller et al., 2015; Schnugg & Song, 2020). The most valuable results are often unexpected (Levine, 2013). Serendipitous events bring fresh perspectives and imaginative ideas—the "fairy dust" that fuels successful art–science collaborations. ISEAS exemplified such magic by connecting people, nature, and animals through multiple artistic approaches, enabling a holistic exploration of the overarching theme of food. Achieving these unexpected results requires a leap of faith and a deep trust in our "partner in crime" (Segal & Meroz, 2023, p. 1). By fostering creativity, embracing play, and promoting genuine transdisciplinary collaboration, we have the potential to instigate a cultural shift within the scientific community—crucial for driving present and future discoveries (Chappell & Muglia, 2023).

Research Approach and Design

The chosen methodology was arts-based research (ABR; Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015, 2017, 2018; McNiff, 1998) in the context of SEA. ABR is a qualitative approach that utilizes creativity, sensitivity, and expressiveness (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Artistic methods allow for the expression of information that may be difficult to verbalize, and the unpredictable nature of art makes it particularly suitable for discussing challenging topics, such as food. Engaging in the iterative process allows explorations

Figure 1. Drawings based on the six questions during the 1st day of the workshop. Courtesy of Fabio Cito, 2022.

and surprise revelations, creating deeper artistic and verbal conversations. Varto (2017) stated that although artistic activity reveals artistic phenomena and entities, they are never theoretically limited because they appear sensory and utilize bodily experimentation.

ISEAS's approach to art is multifaceted, as it includes artists and scientists from diverse fields working in collaboration with the SEA project. The interaction of different art forms shapes the ISEAS research perspective. ISEAS values the role of professional photographers and videographers as integral to data collection. The photos and videos produce data sets for analyzing processes and outcomes, forming integral parts of the exhibition where the process of SEA can be viewed.

Arts-based methods were employed to facilitate meaningful artistic dialogues with schoolchildren, addressing important topics such as food in our daily lives and the interconnectedness of all living networks. We incorporated five arts-based activities: drawing, crafts, physical activity, meeting animals, and creating music. This creative exploration culminated in an exhibition, Our Shared Food, at the Lapua Art Museum, serving as both a showcase and a space where the conversational art initiated during the fieldwork continues.

Workshops at Tiistenjoki Elementary School

In spring 2022, Juhola arranged a workshop completed that August at a small rural school. This dedication reflects the ethical foundation of her dissertation research, characterized by extensive teacher involvement and tailored school curriculum adaptations. The principal's enthusiasm was evident, advocating for the participation of all 47 students. Every student's parent received a detailed letter outlining the upcoming event and requesting written research, photography, and videography permits, allowing them the option to deny or withdraw consent at any point. The goal was to approach food in a gentle and multifaceted way while fostering empathy and understanding for food and animals.

During the planning session, food scientist Anu I. Hopia introduced her research on the multisensory experience of food. Consequently, the subteam decided to navigate the food theme by encouraging students to express emotions and feelings toward food through various arts-based methods, including body exercises, drawing, and

Figure 2. Children create the final artwork on imaginary food in their classroom. Courtesy of Fabio Cito, 2022.

Figure 3. Example of the finalized artwork of a younger child of 7 to 9 years of age. Courtesy of Fabio Cito, 2022.

The subteam decided to navigate the food theme by encouraging students to express emotions and feelings toward food through various arts-based methods, including body exercises, drawing, and painting. Joan Kelly engaged the children creatively, prompting quick drawings to capture their initial, instinctive reactions without the influence of overthinking or societal expectations.

Figure 4. Professor Hopia guiding children's work. Courtesy of Fabio Cito, 2022.

Figure 5. Artists Kelly and Yadav helped during the challenging part of the work. Courtesy of Fabio Cito, 2022.

painting. Joan Kelly engaged the children creatively, prompting quick drawings to capture their initial, instinctive reactions without the influence of overthinking or societal expectations (Gawronski & Payne, 2010). Crafting six thought-provoking questions linking emotions to specific sensory organs, the team sought to delve deeper into the children's perceptions. The first question, designed to evoke surprise, aimed to unveil immediate, unfiltered responses. Using visual language through line- and mark-making facilitated expression and transferred valuable insights from the community to the ISEAS team, enriching their understanding of the children's perspectives.

On the 1st day of the 4-day workshop, the children from 1st to 5th grade ($N = 47$, aged 6 to 12) were asked to draw a series of six food images:

1. Draw a picture of the smelliest food you can imagine.
2. Draw a picture of the most beautiful food you can think of.
3. Draw a picture of the food that comforts you when you are a little bit sad or down.
4. Draw a picture of the food your mom wants you to eat but you do not like.
5. Draw a picture of the noisiest food you can think of.
6. Draw a picture of the food you invented, and describe how it tastes and/or where and with whom you would like to eat it.

During the subsequent days, the children worked on transforming their sketches into full-fledged artworks (Figures 1–5). The younger participants, aged 6 to 9, created two-dimensional artworks on A3 cardboard using materials like paint, felt fabrics, craft braids, and beads. Meanwhile, the older children, aged 10 to 12, made three-dimensional stuffed soft sculptures using fabrics (Figure 6). Each child also wrote a short narrative accompanying their artwork and describing its meaning.

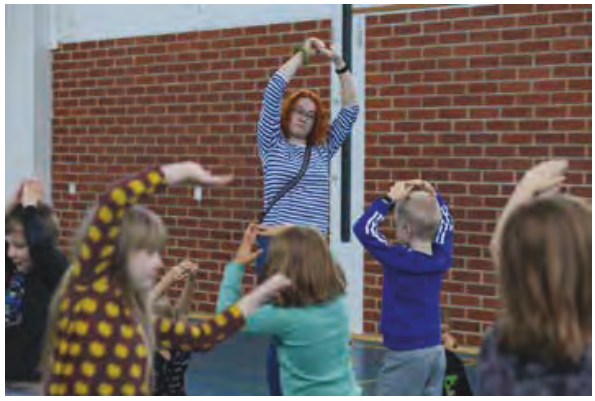
Jokiranta and Yadav led a body-oriented workshop for children aimed at exploring the connection between the mind and the body through creative and experiential methods (Figures 6–9). They included a bodily activity to deepen the children's thinking about food and associated emotions. Children worked in pairs using interactive, creative movements to examine food from different perspectives. An intriguing observation was how children used food creatively, such as making candy chains resembling pearl strings. This activity sparked creativity, fostered social integration, and encouraged diverse perspectives, consistent with dialogical aesthetics (Kester, 2004). The workshop also aimed to enhance self-reflection by guiding students to explore sensory and emotional connections with food, deepening their understanding of the body–mind connection.

On the final day, the children took a trip to Jokiranta's farm to meet cats, dogs, bunnies, horses, and sheep. With Jokiranta's guidance, the children improvised and created songs based on their weekly experiences. Jokiranta played guitar and prompted the children for words related to their experiences. Although she initially took the lead, the children quickly became excited and joined in. The ISEAS documentary team recorded their chorus, which was featured in the official ISEAS documentary and in the Lapua Art Museum exhibition (Figures 10–13).

Results and Discussion

The workshop incorporated five arts-based activities: drawing, crafts, physical activity, meeting animals, and creating music.



Figures 6–9. Body exercises during the workshop will give students tools and stimulate their creativity to understand food-related issues in the future. Courtesy of Fabio Cito, 2022.

> **Through collaborative approaches, participants—children in this instance—developed their sensory awareness and emotional literacy by engaging directly with ISEAS subteam members from diverse cultural contexts, thereby fostering global awareness through experiential learning.**

Engaging children's senses can aid in developing their cognitive, social, and emotional skills, and it can expand their vocabulary and knowledge of the world around them. Drawing materials can provide varied possibilities and complexities for early childhood educators and young children. Through collaborative and unpredictable engagement, these materials turn children, educators, and the medium into colearners and coteachers, cultivating a distinctive form of knowledge within the pedagogical space (Chung, 2022).

By using diverse arts-based methods, our study investigated how children relate to food from their own perspectives. The child's viewpoint took the lead, shaping the resulting outcomes. We first posed questions tied to sensory and emotional experiences to elicit various emotions. The final question—prompting children to invent and describe a new food, specifying where and with whom they would like to eat it—encouraged them to imagine and create freely, yielding a wide range of imaginative responses. One child wrote:

> A doughnut without a hole.
> A doughnut is made from dough, milk and sugar. It has sugar in it. You can eat it anywhere but shouldn't eat it in a volcano.

The children's imaginative and joyful relationships to food, inspired by art, constitute an important finding that could be harnessed in future food education. Such an approach may inspire new ideas for changing consumption habits. By complementing knowledge-based art and food education and engaging with others, participants can experience the interconnectedness of living and nonliving things (Haraway, 2016; Laininen, 2022; Pihkala, 2019; Ylirisku, 2021). Art may also provide a tool to process harmful or threatening feelings connected to food or environmental anxiety.

From an educational perspective, arts-based methods effectively promote thinking and nonverbal expressions of feelings and values regarding children's everyday relationship with food. Considering their varying attention spans, we recommend using multiple arts-based methods when discussing food with young children.

Figures 10–13. Animal-assisted activities in the lamb farm focus on social connection and body–mind themes between animals and children. Courtesy of Fabio Cito, 2022.

Collaboration between artists and science was vital for this project, enabling participatory art activities and resulting in a multivoiced, gratifying work of art.

It is also essential to recognize how socially engaged art practices can foster local ideation and action. In this case, the children's engagement with food and animals may have led to a deeper understanding of local and global food systems, encouraging reflections on broader issues such as sustainability and ethics—even if these concepts were not explicitly introduced. Some children chose to include noodles and durian in their artwork, although these foods are not part of their everyday diet in rural Finland, possibly reflecting curiosity about other cultures and diversity in food.

Children's feedback further highlights emotional engagement, creative expression, and reflections on cultural exchange—aligning with ISEAS objectives:

> It was nice when you came. We hope you will come again. It was a really nice experience. I also liked it when I learned English. I also liked that I could teach them Finnish. (written feedback from anonymous student, September 2022)

> It was fun. It was nice to do crafts. I used my imagination, and it was nice to be with the animals. (written feedback from anonymous student, September 2022)

> It was a bit tiring because there weren't many physical tasks/things other than once or twice. It was difficult because some spoke English and didn't understand us or we didn't understand them. The best part of the week was when we went to the farm to look at animals and sing. The sheep were really cute and fluffy. (written feedback from anonymous student, September 2022)

The children's artworks formed the exhibition Our Shared Food at the Lapua Art Museum, serving as a starting point for dialogue among visitors who could reflect on their own experiences. In alignment with socially engaged art, this work continues its conversations by inviting visitors to read, see, listen, and watch the pieces created by ISEAS artists (Figure 14).

Overall, this study integrated socially engaged art to explore how sensory experiences and emotional connections deepen our understanding of the environment, focusing on food as a fundamental aspect of life. Through collaborative approaches, participants—children in this instance—developed their sensory awareness and emotional literacy by engaging directly with ISEAS subteam members from diverse cultural contexts, thereby fostering global awareness through experiential learning.

Figure 14. Juhola and Hopia in the Lapua Art Museum created the *Dream Dinner Table* installation. Process descriptions in the form of menu cards are integrated into the installation. The works are "joyfully anarchistic and boundary-pushing," emphasizing themes of happiness, delicacy, sharing, and celebration. Courtesy of Anna-Kaarina Perko, 2023.

Conclusion

Highlights and Key Takeaways

1. Collaborative Approach

- ISEAS brought together three artists and a food scientist for a socially engaged art initiative grounded in conversational art theory.
- The team worked with children in a Finnish rural school, promoting an inclusive environment.

2. Arts-Based Activities

- Drawing exercises enabled children to explore emotional connections with food.
- Physical body exercises and farm visits nurtured empathy, extending understanding beyond human relationships.

3. Artworks and Exhibition

- Children's creations culminated in the Our Shared Food exhibition at the Lapua Art Museum.
- This display reflected creativity, joy, and meaningful outcomes that reached a broader public.

4. Educational Impact

- Arts-based methods encouraged nonverbal expression and reflective engagement.
- Emotional development and innovative thinking emerged as pivotal outcomes, demonstrating the potential for arts-based approaches in food education.

5. Collaboration Between Art and Science

- Integrating artistic and scientific approaches offered unique interdisciplinary learning experiences.
- This collaboration enriched understanding and provided tools to address complex issues such as sustainability and food ethics.

Broader Implications

This socially engaged ISEAS project provides a practical model for implementing interdisciplinary art initiatives with elementary-age children. By combining art, science, and community engagement, it illustrates how creativity can deepen understanding, foster emotional connections, and inspire potential solutions to global food challenges. Future research on the intersection of art and food science may continue to unlock valuable insights and strategies for education, sustainability, and community engagement. ■

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ENDNOTE

[1] https://www.iseasfinland.com.


“When you love someone,
the best thing you can offer
is your presence.”
By Thich Nhat Hanh
LAPIN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND