

An abstract painting of a landscape. The upper portion features rolling hills or mountains rendered in vibrant shades of blue, purple, and green, with visible brushstrokes and a textured surface. Below the land, a body of water reflects the colors above, creating a symmetrical effect. The overall composition is layered and atmospheric, with a palette dominated by cool tones.

# *Northern Beauty*

Barents Visual Arts in the 1970s and the 1980s



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Editor

Jonna Katajamäki

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Detail of Anatoly A. Sergienko's painting *The Songs of Northern Coast, 1975–1976*.  
Tempera on canvas, 100 x 100 cm. Murmansk Regional Art Museum.  
Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. Photo: Tuomo Ylinärä.

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Opening of the exhibition and symposium in Luleå, Sweden 23.4.-24.4.2014. Project's workers in the Art Gallery inside the Culture House. From top left Kari Silvennoinen, Bertil Sundstedt, Tomas Lind, Tomi Aho, Tanja Kavasvuo, Kari Laine, Jonna Katajamäki and Olga Evtyukova. From bottom left Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja, Eva Gun Jensen, Olga Kiseleva, Katja Rakkolainen and Irina Gerashchenko. Photo: Ingela Ögren-Weinmar.



# Foreword

Jonna Katajamäki

*Northern Beauty. Barents Visual Arts in the 1970s and the 1980s* is an international project funded by the European Union's Kolarctic ENPI CBC programme with the primary objective of establishing cooperation between arts and cultural institutions across the Barents region. This goal has been pursued by bringing together art museums professionals and art researchers from the North Calotte region that have been responsible for the research and exhibition of visual art. The cooperation network in this project includes the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland, the Regional Office of the Arts Promotion Centre in Lapland and the Kemi Art Museum (Finland), the Art Gallery in Luleå (Sweden), the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art in Karasjok (Norway) and the Murmansk Regional Art Museum (Russia).

The collaboration among art institutions professionals and art researchers has led to an international touring exhibition and seminars organised involved this exhibition. In each country, the artists for the touring exhibition have been selected on the basis of the art-historical research. The active participation of the artists in the North Calotte region's art collaboration in the 1970s and 1980s has served as one selection criteria. Art museums have utilised their professional knowledge and expertise in selecting works for the touring exhibition. *Northern Beauty. Barents Visual Arts in the 1970s and the 1980s* visited during the year 2014 in the Kemi Art Museum (16.1.-16.3.), the Art Gallery in Luleå (23.4.-31.5.), the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art in Karasjok (1.8.-24.8.) and the Murmansk Regional Art Museum (12.9.-19.10.).

The art-historical research results of the project are summarised in this publication in order to present more information about visual arts in the North Calotte region in the 1970s and 1980s. In the publication, the authors look at art by examining questions such as the type of visual artwork produced in the northern regions, the artists who were active at that time, the kind of art styles they represented and the international trends which influenced the northern visual arts. On the other hand, the contents also speak of what it was like to work as a visual artist in the North, how the geographically remote location influenced art and created opportunities, and about the aspects of cross-border cooperation between artists.

*Northern Beauty. Barents Visual Arts in the 1970s and the 1980s* project's collaborators warmly thank all those who have lent their artworks for the touring exhibition. Special thanks go to the authors of the publication and the organisers of the exhibition and seminars. The European Union's Kolarctic ENPI CBC programme and the national funding from the participating countries have made the networking meetings, research, seminars, touring exhibition and this publication possible – thank you all!



Reidar Särestöniemi, Reindeer Migration, 1968

Oil and tempera on canvas, 130 x 130 cm

Kirsi and Keio Eerikäinen Art Foundation Collection, Photo: Rovaniemi Art Museum, Arto Liiti, © Kuvasto 2014

# *Early Cultural Links in North Calotte*

Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja

EARLY CULTURAL LINKS IN North Calotte were formed by the land's first inhabitants, the prehistoric period and medieval trade routes and the settlements as well. In the past hundred years, archaeologists have been speculating about habitation in North Calotte. Some support the routes running from the West i.e. Northwestern Europe to the north along the coast of Norway, while others argue in favour of the eastern routes from Northern Russia, the western part of the White Sea, or through the Kola Peninsula. Based on recent discoveries, it seems that both routes may have been used.<sup>1</sup> However, the prehistoric findings do not reveal anything about the early inhabitants, the Fenns or Skridfinns, in the North Barents region. According to some historians, these are the ancestors of the Sámi people and the Finns. It is likely that the habitation of the early Mesolithic period simply continued into the present, and the newcomers assimilated into the culture of the existing settlement.<sup>2</sup>

Up until the 1100s, the mighty Norway and the Norwegian settlements dominated the shores of the Arctic Ocean and in the 1200s, Novgorod extended its taxes all the way to the coast of the Arctic Ocean. The common area of North Calotte, which included the area jointly governed by Denmark-Norway, Sweden and Russia, reached its zenith in the 1200s. At that time, it covered the Kola Peninsula, Swedish and Finnish Lapland as well as Northern Norway. The shared borders remained open until the 1800s.<sup>3</sup> The artefacts discovered in North Calotte indicate that the trade routes to the North have been used since the early era. Silver necklaces found in Nanguniemi, Inari, which have been dated to the period 1050–1200, originate from either the Baltic or the Ladoga area. The discoveries from the Middle Ages are related to the broader trade routes to Central Europe and Russia.<sup>4</sup> Cross-borders between states were established in the 1500s and 1600s alongside the borders of Lappi villages that usually followed watersheds.<sup>5</sup>

## *Markets as Promoters of Cultural Links, Closed Borders as an Obstacle*

Because of trade and fishing, the inhabitants of the North have migrated for centuries to the coast of the Arctic Ocean. The first reference to the markets in Norwegian Skibotn or Jyykeänperä dates back to 1571, but it is likely that the markets are even older.<sup>6</sup> The markets, controlled by the governments, became more common in the North in the 1600s and continued to grow in the 1700s. Markets had economic significance and all legal activities took place there. In addition, markets played a significant social role for communities as marriage agreements were made there and the families of the bride and groom

met. The most important markets on the Finnish side were Enontekiö Market and Mantojärvi Market in Utsjoki. Based on the coin discoveries, the inhabitants of Enontekiö had strong contacts with the bourgeoisie in Tornio and with Danes working in Utsjoki on the coast of the Arctic Ocean. During summer, people from Utsjoki came to fish in the Arctic Ocean.<sup>7</sup> The markets on the Tornio and Muonio riversides and on the coast of the Arctic Ocean were important parts of North Calotte trade until the 1800s.<sup>8</sup>

The Russians who lived on the coast of the White Sea and the local population in the Varanger area carried out pomor trade during summers. This trade mainly involved bartering, and fish and tools from the Varanger area were traded for timber and furs from Russia. To facilitate the trading, the Norwegians and the Russians developed their own mixed language, Russian-Norwegian.<sup>9</sup> The pomor trade continued from 1740 and until 1917, when the Russian Revolution put an end to the trading.

Nationalism, a focus on the nation-state and shifting power relations led to new borders in the north during the 1800s. In 1809, Finland became a Grand Duchy attached to the Russian Empire and as a result, the border between Sweden and Finland was fortified. In 1852, the border between Norway and Finland was closed. In 1889, the border between Finland and Sweden was closed.<sup>10</sup> The closure of borders affected the life of Sámi reindeer herders the most – they had to choose which country they would live in and the lands available for grazing shrunk.

The settlement on Russia's Arctic coast and the Kola Peninsula began in the 1850s. In 1860, Emperor Alexander II issued a decree granting foreign settlers the right to inhabit the coast of the Arctic Ocean in Russia. Most of the settlers were Finns. The Skolt natives, indigenous to the land, became a minority.<sup>11</sup> Finns had also moved to Northern Norway in the 1700s, but the strongest migration took place at the end of the 1800s during the Great Famine. The descendants of Finnish immigrants were called Kvens.<sup>12</sup>

All in all, the North Barents region was very multicultural in the 1800s. The area was inhabited by the Sámi people of the North, the Inari Sámi people and the Skolt-speaking Sámi as well as Norwegians, Swedes, Russians, Finns, Kvens and the people who spoke Meänkieli ("our language") who lived in Sweden along the Tornio River Valley.

### *The 1900s, a Time of Change*

In the early 1900s, Europe was changing constantly, which naturally impacted the North as well. In 1905, Norway regained independence. From 1914 to 1918, the First World War ravaged Europe, and in 1917, the Russian Revolution occurred and Finland declared independence. The Finnish Civil War in 1918 awakened strong feelings of nationalism and the idea of a Greater Finland, proclaiming that all Finnish-speaking territories should be integrated to Finland. Although the Finnish claims concentrated on the East Karelia region, they also aroused suspicions in Norway and Sweden. In 1920, Finland and Soviet Russia signed the Peace Treaty of Tartu in order to strengthen the eastern border and normalise the relations. In connection



Reidar Särestöniemi, Willow Grouses at the Fell, 1964

Oil and tempera on canvas, 92 x 130 cm

Kirsi and Keio Eerikäinen Art Foundation Collection, Photo: Rovaniemi Art Museum, Arto Liiti, © Kuvasto 2014

with the Peace of Tartu, Petsamo became part of Finland. This sparked Finland's interest in the north and Lapland opened for tourism after the Arctic Ocean Road was completed in the 1930s.<sup>13</sup>

During the chaos of the Second World War, the North Barents region was almost entirely destroyed except for Sweden. First, the Winter War waged between Finland and the Soviet Union in 1939 and as a result, the eastern part of Salla and Karelia was ceded to the Soviet Union. Germany occupied Norway from 1940 to 1945. Germany and the Soviet Union fought the Great Patriotic War from 1941 to 1945. A new war broke out between Finland and the Soviet Union, the so-called Continuation War, and lasted from summer 1941 to autumn 1944. Finland had to relinquish Petsamo and the Finns had to drive fighting Germans out of Northern Finland, starting the Lapland War that ended in April 1945. The population of Finnish Lapland was mainly evacuated to Sweden.<sup>14</sup>



Artists Vasili Baranov, Reidar Särestöniemi and Elsa Montell-Saanio in Murmansk in the late 1960s. Photo: Murmansk Regional Art Museum.

The Germans had been occupiers to the Norwegians; the Germans and the Finns were enemies of the Russians; the German had been brothers-in-arms with the Finns and the Swedes had allowed the Germans to transport supplies from Norway to Finland and to the Eastern Front. After the war, Norway relied on the NATO military alliance. Rebuilding Finnmark, Finnish Lapland and the western Kola Peninsula region after the war was probably the most essential task, but friendship societies had also been established between countries and twin town agreements were concluded immediately after the war ended.<sup>15</sup>

### *Cultural Links in North Calotte in the 1960s.*

The post-war period was difficult in political terms and it was marked by the Cold War between East and West. In the late 1950s, relations began to stabilise, as evidenced by the exhibitions of Lappish artists in Luleå and Hammerfest in 1959. Artists from Kemi exhibited their work in twin town in Luleå. At the end of August 1959, *Norway-Finland Week* was held in Hammerfest, during which an art exhibition was organised. The work of 16 Lappish artists was exhibited in Hammerfest. The artists were members of the Kemi Art Association and the Lapland Art Association Seitapiiri, which was founded in 1947.<sup>16</sup>

Vasili G. Baranov, Reidar Särestöniemi Portrait, 1969, Oil on canvas, 86 x 70 cm  
Murmansk Regional Art Museum, Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Photo: Tuomo Ylinä



The Lappish artist Reidar Särestöniemi (1925–1981) from Kittilä had strong ties to Northern Norway and Northern Sweden through his family. His mother was Kven-born in Vadsø, Norway, where his sister Eeva moved in 1950. His sister Gerda fell in love during the evacuation, got married and relocated to Skellefteå in 1946.<sup>17</sup> Särestöniemi graduated from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in 1951 and wanted to get a scholarship to study abroad. He was offered an opportunity to go to the Repin Institute in Leningrad. Särestöniemi studied three winters as a UNESCO grant recipient, from autumn 1956 through May 1959, and he was the first Finnish artist to study in the Soviet Union after the war. Särestöniemi visited museums in Leningrad and learned about the Russian icon art and the collections of the State Hermitage Museum. These years in Leningrad were very significant for his growth as an artist.<sup>18</sup>

A three-day art exhibition featuring artwork from the Soviet Union, Norway, Finland and Sweden was held for the first time in Kemi in August 1964 in conjunction with the *Calotte Days*. Soviet artists came from the Murmansk region. The exhibition was devoted to historical theme. The realist works by the Russians were painted between 1854 and 1939. The paintings by the Norwegians and the Swedes were figurative and realist as well. The Finnish works dominated the exhibition and the works were mainly informalist, non-representational paintings. Reidar Särestöniemi from Finland and Sámi artists Johan Turi (1854–1936), and Nils Nilsson Skum (1872–1951) from Sweden were invited to attend the art exhibition.<sup>19</sup> In this context, Särestöniemi was awarded a North Calotte Culture Prize.<sup>20</sup>

In November 1964, the Kemi Art Association organised the *Ung Nordfinsk Konst* exhibition funded by the Swedish-Finnish Cultural Foundation, which was first featured in Kemi's twin town, Luleå. The exhibition has also been shown in Gällivare, Kiruna, Piitime and Haparanda.<sup>21</sup> The following year, the artists from Northern Finland presented their art in Northern Sweden once again. The fact that the *Northern Finland Art -65* exhibition has toured Northern Finland and a similar exhibition was shown Kalix and Älvsby in Northern Sweden made this exhibition all the more interesting.<sup>22</sup> The *Ung Nordfinsk Konst* exhibition in 1966 gathered the work of artists from both Lapland and the province of Oulu. Once again the exhibition was first featured in Luleå and then taken to Central and Northern Sweden and Northern Norway.<sup>23</sup> The exhibition featuring the art from Northern Sweden, which has been put together by the Museum of Norrbotten in conjunction with the Swedish-Finnish Cultural Foundation, finally reached Finland in early spring 1967. Besides being shown at the Oulu and Kemi Art Museum, it also travelled to Rovaniemi and Jyväskylä.<sup>24</sup>

In the summer of 1966, a group of more than one hundred Norwegians, Swedes and Finns visited Murmansk together. A photographer Matti Saanio (1925–2006) photographed the city and wrote a travel report in the Finnish magazine *Suomen Kuvalehti*.<sup>25</sup> Saanio was a Finnish photographer who became known in the 1950s for his photographs of people and nature in Lapland. In 1955, his wife Elsa Montell-Saanio (b. 1926) founded the company Taidekutomo Lapin Raanu, which specialised in traditional wool Lapp rugs, in Oikarainen, a town in the rural district of Rovaniemi. In December 1965, Matti Saanio and Elsa Montell-Saanio organised an exhibit at the Museum of Norrbotten in Luleå, Sweden. In 1967, Reidar Särestöniemi, Matti Saanio and Elsa Montell-Saanio presented their work in Vadsø in Norway.<sup>26</sup>



In February 1968, Montell-Saanio, Särestöniemi and Saanio took their work to Murmansk. The local branch of the Finland–Soviet Union Society took part in the arrangements.<sup>27</sup> *Suomen Kuvalehti* reported on the event in its March issue: “When we finally got to Murmansk, all the obstacles had been overcome: we made an instant connection with the people from Northern Russia. The exhibition was assembled with the help of volunteers on the night of our arrival. The opening ceremony was held the next morning and it was already crowded. A continuous stream of people walked from painting to *raanu* (rug), from *raanu* to photograph, from picture to tapestry for three days. More than three thousand people visited the show.”<sup>28</sup> The exhibition lasted only three days. A portrait of Reidar Särestöniemi painted in 1969 by Vasili Baranov (1912–1978), an artist from Murmansk, is a memento of these early contacts. In the 1970s and 1980s, the collaboration in the visual arts developed even further in the North Calotte region.



Vasili Baranov (1912–1978) from Murmansk. Photo: Murmansk Regional Art Museum.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Rankama & Kankaanpää 2007, 31; Carpelan 2007, 93.
- <sup>2</sup> Carpelan 1994, 26; Halinen 2011, 136 & 139.
- <sup>3</sup> Enbuske 2011; Lähteenmäki 2006, 42.
- <sup>4</sup> Lähteenmäki 2006, 12; Halinen 2011, 165.
- <sup>5</sup> Viinanen 2007, 115.
- <sup>6</sup> Lähteenmäki 2004, 143.
- <sup>7</sup> Harlin 2007, 164–165.
- <sup>8</sup> Lähteenmäki 2004, 143–144.
- <sup>9</sup> Alm & Heikkilä 2001, 10.
- <sup>10</sup> Lähteenmäki 2004, 354 & 380.
- <sup>11</sup> Alavuotunki 1999, 41; Lehtola 1999, 149; Lähteenmäki 2006, 49; Solbakk 2006, 73 & 208.
- <sup>12</sup> Lähteenmäki 2004, 384–387.
- <sup>13</sup> Hautala-Hirvioja 2013a, 226, 229 & 232.
- <sup>14</sup> Lähteenmäki 2006, 88–91; ks. Annanpalo, Tuomaala & Tuominen 2001, *Saatiin tämä vapaus pitää. Tutkija kohtaa rovaniemeläisveteraanin.*
- <sup>15</sup> Finland-Soviet Union Society was founded 15. October 1944, just after the cease-fire between Finland and the Soviet Union.
- <sup>16</sup> Kemin taidemuseon arkisto, lehtileikkeet: Lapin Kansa 1959; Kaleva 9.11.1964.
- <sup>17</sup> Hautala-Hirvioja 2013b, 158; ks. Aikio & Aikio 2005, *Särestö taiteilijan koti.*
- <sup>18</sup> Hautala-Hirvioja 2013c, 73.
- <sup>19</sup> Pohjolan Sanomat 23.8.1964; Kaleva 27.8.1964.
- <sup>20</sup> Hautala-Hirvioja 2013b, 160.
- <sup>21</sup> Kaleva 9.11.1964.
- <sup>22</sup> Pohjolan Työ 2.11.1965.
- <sup>23</sup> Kemin taidemuseon arkisto, lehtileikkeet: 12.8.1966.
- <sup>24</sup> Kemin taidemuseon arkisto, lehtileikkeet: 10.2.1967 & 24.2.1967.
- <sup>25</sup> Suomen Kuvalehti nro: 36, 10.9.1966.
- <sup>26</sup> Tenkama & Ylimartimo 1998, 88.
- <sup>27</sup> Neuvostovenäjä nro: 26, 1.2.1968.
- <sup>28</sup> Suomen Kuvalehti nro:11, 16.3.1968.

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# Summaries

## *Pohjoiskalotin varhaisia kulttuuriyhteyksiä*

*Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja*

Pohjoiskalotin kaupp- ja kulttuurisuhteet olivat vilkkaat aina 1800-luvun lopulle. Alue muodosti Pohjoiskalotin yhteisalueen, jota Norja, Ruotsi ja Venäjä hallinnoivat yhdessä. Alueella liikkuvat kauppiaat, kalastajat, metsästäjät ja poronomadit etsien toimeentuloaan. Nationalismin vahvistumisen myötä rajoja alettiin sulkea ja vuonna 1889 vapaa liikkuminen maiden välillä kiellettiin. Rajoista huolimatta ihmiset ja tavarat liikkuvat, ja vilkas pomorikauppakin jatkui. Vianmeren venäläiset ja Varangin seudun norjalaiset kävivät keskenään vaihtokauppaa, joka alkoi vuoden 1740 tienoilla ja jatkui 1920-luvulle asti. Toisen maailmansodan loppuvaiheissa Norjan Finnmark, Suomen Lappi ja Kuolan läntinen osa poltettiin ja tuhottiin.

Toisen maailmansodan jälkeinen aika oli poliittisesti vaikea jakso, joka tunnetaan idän ja lännen välisenä kylmän sodan aikana. 1950-luvun lopulla suhteet alkoivat normalisoitua, ja elokuussa 1964 oli Kemissä Kalottipäivien yhteydessä kolmipäiväinen taidenäyttely, jossa teoksia oli Neuvostoliitosta, Norjasta, Suomesta ja Ruotsista. Kesällä 1966 yli sadan hengen ryhmä norjalaisia, ruotsalaisia ja suomalaisia vieraili yhdessä Murmanskissa. Muutamana vuoden päästä kuvataiteilijat aktivoituivat. Valokuvaaja Matti Saanio, tekstiilitaiteilija Elsa Montell-Saanio ja taidemaalari Reidar Särestöniemi veivät teoksensa Murmanskiin helmikuussa 1968. 1970- ja 1980-luvulla yhteistyö kuvataiteen alueella entisestään lisääntyi.

## *Upptakten till det kulturella samarbetet i Nordkalotten*

*Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja*

Fram till slutet av 1800-talet bedrev folken i Nordkalottområdet intensiv handel med varandra och ett kulturutbyte startade. Det var det enda området som styrdes gemensamt av Norge, Sverige och Ryssland. Här var det många handelsmän, liksom fiskare, jägare och renskötare, som tjänade sitt uppehälle. Till följd av den växande nationalstatsidén sattes emellertid skarpa gränser upp mellan länderna och 1889 begränsades den fria rörligheten i området. Trots att det fanns gränser skedde det en förflyttning av folk och varor liksom tidigare, och den aktiva handeln med kustborna upphörde inte. Den ryska befolkningen vid Vitahavskusten och norrmännen från Varangertrakten började utbyta varor redan 1740, och detta utbyte höll i sig ända fram till 1920. I slutet av andra världskriget drabbades det norska fylket Finnmark, finska Lappland och den västra delen av Kolahalvön av liknande öden: områdena brändes och förstördes helt och hållet.

Efter andra världskriget följde en period av politiska spänningar mellan öst och väst, känd som kalla kriget. I slutet av 1950-talet normaliserades likväl förhållandena gradvis och i augusti 1964 anordnades en tredagars konstutställning under festivalen ”Kalotten”, som ägde rum i staden Kemi, där konstnärer från Sovjetunionen

nen, Norge, Finland och Sverige ställde ut sina verk. Sommaren 1966 besökte en delegation bestående av över hundra norrmän, svenskar och finnar i sin tur Murmansk, och redan efter ett par år blev kontakten mellan konstnärerna mer intensiv. I februari 1968 tog fotografen Matti Saanio, textilkonstnären Elsa Montell-Saanio och målaren Reidar Särestöniemi med sig sina alster till Murmansk. Under 1970- och 1980-talet ökade det konstnärliga samarbetet ytterligare.



## *Opptakten til det kulturelle samarbeidet på Nordkalotten*

*Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja*

Fra slutten av 1800-tallet begynte folket i Nordkalott-området intensiv handel med hverandre, og det ble starten på en kulturutveksling. Dette var det eneste området som ble styrt i fellesskap av Norge, Sverige og Russland. Her var det mange handelsmenn, som f.eks. fiskere, jegere og reindriftsfolk som tjente til livets opphold. Som følge av den voksende ideen om nasjonalstaten ble det imidlertid trukket skarpe grenser mellom landene, og i 1889 ble fri ferdsel i området begrenset. På tross av grensene foregikk det fortsatt forflytning av folk og varer, og den aktive handelen mellom kystbefolkningen vedvarte. Den russiske befolkningen ved Kvit-sjøen og nordmennene fra Varangertraktene begynte å utveksle varer allerede i 1740, og denne utvekslingen ble opprettholdt helt fram til 1920. På slutten av andre verdenskrig, ble Finnmark, Lappland i Finland og den vestlige delen av Kolahalvøya rammet av en felles skjebne: områdene ble brent og fullstendig ødelagt.

Etter andre verdenskrig fulgte en periode med politiske spenninger mellom øst og vest, kjent som den kalde krigen. Mot slutten av 1950 ble forholdene likevel gradvis normalisert, og i august 1964 ble det arrangert en tre-dagers kunstutstilling under festivalen «Kalotten». Festivalen fant sted i byen Kemi, der kunstnere fra Sovjetunionen, Norge, Finland og Sverige viste fram sine verker. Sommeren 1966, besøkte en delegasjon på over hundre nordmenn, svensker og finner i sin tur Murmansk, og etter noen år ble kontakten mellom kunstnerne mer intensiv. I februar 1968 viste fotografen Matti Saanio, tekstilkunstneren Elsa Montell-Saanio og maleren Reidar Särestöniemi sine verker i Murmansk. På 1970- og 1980-tallet økte det kunstneriske samarbeidet ytterligere.



## *На заре культурного сотрудничества в Северном Калотте*

*Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja*

Вплоть до конца XIX века, народы Северного Калотта вели между собой оживленную торговлю, и в регионе имел место культурный обмен. Это была единая территория, которая управлялась совместно Норвегией, Швецией и Россией. Множество торговцев, а также рыбаков, охотников и оленеводов зарабатывали здесь себе на жизнь. Однако, с усилением идей национального государства, между странами были проведены четкие границы, и в 1889 году свободное перемещение по региону было ограничено. Однако, несмотря на существование границ, люди и товары по-прежнему переме-

щались, и активная торговля со, скажем, поморами не прекращалась. Русское население побережья Белого моря и норвежцы из местности Варангер начали обмениваться товарами еще в 1740 году, и практика обмена сохранилась вплоть до 1920 года. В конце Второй мировой войны норвежский регион Финнмарк, финскую Лапландию и западную часть Кольского полуострова постигла одинаковая судьба: они были выжжены и полностью разрушены.

После Второй мировой войны наступил политически напряженный период времени, известный как Холодная война между Востоком и Западом. В конце 1950-х годов отношения, тем не менее, постепенно нормализовались, и в августе 1964 года в рамках Фестиваля «Калотт», проходившего в городе Кеми, была организована трехдневная выставка произведений искусства, на которой свои полотна представляли художники из Советского Союза, Норвегии, Финляндии и Швеции. Летом 1966 года делегация из более ста норвежцев, шведов и финнов посетила, в свою очередь, Мурманск, а уже через пару лет общение художников стало еще более активным. В феврале 1968 года фотограф Матти Саанио, художник по текстилю Элса Монтелл-Саанио и живописец Рейдар Сярестёниemi привезли свои произведения в Мурманск. В 1970–1980-х годах сотрудничество в области изобразительного искусства стало еще более тесным.





Employees in the cultural excursion to Murmansk in 1981. In the background a large monument *Defenders of the Soviet Arctic during the Great Patriotic War*, commonly called Alyosha. From left to right Kari Laine, Paula Pulju, Heikki Porkola and Pekka Hermanni Kyrö.



# Viewer Observations

Kari Laine

AN ACTIVE POLITICAL MOVEMENT in Finland began in the 1970s. Its roots dated back to the previous decade, when the left-wing movements started to rise. Before long, the students and artists joined in. Political awakening was evident everywhere in society and the commitment to various ideological positions was stronger than before. Political parties gained new members and social debate became popular and fashionable.

## *Changes*

The other political landscape has formed along with the left-wing party. A favourable atmosphere for change and reforms had been created, thus opening opportunities to make bold decisions. The Finnish comprehensive school reform may be regarded as the most notable one. First implemented in the province of Lapland in 1972, this reform then advanced towards the south so that within five years a uniform primary school system had been implemented across the country.

During the waves of changes, art also got its fair share: in the late 1960s, a new National Arts Administration was established. Its purpose was to promote the making of art and interest in the arts throughout the country. The system covered all eleven provinces. The provincial arts councils began to support regional arts with government funding and professional artists with grants and scholarships. The decision on their distribution was made by the regional art and culture experts appointed by the provincial government (provincial governor) for a three-year term. Art Commissions also hired provincial artist laureates to guide and support the artists in their area in the fields of their own expertise.

Lapland had a dire need for the new system as regional artists there only received subsidies at random. Many did not even know about the possibilities for support. Now, a support scheme clearly targeting a specific area became available, and through the regional media, it soon became common knowledge. The distribution of art grants aroused fervour and received plenty of mentions in regional publications. This certainly garnered media attention and coverage. The Arts Council of Lapland always got a column when requested and often without even asking. In the mid-1970s, thirty artists applied for the art grants and nearly a third of them were professional artists. Since then, the number of artists in Lapland has increased tremendously due to the additional education programmes and almost all professionals compete for the grants.

## *Art Policy vs. Party Politics*

The internal conflict of the left wing gave rise to far-left political movements, the most prominent of which was called Taistoism after the leader Taisto Sinisalo (Taisto means Fight). From today's perspective, it was a group of left-wing fundamentalists whose ideology did not tolerate compromise or dissent. The dogmatism, however, attracted some supporters. A number of talented young artists from different fields committed to Taistoism and they received plenty of coverage, especially in the electronic media. Flag-waving, however, subsided during the 1980s, and the events in the Soviet Union at the beginning of the next decade forced the movement activists to seek the truth elsewhere.

Ultimately, Taistoism turned out to be a marginal phenomenon, but in a broader sense, left-wing politics did influence Finnish culture. This was reflected in the visual arts, theatre and literature; art took a stand, expressing new views and bringing social problems into the public eye. In the 1970s, the north raised concerns about the preservation of nature. At the same time, the status of minorities, particularly the importance of Sámi culture in Lapland, sparked discussion as well.

The European arms race shifted into high gear in the 1980s. The artists organised a *Peace Train* project against it. Although it was widely known that the project was originally designed by the cultural wing of Taistoism, the artists' community from every corner of the political map and even from the outside actively participated in the journey. In April 1982, the *Peace Train* visited some twenty locations in Finland. More than a hundred artists from different fields who arrived at Rovaniemi performed at several concerts and discussion events and took part, among other things, in a large wall painting at the Rovaniemi Swimming Pool.

All in all, a few hundred Finnish artists travelled on the *Peace Train*. The public information was well prepared, so the project received a lot of attention. The project did not manage to accomplish peace, but a few performers got publicity and further developed their careers. The *Peace Train* also had a significant influence on the traditional concepts of art: popular culture rose from a marginal position to a central one in art.

Political parties were also active during this time. The members of the Arts Council of Lapland were appointed based on the power relations of the previous parliamentary and municipal elections, despite the fact that the law did not require to do so, let alone approved. Perhaps in the intoxicating rush of nomination process, the political expertise outweighed the art expertise required by the law. This indeed came to light when the art grants were distributed; politicians were often tempted to distribute them amongst their peers. This was the case particularly with regard to decisions on the applications for grants from the arts and cultural organisations.

## *The Visual Arts in Northern Finland*

The interest in the visual arts was very strong in the province of Lapland. In the 1970s and 1980s, each of the 22 municipalities in Lapland had its own art association. Associations arranged courses, summer residencies, exhibitions and a critical review service. The National Arts Administration organised every year region-



A visit to the Swedish artist Elis Aidanpää's atelier in Karhuniemi, Kiruna in autumn 1988. On the left Päivi Kiiski, Elis Aidanpää and Kari Laine. Photo: Kaisu Mikkola.

al exhibitions. Anyone could send in works and an expert jury selected the pieces that would be exhibited. Later, the best works were collected from the different regions for the national exhibition. The state art prizes were awarded based on this exhibition. The painter Pentti Tulla won a prize in 1979. He was a constructivist whose work was valued much more outside of Lapland.

The visual arts of the north were different in the Oulu and Lapland provinces. The province of Oulu had a long and well-known history in art. Lapland had very few professional artists and professionalism in the field had yet to take shape. Many artists worked second jobs, as they did not earn enough from their art to cover day-to-day living expenses. Therefore, the visual arts in Lapland could have been limited to sellable paintings of beautiful landscapes.

Nonetheless, the Lappish artists who were committed to creating art followed international trends closely. For example, the group of artists whose production reflected European trends had a great influence in Kemi. Artists from Kemi were actively presented in Finland and they were even exhibiting their works in Sweden and some other European countries. Unfortunately, such activities and efforts were isolated. They impacted the Lappish visual arts but did not grant the artists the international attention they deserved. It was pioneering work, the influence of which only began to show decades later.

Geographical location has always been both an advantage and disadvantage to the artists in Northern Finland. For artists, Lapland is a unique and inspirational working environment, but is far from the capital. If a painter was



In front of the statue Alyosha is a platform of natural black stone bearing an eternal flame of the Unknown Soldier. On the left, Kari Laine and Heikki Porkola. 1981.

looking for exposure, he or she had to have an exhibition in Helsinki. Back in the day, it was practically impossible for most of them as transportation and other arrangements were too much of a financial risk. In addition, the mainstream media critics might not even bother to come let alone write about the exhibition. The north was in need of professional curators, but there were none. For this reason, few art shows were held. Only a few northern artists got into the more profitable circuits of the south. The luckiest of them was Reidar Särestöniemi, the original artist who studied at the Repin Institute. The helicopter carrying President Urho Kekkonen landed in his wilderness backyard.



The first official trip to Murmansk in 1989. A visit to a local artist's studio. From left to right Yrjö Alamäki, Pirkko Rainesalo, Irina Shevzuk and Hannu Wegelius. Photo: Kari Laine.

Lapland had a rare visual arts policy at the municipal level, and the results are still being felt to this day. Lapland continues to be the only province in the Barents region that has three professionally managed art museums in the cities of Kemi, Tornio and Rovaniemi. The importance of these museums was significant for the Lappish visual arts. A network called *North Calotte Museums* was founded to promote joint cooperation among museums in the North Calotte region; among its activities, the network organised exhibitions. This association, however, did not gain momentum. Perhaps a deeper and more practical vision was required to determine how the northern visual arts should be promoted and advanced.

Cultural cooperation in North Calotte was already prominent, but the conferences organised by the North Calotte Committee were merely meetings of enthusiasts, where discussions flowed fluently in Swedish and Norwegian. But they did not really bear relevance for the visual arts or any other arts for that matter. From the artistic point of view, the problem was amateurism: the will was there, but not the skill. These activities, however, contributed to other Nordic interactions in a positive way.

Northern artists rarely got to Helsinki, though some went there and beyond. The painter Pentti Tulla established relations with Poland and organised exhibitions in Gdansk. He also selected Lappish artists for the international art residency in Poland. Olavi Korolainen regularly flew to Paris in the month of April and also travelled to other foreign countries. One guy with a moustache from a Catalan fishing village invited him to his house. What was supposed to be a short visit stretched out for hours, because the afternoon in the company of Salvador Dalí and his wife Gala turned out to be entertaining indeed.

Perhaps the lack of language skills has been an obstacle for northern visual artists who want to enter the international art world. At that time, not even art museums had the professional expertise to take the regional visual artists abroad, and this was not one of their duties. Collaboration networks were primarily national, and the lack of funding posed problems. A few cities had twins in different countries and cultural exchanges did take place. The work, however, was arbitrary and no long-term goals were set.

The topic of international collaboration in art stirred a conversation at one of the Lapland's provincial administrative meetings. "First we have to take care of things in Lapland, and only then can we think of going elsewhere", said one official, putting an end to any discussion.

## *Dawn*

A broader international awakening did not begin until the late 1980s. The next generation was emerging in the artistic community. These young artists were able to communicate in languages other than their mother tongue. Gradually, people began to explore other financing channels, which initially were found mainly in the Nordic countries. However, broader international cultural cooperation did not begin until the 1990s. The visual arts needed knowledgeable curators and other experts, but no one even knew about such things then.

When the Glasnost period began in the Soviet Union, regional cultural administrations also got a chance to weigh in for the first time. In 1988, the cultural administrations of Murmansk and the province of Lapland launched a cultural cooperation with an aim to implement a mutual cultural exchange without the reins of political guidance. Funding was obtained from both sides and later they figured out how to acquire additional financing outside their own annual budgets.

At the beginning, the lessons were learned hard way, through trial and error. Little by little, even Lapland started to realise that being global is an important concept in developing art and culture. Today, it has become clear that the great distances to the world venues is not an insuperable obstacle for northern artists. Knowledge and information are more in demand than ever, but they are certainly worth the investment.

Finnish television showed French broadcast channels providing a daily weather forecast for all of Europe. In the north, the weather map only reached up to Stockholm-Helsinki. A similar limitation would have been found on a map of European art. It is always important to update maps and the northern coordinates are still unfamiliar to many. In the north, it makes more sense to do the update yourself.

*Kari Laine worked as a Secretary General of the Arts Council of Lapland from 1976 to 2009*

# Summaries



## *Havaintoja katsomosta*

*Kari Laine*

Suomessa alkoi 1960-luvulla poliittinen liikehdintä, joka vahvistui seuraavalla vuosikymmenellä. Vasemmistolaisuuden nousu aktivoi muitakin poliittisia liikkeitä. Ilmapiiiri oli otollinen rohkeille päätöksille: yhteiskunnallisia rakenteita uudistettiin, niistä huomattavimpana peruskoulujärjestelmä. Muutoksista sai osansa myös taide-elämä, sillä 1960-luvun lopulla luotiin koko maan kattava valtion taidehallinto. Sen tehtävänä oli edistää taiteen tekemistä koko maassa.

Uuden järjestelmän myötä läänien taidetoimikunnat alkoivat valtion varoin tukea alueellista taiteen tekemistä avustuksin ja apurahoin. Taidetoimikuntiin palkattiin läänintaiteilijoita, jotka ohjasivat alueensa taiteentekijöitä kukin omalla alallaan. Lapille uusi järjestelmä oli tarpeellinen, sillä aikaisemmin alueen taiteilijat olivat saaneet tukea vain sattumanvaraisesti. Nyt oli tarjolla omalle alueelle selkeästi suunnattu tukijärjestelmä.

Lapin läänin kunnat tukivat taidetta ja kulttuuria eri tavoin. Erikoista oli se, että Lapissa ammatillisesti hoidettuja taidemuseoita oli 1980-luvulla jo kolmessa kaupungissa. Määrä on suhteellisesti katsottuna edelleen suurin koko Barentsin alueella. Myös kuvataide aktivoitui 1980-luvun lopulla uusien ikäpolvien ja tehostuneen koulutuksen myötä. Samalla taiteen kansainvälinen vuorovaikutus alkoi lisääntyä. Barentsin alueen kuvataideyhteistyö käynnistyi laajemmin 1990-luvun ensimmäisellä puoliskolla.



## *Betraktarens iakttagelser*

*Kari Laine*

På 1960-talet i Finland tog politiska omvälvningar fart som sedan växte i styrka under de kommande årtiondena. Vänsterrörelsens uppsving blev ett slags katalysator även för andra politiska processer. Samhällssituationen gynnade djärva beslut: samhällsinstitut förnyades och den mest kända omställningen blev utbildningsreformen. Förändringarna inverkade även på samhällets konstliv, eftersom man i slutet av 1960-talet hade upprättat en finsk statlig myndighet för konstfrämjande vars verksamhet omfattade hela landet. Myndighetens uppdrag var att bistå konstnärer i hela Finland.

De regionala konstkommissionerna, som hade grundats med hjälp av det nya systemet, kunde nu subventionera konstnärer i olika landsändar genom att dela ut bidrag och stipendier med de medel som tilldelades av staten. Framstående konstnärer bjöds in till konstkommissionerna för att vara handledare åt kolleger runt om i landet - var och en inom sin inriktning. För det finska Lappland visade sig det nya

systemet fordelaktigt, med tanke på at de lappländska konstnärerna hittills bara hade erhållit subventioner någon gång. Till sitt förfogande hade de nu ett subventioneringssystem som skulle oppmuntra till at utveckla kunsten i området.

Kommunerna i Lappland gav bidrag till kunst och kultur med hjälp av olika metoder. Vad som var spesielt med detta län var at man redan på 1980-talet hadde öppnat konstmuseer med professionell ledning i tre städer i Lappland. Antalet museer i förhållande till områdets yta är fortfarande oppseendeväckande stort i jämförelse med övriga delar av Barentsregionen. I slutet av 1980-talet skedde det en ännu starkere utveckling av billedkunsten tack vare en ny generation konstutövare och samtida undervisningsmetoder. Samtidig började det internationella konstsamarbetet at oppmärksammas, och under första halvan av 1990-talet kunde ett tätare konstnärligt samarbeide bli verklighet i Barentsregionen.



## *Deltakerobservasjoner*

*Kari Laine*

På 1960-tallet i Finland fikk politiske endringer en framdrift som etter hvert vokste i styrke i løpet av de kommende tiårene. Venstrebevegelsens oppsving ble en slags katalysator selv for andre politiske prosesser. Samfunnssituasjonen dannet grunnlaget for dristige beslutninger: samfunnsinstitusjoner ble fornyet, og den mest merkbare omstillingen var utdanningsreformen. Endringene påvirket også samfunnets kunstliv, etter som det på slutten av 1960-tallet ble opprettet en statlig landsdekkende etat for kunstens fremme. Etatens oppgave var å støtte kunstnere i hele Finland.

De regionale kunstrådene, som ble opprettet ved hjelp av det nye systemet, kunne nå støtte kunstnere i ulike deler av landet ved å fordele tilskudd og stipend fra midlene bevilget av staten. Framstående kunstnere ble invitert til kunstrådene for å være mentorer for kolleger rundt om i landet, hver på sitt område. For det finske Lappland viste det nye systemet seg gunstig, fordi de samiske kunstnerne tidligere bare sporadisk hadde mottatt støtte. De hadde nå et støttesystem til rådighet som skulle stimulere til utvikling av kunsten i området.

Kommunene i Lappland ga støtte til kunst og kultur ved hjelp av ulike metoder. Det spesielle med dette fylket var at man allerede på 1980-tallet hadde åpnet konstmuseer med profesjonell ledelse i tre byer i Lappland. Antallet museer i forhold til områdets størrelse er fortsatt oppsiktsvekkende stort i forhold til andre områder i Barentsregionen. På slutten av 1980-tallet, var det en enda sterkere utvikling av billedkunsten, takket være en ny generasjon kunstnere og moderne undervisningsmetoder. Samtidig ble oppmerksomheten rettet mot internasjonalt konstsamarbeide, og i første halvdel av 1990-tallet ble et tettere kunstnerisk samarbeide en realitet i Barentsregionen.





## *Наблюдения посетителя*

*Kari Laine*

В 1960-х годах в Финляндии начались политические волнения, набравшие силу в последующие десятилетия. Подъем левого движения стал своеобразным катализатором и для других политических процессов. Ситуация в обществе благоприятствовала смелым решениям: обновлялись общественные институты, а самым заметным преобразованием стала реформа школьного образования. Перемены отразились и на творческой жизни общества, поскольку в конце 1960-х годов в Финляндии было создано государственное ведомство по вопросам искусства, охватывающее своей деятельностью всю страну. Задачей этого ведомства была поддержка художников по всей Финляндии.

Созданные благодаря новой системе губернские художественные комиссии могли теперь на средства, выделенные государством, помогать художникам из разных уголков страны, выдавая им гранты и стипендии. В художественные комиссии приглашались именитые мастера, которые, каждый в своем направлении, руководили работой коллег в регионах. Для Лапландии новая система оказалась полезной, поскольку до нее лапландские художники получали государственные дотации лишь изредка. Теперь же в их распоряжении появилась система поддержки, направленная на развитие искусства в крае.

Муниципалитеты Лапландии поддерживали искусство и культуру разными методами. Особенностью этой губернии было то, что уже в 1980-х годах в трех городах Лапландии были открыты профессионально управляемые художественные музеи. Соотношение числа музеев и размера территории является по-прежнему самым впечатляющим во всем Баренцевом регионе. В конце 1980-х годов развитие изобразительного искусства активизировалось еще сильнее благодаря новым поколениям мастеров кисти и современным методам обучения. Одновременно с этим, заметным стало и международное взаимодействие в сфере искусства. Более тесно сотрудничество в области изобразительного искусства в Баренцевом регионе начало осуществляться в первой половине 1990-х годов.



Olavi Korolainen, The Gap, 1970  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm  
Aine Fine Art Foundation, Aine Art Museum, Tornio

# *From the Northern Periphery to the International Art Arena*

Jonna Katajamäki

IN FINNISH LAPLAND, NATURE and landscape have always played a central role in the visual arts. Before the Second World War, traditional fells and wilderness landscapes served as national targets; after the destruction of the war, they played an important role in spiritual healing and regional identity<sup>1</sup>. Despite the post-war shortages, the need for new spiritual stimulation was building. As the living standards gradually rose, many artists had the opportunity to travel abroad, thus increasing international interaction and insights into the emerging trends in art.<sup>2</sup> Following the arrival of modern art to the north in the 1950s and 1960s, Lappish art began to expand internationally. Although the traditional portrayal of Lapland remained dominant in the 1970s and 1980s, new, universal ways to describe and conceptualise the northern reality have since been added.<sup>3</sup>

## *The Group Kemi - Forerunners of the Avant-Garde*

The influence of the international avant-garde was strongly felt in Kemi, where several artists seeking new ways of doing art. Known as the Group Kemi (established in 1965), they held group exhibitions comprising seven of the most active visual artists.<sup>4</sup> The founder members of the group were Nina Vanas, Liisa Rautiainen, Harry Porko, Olavi Korolainen, Toivo Hoskari, Lea Kauppi and Pauli Pyykölä, who was later replaced by Osmo Rautiainen. The group did not have a uniform stylistic, ideological or arts policy agenda, although the works of its members went through different -isms: informalism, kineticism, constructivism, naïvism and even surrealism.<sup>5</sup> No one in the group had received formal art training and only three of them had an academic education; the others were more or less supported by the “Kemi Atelier”<sup>6</sup>. The artists in the group were united by a shared intolerance to commercial public courting in the name of art<sup>7</sup>. All of them had another occupation besides art, so their livelihood did not depend on selling their works of art. In this way, they were able to experiment with different styles and develop their own very distinctive art.<sup>8</sup> The modernism of the Group Kemi’s artwork stood out from traditional realism of Lapland<sup>9</sup>.

The members of the Group Kemi were commended at the national level and at exhibitions across Finland. The artists actively organised joint exhibitions from 1966 up until 1973.<sup>10</sup> “The group gained national significance and our work was noted. Exhibitions were held in almost all European countries.”<sup>11</sup> The Group Kemi achieved recognition in Sweden, Norway, the Soviet Union, Denmark, Germany and

the Netherlands<sup>12</sup>. The 1973 exhibition in Emmen, the Netherlands was so well received that the town was inspired to organise *Finland Week*<sup>13</sup>. Thus, the group acted as an ambassador of Lappish avant-garde, putting not only Kemi and Lapland but all Finland on the map while travelling in the North Calotte region and Europe<sup>14</sup>.

Nina Vanas (1906–1977), one of the artists from Group Kemi, became known for her works combining orthodox eastern and western influences. It seems that the solemn and powerful timeliness and mysticism of the Orthodox Church have been transferred to these strong landscapes, portraying an infinite and intense mystery through the Finnish landscape. Nina Vanas was a political artist who told a story of global injustice through her works of art, such as the suffering in Biafra and issues in Africa.<sup>15</sup> Liisa Rautiainen (b. 1919) achieved success in the 1970s with her kinetic and constructivist works dominated by precision, geometrism and colour gradations. In the early 1980s, she shifted to abstract expressionism where the flat surfaces of constructivist art burst in vibrant colours, strokes, textures and expressive gestures.<sup>16</sup> The abstract works of Rautiainen were based on an inner world inspired by the music or personal experiences<sup>17</sup>. Lea Kauppi (1917–1999) charmed the world with her colourful, heart-warming and humorously naïve paintings. She borrowed themes from folklore and also from her own life stages and dreams<sup>18</sup>. Even though her earlier works had naïve elements, in the late 1960s they become dominant. Many of the paintings by Kauppi corresponded to a certain art genre that depicted the life of people following in the footsteps of the Flemish painter Pieter Bruegel, but in a lighter manner.<sup>19</sup>

One of the men from the Group Kemi, Harry Porko (1923–1982), was known for his landscape watercolours and time lapse paintings. Olavi Korolainen (b. 1931) astounded as an abstract colourist who went through several colour periods in the 1970s, including red, yellow, blue and gold periods. After the colour exaggeration and optical-kinetic phase, he pursued painting in white along with more realistic themes. In the 1980s, the colours returned and his paintings took a more relief and sculpture-like direction while the artist made various experiments with materials.<sup>20</sup> Simplified geometric shapes and colour were the basic elements in the paintings by concretist Toivo Hoskari (1937–2010). The compositions in his works in the first half of the 1970s are condensed into tight constructions with precisely delimited geometric shapes.<sup>21</sup> In 1978, after the trip to Paris, the artist was drawn to compositions with pipes and worked on with them for several years. His fascination with Joan Miró paintings triggered a new phase in Hoskari's art in the 1980s. The art works of the Miró phase show themes more imaginative than that of pipes, playful compositions and a light, liberating humour.<sup>22</sup>

Along with the Group Kemi, Pentti Tulla (1937–1988), a painter from Kemijärvi, contributed greatly to the spreading of new art trends throughout the north. The constructivist, who served as an artist laureate of the province of Lapland in 1974–1983, wanted to educate people about abstract art and travelled around the province with his collection of contemporary art<sup>23</sup>. Tulla was interested in the kinetic expression used in artworks to create the optical illusion of movement. He perceived art as shape and colour solutions constructed through a mathematical approach, which he also applied in depicting northern nature.<sup>24</sup> The artist belonged to the Dimensio Group, established in 1972 by artists and technologists. The purpose of



Liisa Rautiainen, Transition, 1986  
Acrylic and oil on canvas, 120 x 120 cm  
Aine Art Museum, Tornio



Reidar Särestöniemi, River Ounasjoki Flows from the Land of the Midnight Sun, 1974, Oil on canvas, 150 x 150 cm  
Kirsi and Keio Eerikäinen Art Foundation Collection, Photo: Rovaniemi Art Museum, Arto Liiti

the group was to present the opportunities that science and technology could offer art and to utilise art to reflect scientific and technological phenomena.<sup>25</sup> The Lapland themes in the paintings by Pentti Tulla are simplified into kinetic patterns and geometric surfaces that bear only a suggestive resemblance to the shapes of fells and the movements of the Northern Lights<sup>26</sup>. Sometimes, the title of the work alone reveals the original northern idea<sup>27</sup>.

### *Art on Behalf of the Nature and People of Lapland*

Lapland and its inhabitants encountered new challenges in the 1970s. The northern region was undergoing serious structural changes, and there seemed to be no end to the unemployment, the desolation of small farms and the migration from peripheral regions to larger centres. The landscapes of idyllic, picturesque villages began to change along with the accelerated modernisation.<sup>28</sup> “For Lapland, development is rapidly leading to a migration of its original population and the transformation of the region into a large vacation and recreational area (...)”<sup>29</sup>. Lapland quickly became a place occupied by tourists, where the environment was destroyed to clear the way for road networks, hotels and ski slopes. From the perspective of Southern Finland, the northern environment was regarded as the reserve of industrial energy and raw materials to be utilised to promote national growth.<sup>30</sup> For Laplanders, this meant changes to their living environment<sup>31</sup>. Northern artists were particularly concerned about the future of their native region.

Reidar Särestöniemi (1925–1981) from Kittilä was the best known and most highly educated Lappish artist of his time; few of his fellow artists were able to travel that extensively around the world<sup>32</sup>. However, the artist’s ultimate anchor point was located in Särestö, Kittilä, the place of his birth which Särestöniemi was deeply devoted to: “I guess it is true that you always return to the place of your birth, just like reindeer are always herded in the same area. I identify myself in some way with these landscapes, this sky, these people and this nature. I like it here; I feel good here.”<sup>33</sup> For Särestöniemi, living in the north and observing nature were part of everyday life. It is reflected in the motifs of his paintings and in his world of strong colours. The nature of Lapland, the Lappish people and their beliefs were an inexhaustible source of inspiration, although his work was also influenced by European modernism, Russian art and prehistoric cave paintings.<sup>34</sup>

Reidar Särestöniemi gained nationwide fame already back in the 1970s and was greatly esteemed by the cultural elite as a “Nordic Picasso” with element of shamanism; his work in the public eye had paid off. Concerns about the future of nature and people in Lapland became a central theme<sup>35</sup>. “Forty years have passed since the human race with its great wisdom has begun wreaking havoc: marshes have been ruined and pine trees, wild birds, cranes, cloudberries, insects, beetles and dragonflies have all disappeared. The weather has changed, the groundwater levels have dropped. (...) Destruction can be seen from the window of this cabin and there’s nothing left to do but cry.”<sup>36</sup>

Särestöniemi was particularly concerned about the swamps of Lapland, which were drained to improve forest. He felt deep sorrow for swamp destruction that had destroyed the mire landscape and its ecosystem.<sup>37</sup>

Särestöniemi also fought to keep the Ounas River flowing freely next to his home, where a dozen power plants and two reservoirs have been planned<sup>38</sup>. In protest against the river exploitation, he did an art series entitled *Nature Conservation* that included, among other things, the following paintings: *Undammed Rapids of Ounas River* (1974), *River Ounasjoki Flows from the Land of the Midnight Sun* (1974) and *Earth Is So Beautiful* (1975). The artist's concern for the living environment also grew when the Lokka and Porttipahta reservoirs in Lapland were filled with water in 1968–1973. A friend of Särestöniemi, the textile artist Elsa Montell-Saario (b. 1926), also took a stand against the construction of Lokka reservoir in her rug design *Lokka Wolf* (from 1970s).<sup>39</sup>

The self-taught painter Eero Kumpula (b. 1933) became known as a portrayer of the old village milieu and the depopulation of the countryside in Lapland. Kumpula thought that the general tendency of Lappish artists towards exotic art, mystique and sales was devastating, because in his opinion, “the artist's duty was to help people in distress and try to do the best you can to improve their living conditions”<sup>40</sup>. In the spring of 1972, the artist found that Suvanto village had been spared from the destruction of war and it became the object of his artwork for the next six summers. The influence of Paul Gauguin and Marc Chagall can be seen in Kumpula's colour-rich village milieu. In the works of Kumpula, swaying houses, forests bathed in the light, meadows, fields, and the silent world of animals give the impression of an enigmatic environment. On the other hand, Kumpula's naïve village landscapes are harsh tales of the depopulation of the countryside. The paintings rarely portray people, only the evidence of the life they left behind: empty barns, parcel of arable land and farming tools that are no longer needed. This mysterious glow of Eero Kumpula's works is born from the absence of a presence, the lack of human touch and its impact on the landscape.<sup>41</sup>

Teuvo Tuomivaara (b. 1943) from Posio faced the abandonment after returning to his home in Lapland. “When unemployment struck in the mid-1960s, I went to Sweden like many others. There I work different jobs for years and all the time, I had a burning desire to paint, but I just didn't have a chance.”<sup>42</sup> Tuomivaara moved from Sweden to work in Helsinki and then returned to Posio in the early 1970s and began to paint. In terms of an art-friendly environment, pressure was high, as art-making wasn't exactly encouraged in the small rural village.<sup>43</sup> Early in his career, Tuomivaara had ached for the abandoned native region and the anguish of the people who remained. Overwhelmed with emotion, he created a number of expressive oil paintings, such as those included in the *Abandoned Village* series.<sup>44</sup> After switching to sculpture in the late 1970s, he started making humorous human figures. His international inspiration came from Henry Moore's and Alberto Giacometti's art<sup>45</sup>. Soon Tuomivaara began to manifest his feelings towards nature and people in his sculptures: “*Tourist Conveyor* and *Threatening Cloud* criticised the fact that Lapland had been turned into the southern reservation and warned of the imminent threat of pollution in the province.”<sup>46</sup>

## *Depicting Everyday Life and Lappish Mindsets*

In Lapland, art-making was not yet regarded as a source of livelihood in the 1970s, as only a few artists were able to earn a living by selling their works. The Finnish art world, exhibitions, critics, buyers and public had concentrated on the cultural centres in Southern Finland, a long way away from the north<sup>47</sup>. For the artists who lived in Lapland, participating in the exhibitions in Southern Finland was exhausting both financially





Eero Kumpula, Suvanto Village, 1972, Oil on canvas, 85 x 110 cm  
Rovaniemi City Collection, Photo: Rovaniemi Art Museum, Arto Liiti

and emotionally. A national system of artist grants established in the late 1960s did not alleviate the situation<sup>48</sup>, because grants distributed to Lapland were small and reached only a fraction of those who needed it. Yet the yearning to express themselves helped many artists from Lapland to overcome the financial challenges to their career and travel further south to study. These artists include Reijo Raekallio and Kalervo Palsa from Kittilä both Pekka Hermanni Kyrö from Inari.

Reijo Raekallio (b. 1950) started his art studies at the Lapland Vocational College in Rovaniemi (1969–1972). He then attended the Lahti Fine Arts College (1974–1977) and completed studies in the history of art at the University of Tampere (1977–1978). After graduation, he returned to the north and worked as a teacher at the Art School of Lapland in Tornio.<sup>49</sup> After receiving a one-year government grant in 1981, Raekallio opted to become a full-time artist. He headed back to his roots in Kittilä and settled with his family in the abandoned Pöntsö village. Early in his career, Raekallio discovered art themes in everyday occasions. His paintings reflected the feeling of a young family in the 1970s in Finland.<sup>50</sup>



Reijo Raekallio, Evening, 1985, Watercolor, 113,5 x 60 cm  
Aine Fine Art Foundation, Aine Art Museum, Tornio

In the 1980s, the portrayal of the family life typical of Raekallio was supplemented by landscape motifs and elk and reindeer paintings<sup>51</sup>. Raekallio depicted reindeer as a semi-wild ferocious beast that signifies unresolved conflict through its essence and movements. Reindeer colours were subdued, but its life was still a continuous, restless voyage without destination.<sup>52</sup> The artist captured the essential nature of reindeer with caricature brush strokes so that the frightened animals hit on the road even had a humorous look<sup>53</sup>. In the late 1980s, Raekallio focused on portraying the life of people in Lapland<sup>54</sup>. In his paintings, the artist poked fun at some of life's familiar elements: running after things, judging things by their appearances and the unnecessary rush<sup>55</sup>. The northern tourism industry also received its fair share, as the artist commented on its colourful world in a humorous way<sup>56</sup>.

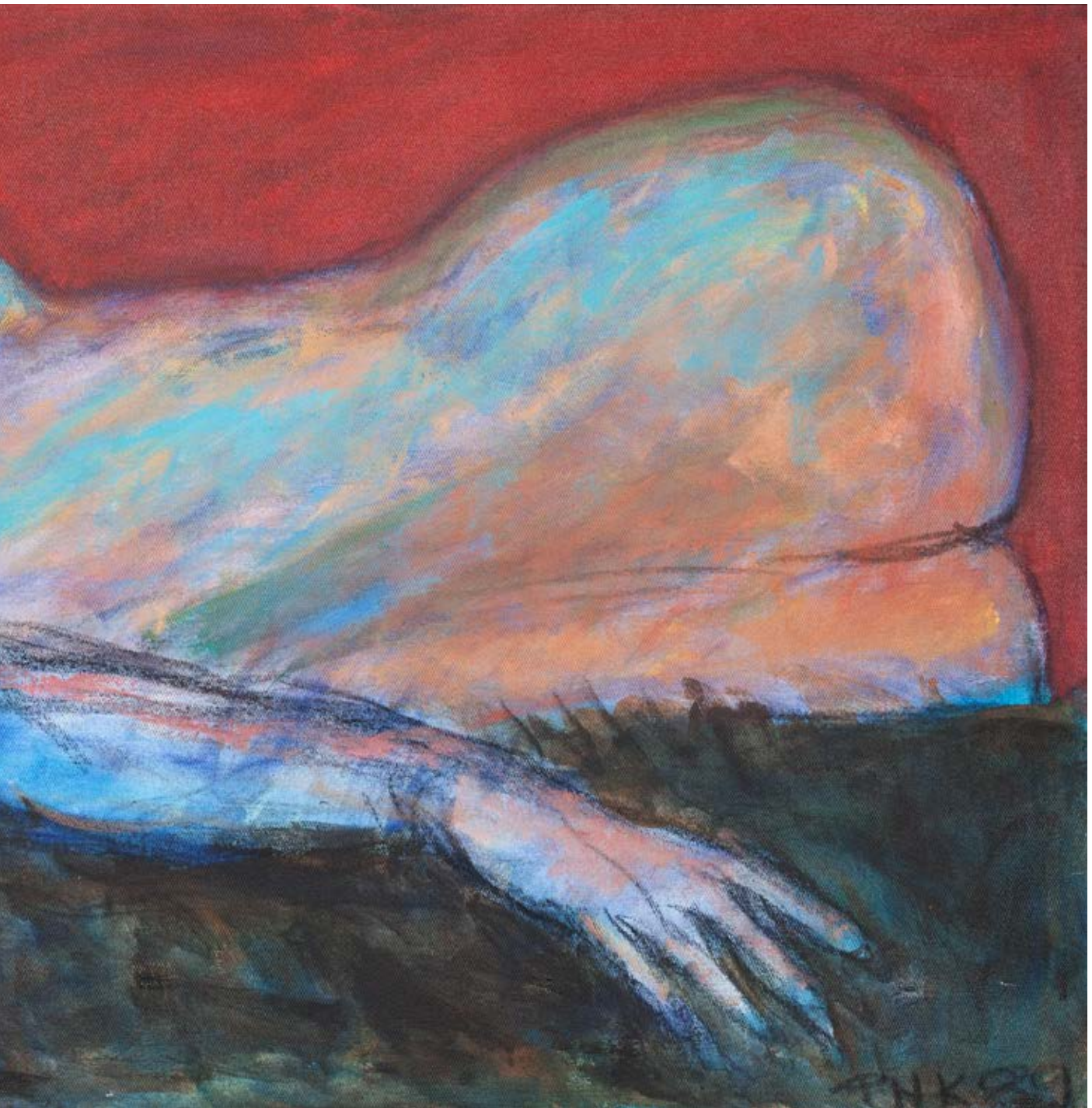
Pekka Hermanni Kyrö (b. 1950) studied art at the Liminka School of Arts (1973–1974), the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki (1974–1978) and at the Royal Academy of Arts in Stockholm (1977). After completing his studies, he came back to Rovaniemi. The themes in his early realistic paintings included nature, animals and women. The variations of the international art trends and his attitude towards the politicisation of the art world were exposed in the paintings.<sup>57</sup> In the 1980s, Kyrö's manner of painting simplified and colour developed into a powerful element. Female figures reduced to an unrecognisable and understated language of painting dominated his works, which were done mostly in blues, greens and reds. Through these female essays, Kyrö endeavoured to portray the mindsets of the people in Lapland. The position of the model portrayed darkness, threat and a fear of rejection, which at the same time reflected safeguarding and a rejection of the external world.<sup>58</sup> At the late 1980s, Kyrö returned to his birthplace in Inari and built a workshop on the shore of Vuostimo Lake<sup>59</sup>. From his workshop, the artist made painting trips to the surrounding fells: "It would never cross one's mind to paint something abstract in the country, though it comes naturally in the city."<sup>60</sup>

Kalervo Palsa (1947–1987) from Kittilä grew up in a family with a marginal position in a parish that had rapidly modernised<sup>61</sup>. Palsa left behind the meagre and oppressive environment in the early 1970s when he took a general course at the School of Applied Arts in Helsinki (1971–1973) and then studied at the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts (1973–1977)<sup>62</sup>. After graduating, Palsa returned to Kittilä, because "the hometown environment is more natural for creative work than Helsinki"<sup>63</sup>. He settled in the cabin he inherited: "This is a Porvoo croft. Father was called in Porvoo (...). Here people drank, practiced sex and sold booze."<sup>64</sup> Built from lath refuse, Palsa's studio in "Cloud Castle" was a fifteen square meter shack, which he named Gethsemane. There he made around a thousand paintings over a twenty year period. Palsa died in Gethsemane.<sup>65</sup> His controversial art originated in this tiny and gloomy shack where he worked at times on the verge of starvation. Despite the constant shortage, he refused to compromise his beliefs or create more sellable and more acceptable art works: "Commercialism comes along with a branded name. I would have been a millionaire in America."<sup>66</sup> The artist earned additional income by subtitled foreign comics<sup>67</sup>.

The art of Kalervo Palsa stemmed from the loneliness, love and longing for death, and tormented feelings towards his home village. The artist was particularly attracted to sexuality and violence: "All my life I grew up in such environment, close to the kind of atmosphere where was the taste of life, the basic instincts of man strongly visible."<sup>68</sup> In his paintings, Palsa poured out the "dark and aggressive expressionism in harsh

Pekka Hermanni Kyrö  
Breast, 1989  
Acrylic on paper, 66 x 100 cm  
Rovaniemi City Collection  
Photo: Rovaniemi Art Museum, Arto Liiti





pathos”<sup>69</sup>. He was influenced by Francis Bacon’s art<sup>70</sup>. Palsa’s work reflects a horrific world in horrific images: skulls, skeletons, people being hanged, a penis transformed into a hangman’s noose, huge phallic symbols, sexual intercourse, lust and stabbings. His art was furious, predatory, banal and at the same time, a coldly analytical interpretation of the times.<sup>71</sup> Palsa called his style fantastic realism<sup>72</sup>. He has been defined as an apocalyptic painter. Apocalypse refers to removing the veil from your reality. Palsa’s anxiety was a reaction to the world full of chaos and violence. He expressed this anxiety in his paintings.<sup>73</sup>

### *Visual Arts Societies in Lapland - The Revitalisation of Northern Art and Exhibitions*

In the north, art-making was a lonely affair: contacts with other artists were sparse and municipalities were not able to provide space for exhibitions. Artists needed community support to promote art and exhibitions, and this support was provided by the local visual arts societies. The 1970s was the decade when the regional artists’ associations were established in Lapland. Thriving visual arts societies in Kemi, Rovaniemi and Tornio led the way and the activities inspired by them quickly spread further and further north. The purpose of the local visual arts societies was to promote artistic pursuits, organise painting residencies and courses, as well as to advance exhibitions<sup>74</sup>. Both individual artists and groups were busy with exhibitions. *Regional Exhibition in the Province of Lapland*, the *Annual Art Exhibition in Lapland* and the juried sales exhibition, *Ars Arctica*, in Rovaniemi provided artists with an opportunity to display their work alongside that of other artists.

At the joint initiative of the Palas Art Society of Lapland and provincial artist laureate Matti Jaukkuri, a common organisation for the visual arts societies in Lapland was founded in 1973, and it was called the Associations of Visual Art Societies of Lapland<sup>75</sup>. It was established to support the northern visual arts field and to act as a joint body in the dispersed area<sup>76</sup>. The purpose of the association was to coordinate the activities of the visual arts societies functioning in different locations in Lapland to encourage cooperation between the societies, and to design and implement the annual courses and lectures<sup>77</sup>.

In 1979, the Associations of Visual Art Societies of Lapland launched regional exhibitions in order to fill the gap left by the biennial regional exhibition organised by the state<sup>78</sup>. The annual exhibition was intended to be held in the capital<sup>79</sup>. Lappish artists, however, had already participated in many northern art shows held in Southern Finland, including a joint exhibition of artists from Northern Finland and Ostrobothnia (1970); the *Artists from Lapland* exhibition (1972) in Helsinki; the *Lapland Art Exhibition* (1974) in Turku; and the touring exhibition *Angle of View to the North* of the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts (1973–1975). However, the cultural atmosphere in the capital was completely different from that in the north, which is why it was often much easier for Lappish artists to cooperate in the North Calotte region than in distant Helsinki<sup>80</sup>.

The first steps towards art cooperation in the North Calotte region were taken by the Tornio Region Fine Art Society in the early 1970s. “All of the northern regions, regardless of nationality, were accustomed to communicating with their own capitals, but not exactly across the border. It was particularly perplexing in

the Torne Valley where, for example, artists could live and work within just a few dozen kilometres, blissfully unaware of each other.”<sup>81</sup> The Tornio Region Fine Art Society organised *Calotte Exhibitions* in 1970–1972 to promote cross-border cooperation. Veli Aine, the tradesman in Tornio, was the proponent and a sponsor for these exhibitions. The artists from Sweden, Norway, Finland and in 1972, even from Murmansk, took part in the *Calotte Exhibitions*. Three summer exhibitions had to be cancelled due to financial hardships. In their place, the *Border Exhibition* was held annually, alternating between the cities of Kemi, Tornio and Haparanda, Sweden. The *Border Exhibitions* were arranged from 1973 to 1986, and they achieved great success.<sup>82</sup>

Art cooperation between Finland and Sweden was broadened with the biennial exhibition started in 1977. At that time, the Rauma Art Museum organised the first *Gulf of Bothnia Biennale*, which was attended by artists from the coastal cities of all the gulf countries. In 1985, the biennial was expanded to cover all Baltic Sea States and was renamed *Rauma Biennale Balticum*. At first, the exhibition was by invitation, via artist associations in the Soviet Union, Poland, Western and Eastern Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. In the next decades, a curator was selected for each exhibition to generate ideas for the exhibition theme and to choose artists.<sup>83</sup>

### *The National Position of Lappish Artists at the Turn of the Decade*

A positive development took place in the field of the visual arts in Lapland during the 1970s. Organising regional artists into local visual arts societies encouraged interactions between actors, offering much-needed contacts and opportunities for collaboration, peer support and exhibitions. More and more artists who lived and worked in Lapland were given a chance for recognition in their home province and beyond. Despite these advances, the northern artists felt that they were in a weaker position than their colleagues in the south.<sup>84</sup> Lappish artists thought that their lack of visibility affected their opportunities to attain exposure on the national level, reach buyers and get grants and prizes to facilitate their creative work and living<sup>85</sup>.

However, when examining power relations in the Finnish field of visual arts, the central role of the Artists Association of Finland in the county’s art world cannot be overlooked. It was very difficult to be a professional artist in Finland without belonging to its member organisations.<sup>86</sup> The Artists Association of Finland accepted artists who obtained three points at the national exhibitions: “It was impossible for artists from Lapland to get in: even a lifetime wouldn’t be enough to get that many points.”<sup>87</sup> The remote location of the Northern region greatly affected the Lappish artist’s access to organisations: “Since the national exhibitions like that of the *Artists Association* and *Youth Art* are held mainly in Helsinki, it is costly to travel there.”<sup>88</sup> The fact that the artistic life was concentrated in the south was also evident in a very small number of art works selected from the regional exhibitions in Lapland for the national exhibitions<sup>89</sup>.

In the 1970s, only a few Lappish visual artists managed to become members of the Artists Association of Finland. Public grant policy supported organised and well-established artists, so most of the government grants were awarded to the trade union members or to those mentioned in the artist registers<sup>90</sup>. For most of the artists who lived in Lapland, the grants awarded by the provincial Arts Council were a necessary lifeline

for practising the profession<sup>91</sup>. Besides financial support, the receipt of grants was also affiliated with their affiliations<sup>92</sup>.

### *Emergence of a New Lappish Generation of Artists*

Lappish art gained freedom and diversified in the 1980s. An aspiring generation of those born in the early 1960s, a generation born with an international mindset, took the team of older artists by storm. “There were not very many visual artists in Lapland twenty years ago. A cohort of young visual artists is now emerging – a new generation. There are very promising talents amongst this young crowd, well educated and hence also technically trained and skilled.”<sup>93</sup> Living on the cutting edge and following international trends was important to young artists. This was reflected in new themes, mixed techniques and new forms of expression such as video art, environmental art and performance art to the north. At the same time, a new, international way of thinking began to spread around: “Artists in Lapland can no longer claim that they are underprivileged. Information flows quickly. It is pretty good to be an artist in Lapland. It depends a lot on the artist to get things rolling.”<sup>94</sup> The artwork is proof that “even though we are geographically remote, it does not necessarily mean that we live on the intellectual outskirts”<sup>95</sup>.

Riitta Moilanen (b. 1959) from Kemi began her studies at the Art School of Lapland in Tornio and continued at the Lahti Fine Arts College (1980–1984). After graduating in printmaking, Moilanen returned to her hometown and became known as the only colour graphic artist in Lapland<sup>96</sup>. Bold branching fit the time, because “large colourful prints captured Finnish graphics in the 1980s. Stories of fantasy and dashing abstractions came to light with traditional realism and concretism.”<sup>97</sup> An enigmatic dream world of this young woman tallied well with the new traits of graphic art: “Her graphic prints are the landscapes of the soul, not the images of external reality. Trees, people sleeping and hair fluttering in the wind are symbols, but they are not bound by a single interpretation. They mean different things to each viewer. A secret, unexplained, is part of a dream.”<sup>98</sup> Moilanen was inspired by Henri Matisse’s and Marc Chagall’s art. However, she did not think that imagination, the dream world and the search for internal reality were typical attributes of the time: “This is a sign of a search for new values. The artist studied people and nature through herself.”<sup>99</sup>

Pertti Lohiniva (b. 1958) studied at the Kuopio Academy of Arts and Crafts from 1976–1980. After a long absence, he returned to Lapland. Lohiniva represented a new generation of artists with a broad range of visual capabilities. Storytelling and symbolism are characteristic of Lohiniva’s dark paintings done on mixed media. Thematics brought force the tendency of the time to emphasise inherent subjectivity: different periods lived through powerful images.<sup>100</sup> The artist’s work also manifests his stand towards world phenomena such as commercialism, the threat of nuclear war and dictatorships. Lohiniva’s satirical interpretations of the time were indirect but sharply alluded to the present even when certain themes seemed playful<sup>101</sup>.

Pekka Syväniemi (b. 1958) from Pello received training at the Art School of Lapland in Tornio (1977–1980) and at Lahti Fine Arts College. Syväniemi interspersed clips and clippings with acrylic painting in his expressive collages. The artist’s “themes were the roles of female and male, humanity in general and human





Riitta Moilanen, Lunar Landscape, 1984, Etching, aquatint, 33 x 38,5 cm  
Photo: Kemi Art Museum, Pentti Korpela

value. He criticised commercialism, pornography and the monomyth.<sup>102</sup> Syväniemi's collages were filled with chaos, desolation and lust. They were not intended to be attractive or aesthetic. Made in a fury, meaningful collages reflected the young artist's discomfort and the mindset of the creator.<sup>103</sup> By the end of decade, the layering in Syväniemi's paintings has intensified: serious and playful genres intertwined in an absurd way<sup>104</sup>.

Merja Aletta Ranttila (b. 1960) from Inari studied at the Art School of Lapland in Tornio (1980–1982) and the Rovaniemi Institute of Arts and Crafts (1982–1986). Ranttila became clearly aware of her Sámi identity during her studies at the Art School in Tornio. She noticed that Sámi culture was exotic and different in a positive way, and realised that she no longer had to be ashamed of being Sámi.<sup>105</sup> While studying, Ranttila supported



Merja Aletta Ranttila, *Virgins Afternoon*, 1988, Linocut, mixed media, 30 x 40 cm  
Rovaniemi City Collection, Photo: Rovaniemi Art Museum, Arto Liiti

herself with her pencil and watercolour works portraying Sámi people, reindeer herders, fishermen and gold panners<sup>106</sup>. These Sámi paintings quickly established a niche in the expression of Lappish visual arts. A few years later, the artist's self-portrayal gained momentum alongside her Sámi paintings.<sup>107</sup> Ranttila's art works are marked by a hint of the natural mystique preserved in Sámi spirituality. Her work emphasised interdependence of man and nature and a shared fate.<sup>108</sup>

### *The Exposure of Lappish Visual Arts Rises to a New Level*

In the early 1980s, there were about thirty museums of art in Finland, but only one of them, the Kemi Art Museum (founded in 1947), was actually situated in Lapland<sup>109</sup>. For decades, the museum was the exclusive trendsetter in Northern Finland. It was designated a regional museum in 1981. The field of the Lappish visual arts expanded in 1986, when two new art museums were opened in the province: the Aine Art Museum (Tornio) and the Rovaniemi Art Museum (Rovaniemi). Museums were also founded for individual Lappish artists: the Särestöniemi Museum (Kittilä), which displays Reidar Särestöniemi's home, working environment and paintings, opened in 1985; the Museum-Gallery Alariesto (Sodankylä), featuring Andreas Alariesto's lifelong work, in 1986; and the Art Museum Einari Junttila (Kittilä), a landscape painter, opened in 1991.

The only private art gallery in Lapland opened in Rovaniemi in 1986. A young artist, Pertti Lohiniva, served as a spokesperson for the project, as he was frustrated with the lack of exhibition space in his town. Although the gallery existed only for a short period (1986–1987)<sup>110</sup>, it did offer an exhibition space for many Lappish artists<sup>111</sup>.

### ***Twin Town Activity in Northern Calotte Boosts Cooperation between Artists***

In Lapland, local visual arts societies were active throughout the 1980s. Regional exhibition was animated and furthered the exposure and reputation of the visual arts and artists in the provinces. Visual arts societies began to look for partners in the North Calotte region: “At these latitudes, people focus too much at the capitals and don’t see the art of their neighbours, even though Sweden, Norway and Finland are so close by. The east-west axis should be exploited more.”<sup>112</sup>

The cooperation partners closest to the Kemi Artists Association were found in the province of Norrbotten in Northern Sweden. The interaction between artists was most intense in Luleå: “The Kemi Art Museum is currently showcasing the works of three artists from Luleå: graphic art by Inger Andersson, textile art by Gun Johansson and naïve oil paintings by Karin Nyberg. This is a return visit as the works of artists from Kemi were recently exhibited in Luleå.”<sup>113</sup> The artists from Kemi also exhibited their work in Gällivare and Kalix<sup>114</sup>. In autumn of 1983, the Kemi Artists Association organised exhibitions in Tromsø, Vadsø and Ringkøbing in Denmark. Olavi Korolainen, Toivo Hoskari, Liisa Rautiainen, Lea Kauppi, Jorma Kuula, Terttu Mällinen, Erkki Soukka, Mikko Rautajoki, Sanna Koivisto and Jorma Qvist participated in the friendship exhibition held in Denmark.<sup>115</sup> An exceptional friendship exhibition was organised in Kemi in 1987, where the art from Volgograd was displayed in the Provincial Museum of Lapland after a seventeen-year interval<sup>116</sup>.

The city’s vibrant twinning activity with Murmansk and Kiruna opened a natural door for artistic cooperation for the visual arts associations in Rovaniemi. In particular, lively cultural exchanges took place between Rovaniemi and Murmansk in the 1980s and the cities organised *Cultural Days*. The first *Rovaniemi Cultural Days* were celebrated in Murmansk in 1981 and the *Murmansk Cultural Days* were held in autumn of 1982 in Rovaniemi<sup>117</sup>. The next Rovaniemi friendship days were held in autumn of 1985 and the Lappish visual arts were also exhibited in Murmansk. Twelve artists from Rovaniemi took part in the exhibition, including Marjaana Niskala, Pertti Lohiniva, Pekka Hermanni Kyrö, Seppo Öfverström and Sointu Viinikka.<sup>118</sup> In turn, the art from Murmansk was displayed in the capital of Lapland in the fall of 1986<sup>119</sup>. The grants distributed by cities were also part of the cultural exchange between Rovaniemi and Kiruna. The painter from Rovaniemi, Eero Kumpula, was awarded a trip in 1979 to Kiruna and the painter from Kiruna, Aili Kangas, spent a week in Rovaniemi in 1980, exploring local artistic life.<sup>120</sup> Twin towns also exchanged exhibitions. In the early summer of 1989, a dozen artists from Rovaniemi arranged a show in Kiruna and in autumn, 18 members of the Kiruna Artists Collective performed in Rovaniemi<sup>121</sup>.

Cooperation in visual arts societies in the Torne Valley flourished on both sides of the Finnish and Swedish border. The joint exhibit *Provinsia Bothensis* with works by artists from Tornio and Haparanda was displayed in the Haparanda library in 1987 and a couple of years later, visual arts societies exhibited together in Tornio<sup>122</sup>. Visual arts societies in Pello and Ylitornio, as well as cultural committees in Övertorneå and Pajala, developed cooperation through shared art residencies. The painter Pekka Syrjä from Helsinki and Seppo Öfverström from Rovaniemi worked as instructors in the residency in Svanstein, Sweden (1985).<sup>123</sup> The residency and exhibition activity was also well underway in the Ylitornio Visual Arts Society together with its twin municipality Lyngen.<sup>124</sup> The Muonio Visual Arts Society was willing to cooperate with Norwegian and Swedish artists. Artists from Muonio were planning a joint art and exhibition activity with Kautokeino in Northern Norway.<sup>125</sup> The Muonio Visual Arts Society was also responsible for organising the touring exhibition *Muonio, Kolari and Pajala Art*. In 1983, the exhibition toured in the Torne Valley municipalities on both sides of the border.<sup>126</sup> In 1987, the Enontekiö Art Association started a cultural cooperation with its twin municipality Storfjord in Northern Norway<sup>127</sup>. The Kittilä Art Society exhibited art in Svanvik and Kirkkonieimi in Norway<sup>128</sup>. In turn, the visual artists from Sodankylä exchanged exhibits with the Norwegian Art Association in its twin municipality Berlevåg<sup>129</sup>.

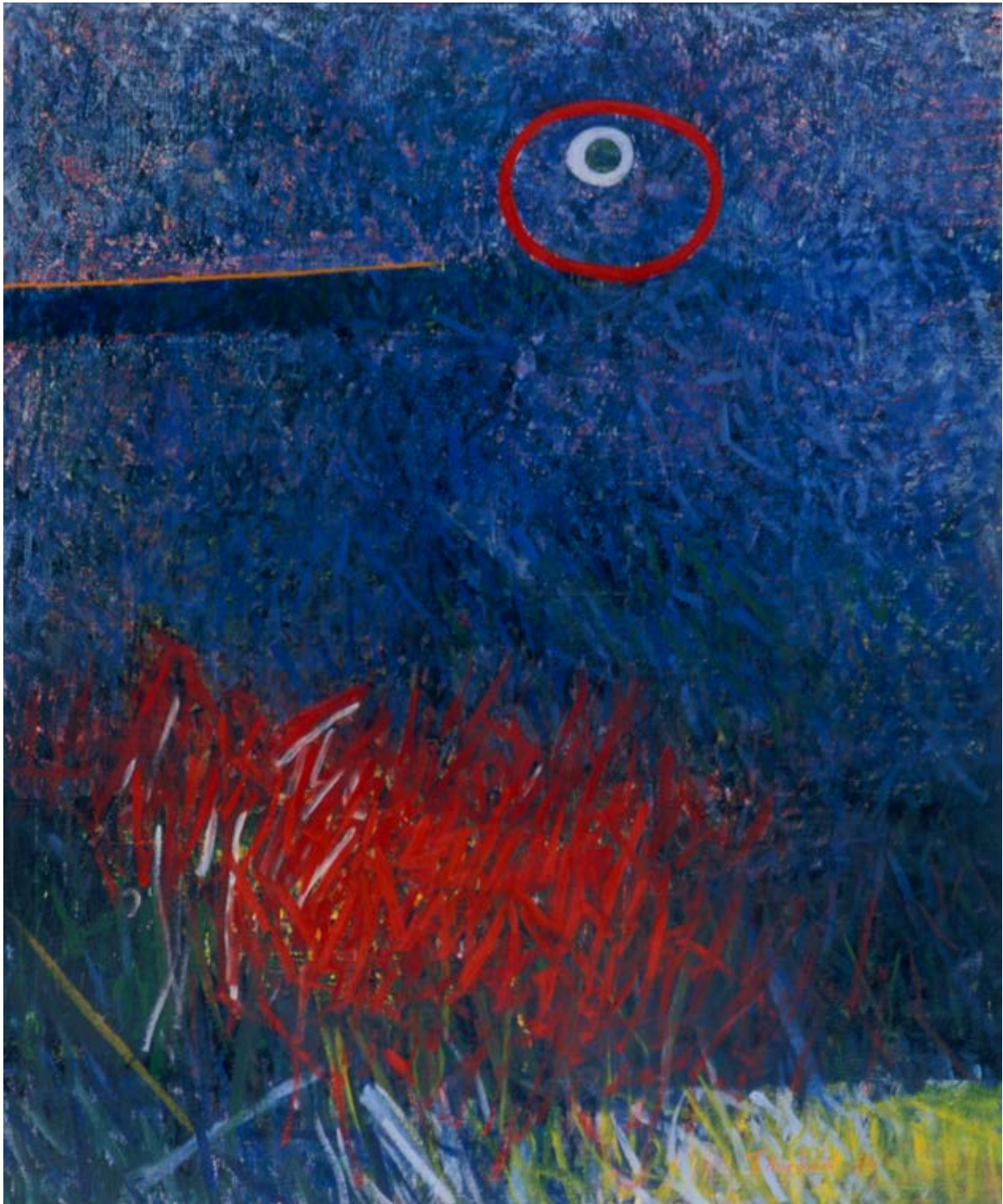
### *Lappish Visual Artists at the North Calotte Regional Exhibitions*

Lappish artists enthusiastically participated in the joint exhibitions organised in North Calotte. In 1980, artists Lea Kauppi, Sanna Koivisto and Mikko Rautajoki represented the country in the first joint exhibition arranged in conjunction with the *North Calotte Trade Fair* in Piteå, Sweden<sup>130</sup>. The following year, the northern visual arts were presented during *North Calotte Peace Days* in Alta, Norway. Ten artists from Finland, Sweden, Norway and the Soviet Union got a chance to present their art. Matti Jaukkuri, Lea Kauppi, Olavi Korolainen, Eero Kumpula, Pekka Hermanni Kyrö, Eeva-Riitta Lättilä, Reijo Raekallio, Liisa Rautiainen, Viljo Venäläinen and Pentti Tulla were invited from Lapland.<sup>131</sup>

A Sámi art exhibition, *Sámi Dáidda*, was opened in Karasjok, Norway in 1981. The exhibition was a consolidated exposition of pieces ranging from old Sámi tools to modern visual arts. The most acclaimed early Sámi visual artists at the exhibition were Johan Turi, Nils Nilsson Skum and Johan Savio, but there were also four oil paintings by a non-Sámi artist Reidar Särestöniemi, a native of Kittilä, Finnish Lapland. The Sámi exhibition toured in Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland.<sup>132</sup>

In 1982, the Tromsø Art Association held the exhibition *Art from North Calotte* in the old museum. Three or four artists from Northern Norway, Northern Sweden and Northern Finland were invited to this exhibition. From Norway, Sámi artists Iver Jáks, Oscar Bodögaard and Inghild Karlsen took part in the exhibition. Sweden was represented by Gun Johansson, Gösta Hedström, Else-Maj Johansson and Lena Nallo. From Finland, Hilka Ukkola from Lapland joined Matti Mikkola and Kaarlo Mikkonen from Oulu at this exhibition.<sup>133</sup>

The ninth *North Calotte Peace Days* (1987) in Tornio, Finland offered yet another glimpse of the art from neighbouring countries. Eight artists from the Soviet Union participated in the exhibition, Olof Lindström



Toivo Hoskari, Drunken Artist on Evening Campfire, 1984, Oil on canvas, 94 x 78,5 cm  
Photo: Kemi Art Museum, Pentti Korpela

from Luleå represented Sweden and Johanne Marie Hansen-Krone, a native of Nordreisa, came from Norway. Ten artists were invited from Finland: Eeva-Liisa Isomaa, Lea Kauppi, Jorma Kuula, Raisa Luodonpää, Riitta Moilanen, Tuula Mukka, Marjaana Niskala, Reijo Raekallio, Merja Aletta Ranttila and Pentti Tulla. Each of them presented one work at the exhibition. One of the Reidar Särestöniemi's paintings was also put on display.<sup>134</sup>

The all-time largest exhibition of fine art for sale, the *North Calotte Autumn Salon*, opened its doors for the first time in Arcus Hall of Luleå in 1987. The exhibition was organized for the second time in 1989. "Despite the name, the exhibition has comprised not only North Calotte art but also artists from the southernmost parts of Finland and Scandinavian counties as well as a few creators from Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Austria."<sup>135</sup> Lappish artists Eero Kumpula, Seppo Öfverström, Pekka Hermanni Kyrö, Teuvo Tuomivaara, Pekka Syväniemi, Aulikki Nukala, Merja Aletta Ranttila and Mikko Rautajoki took part in the exhibition<sup>136</sup>. The *North Calotte Autumn Salon* was held for the third time in 1991<sup>137</sup>.

### *Being a Visual Artist in Lapland in the 1970s and 1980s*

In Lapland, being an artist was not yet regarded as a profession in the 1970s. Most artists had a breadwinning job that secured their livelihood and made art-making possible. The development of the government grant system improved the financial status and the opportunities to practice their profession full time. In the early 1970s, the grants and various prizes were, however, only a supplement to what the artist earned at his or her other jobs, but by the 1980s, they had become almost enough to make a living. At the same time, expanded art education produced a new generation of visual artists. As the artists' community was growing, the competition for the larger grants became tougher. Many young and even more experienced artists relocated to the south, but the most persistent stayed in their native region. They wanted to live and work as visual artists in Lapland.

Lappish artists were united by a strong bond to the northern region. The nature in Lapland, its unique colours and the northern lights phenomena offered them a source of inspiration and a natural environment for artistic activity. The remote location ensured peaceful work and original art. Living in the north does not, however, mean isolation from the rest of the world, as artists travelled a lot both domestically and abroad. For the artists living on the periphery, keeping up with new trends and meeting with fellow artist was of paramount importance in order for them to regenerate and set themselves apart from others. The insights and experiences gained from the trips were reflected in the artists' works, but were filtered through northern lens. For this reason, it was easier for Lappish artists to showcase their art and collaborate in the North Calotte region than in the country's capital. In the 2000s, the members of the Barents art community already know each other quite well, and collective exhibits and other projects were organised even more frequently<sup>138</sup>.

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## Endnotes

- 1 Hautala-Hirvioja 2011, 78 & 108.
- 2 Harju 2007, 12.
- 3 Hautala-Hirvioja 2011, 109.
- 4 Pohjolan Työ 30.8.1973.
- 5 Hämeen Sanomat 21.10.1966; Etelä-Suomen Sanomat 22.10.1966; Kaltio 5/1999.
- 6 Harju 2007, 60.
- 7 Pohjolan Työ 30.8.1973.
- 8 Harju 2007, 60.
- 9 Pohjolan Sanomat 9.5.2002.
- 10 Nevaranta 1998, 12.
- 11 Pohjolan Sanomat 9.5.2002.
- 12 Pohjolan Työ 30.8.1973.
- 13 Kaltio 5/1999.
- 14 Pohjolan Työ 30.8.1973.
- 15 Rautiainen, Seitamaa-Oravala & Vanas 1986, 32–33, 38.
- 16 Mäkinen 2012, 177; Kaltio 5/1999.
- 17 Hautala-Hirvioja 1999, 27–30.
- 18 Rönkkö 1983, 24.
- 19 Rönkkö 1983, 21 & 24; Lapin Kansa 17.7.2013.
- 20 Pohjolan Sanomat 19.12.1976; Nevaranta 1998, 8, 13 & 16; Rautiainen 1989, 7 & 9.
- 21 Pohjolan Sanomat 5.11.1987.
- 22 Lapin Kansa 5.11.1987; Kaleva 9.11.1987; Pohjolan Sanomat 8.4.1989.
- 23 Sinisalo 1990, 108.
- 24 Hautala-Hirvioja 2011, 109.
- 25 Sinisalo 1990, 223–224.
- 26 Hautala-Hirvioja 2003, 209.
- 27 Hautala-Hirvioja 2011, 109.
- 28 Arminen 2011, 38.
- 29 Mukka 1972, 1–2.
- 30 Ahvenainen 1968, 462; Siukonen 2011, 8–9.
- 31 Arminen 2011, 38.
- 32 Siukonen 2011, 9.
- 33 Sit. Ilvas 2000, 145.
- 34 Kaltio 2/1965.
- 35 Siukonen 2011, 11.
- 36 Apu 20/1977.
- 37 Salo & Hautala-Hirvioja 2012, 26.
- 38 Aikio & Aikio 2005, 116.
- 39 Salo & Hautala-Hirvioja 2012, 26, 27 & 29.
- 40 Sit. Niskanen 1996, 6.
- 41 Niskanen 1996, 5 & 9.
- 42 Kaleva 1.12.1983.
- 43 Kaleva 1.12.1983; Lapin Kansa 23.12.1987.
- 44 Rönkkö 1981b, 52.
- 45 Pohjolan Sanomat 5.11.1987.
- 46 Kansan Tahto 19.8.1989.
- 47 Juhola 2011, 4.
- 48 Lapin Kansa 16.2.1989.
- 49 Hautala-Hirvioja 2010, 11; Kaleva 24.1.1983.
- 50 Alatalo & Ruotsalainen 2010, 27; Lapin Kansa 17.8.1978.
- 51 Lapin Kansa 7.9.1985.
- 52 Kaleva 24.12.1986.
- 53 Pohjolan Sanomat 9.2.1986.
- 54 Pohjolan Sanomat 24.3.1986.
- 55 Lapin Kansa 7.9.1985.
- 56 Lallo 2010, 73.
- 57 Pohjolan Sanomat 12.10.2013.
- 58 Lapin Kansa 23.10.1986; Lapin Kansa 10.12.1987.
- 59 Lapin Kansa 28.8.1988.
- 60 Vartiainen 1990, 6.
- 61 Siukonen 2011, 11.
- 62 Rönkkö 1981a, 32.
- 63 Siukonen 2011, 11.
- 64 Kansan Tahto 22.7.1983.

- 65 Heinimäki 2002, 23–24.
- 66 Lapin Kansa 22.1.1984; Kansan Tahto 24.7.1985.
- 67 Kansan Tahto 22.7.1983; Lapin Kansa 22.1.1984.
- 68 Lapin Kansa 22.1.1984.
- 69 Lapin Kansa 7.9.1985.
- 70 Kansan Tahto 22.7.1983.
- 71 Lapin Kansa 22.1.1984.
- 72 Kansan Tahto 22.7.1983.
- 73 Heinimäki 2002, 27–28.
- 74 Tornion seudun kuvataideseura ry:n historia 2013.
- 75 Lapin kuvataideseura Palas ry:n historia 2013.
- 76 Lapin Kansa 20.9.1980.
- 77 Lapin Kansa 20.9.1980; Lapin kuvataideseura Palas ry:n historia 2013.
- 78 Lapin Kansa 20.9.1980.
- 79 Lapin Kansa 20.9.1980.
- 80 Harju 2007, 59–60.
- 81 Laine 2005, 108.
- 82 Tornion seudun kuvataideseura ry:n historia 2013.
- 83 Rauman taidemuseo 2011.
- 84 Pohjolan Sanomat 25.4.1978.
- 85 Pohjolan Sanomat 25.4.1978.
- 86 Lapin Kansa 16.2.1989.
- 87 Kansan Tahto 29.7.1982.
- 88 Lapin Kansa 16.6.1981.
- 89 Lapin Kansa 31.7.1984.
- 90 Lapin Kansa 16.2.1989.
- 91 Pohjolan Sanomat 24.11.1987.
- 92 Lapin Kansa 22.1.1984; Lapin Kansa 31.7.1984.
- 93 Pohjolan Sanomat 17.9.1988; Pohjolan Sanomat 5.9.1981; Kaleva 12.11.1986.
- 94 Pohjolan Työ 10.3.1988.
- 95 Kansan Tahto 21.9.1989.
- 96 Pohjolan Sanomat 28.11.1985.
- 97 Kaleva 29.11.1991.
- 98 Lapin Kansa 23.7.1985.
- 99 Lapin Kansa 23.7.1985.
- 100 Pohjolan Sanomat 12.6.1986.
- 101 Lapin Kansa 30.3.1988.
- 102 Kaleva 25.9.1986.
- 103 Kaleva 25.9.1986.
- 104 Lapin Kansa 12.10.1988.
- 105 Jauhola 1999, 89.
- 106 Kaleva 7.7.1982.
- 107 Lapin Kansa 4.3.1987.
- 108 Pohjolan Sanomat 11.5.1989.
- 109 Pohjolan Sanomat 13.9.1986.
- 110 Lapin Kansa 29.1.1987.
- 111 Gallery's artists were, for example, Rosa Liksom, Pekka Hermanni Kyrö, Erkki Alajärvi, Markku Malmivaara, Kalervo Palsa, Reijo Raekallio, Pekka Syväniemi, Kari Tuisku, Juhani Tuominen and Teuvo Tuomivaara (Pohjolan Sanomat 12.6.1986; Galleria herää hetkeksi henkiin 2013).
- 112 Pohjolan Sanomat 23.4.1988.
- 113 Pohjolan Sanomat 5.12.1980; Pohjolan Sanomat 13.12.1980.
- 114 Pohjolan Sanomat 7.10.1980; Pohjolan Sanomat 25.10.1980; Lapin Kansa 6.9.1986.
- 115 Pohjolan Sanomat 19.4.1983; Pohjolan Sanomat 12.6.1983.
- 116 Pohjolan Sanomat 19.6.1987; Kaleva 2.7.1987.
- 117 Kansan Tahto 10.6.1981; Kaleva 10.6.1981; Pohjolan Sanomat 12.6.1981.
- 118 Pohjolan Sanomat 11.9.1985.
- 119 Lapin Kansa 27.9.1986.
- 120 Lapin Kansa 5.9.1980.
- 121 Pohjolan Sanomat 28.8.1989; Lapin Kansa 30.8.1989.
- 122 Pohjolan Sanomat 3.12.1987; Kaleva 7.9.1989.
- 123 Pohjolan Sanomat 11.4.1985; Lapin Kansa 12.4.1985.
- 124 Lapin Kansa 20.1.1986.
- 125 Lapin Kansa 4.11.1980.
- 126 Pohjolan Sanomat 8.11.1983.
- 127 Lapin Kansa 14.8.1987.
- 128 Pohjolan Sanomat 10.11.1983.
- 129 Pohjolan Sanomat 3.10.1980.



<sup>130</sup> Pohjolan Sanomat 2.7.1980; Kaleva 5.8.1980.

<sup>131</sup> Lapin Kansa 30.5.1981.

<sup>132</sup> Lapin Kansa 21.3.1981.

<sup>133</sup> Pohjolan Sanomat 3.8.1982; Lapin Kansa 8.8.1982.

<sup>134</sup> Lapin Kansa 23.6.1987; Pohjolan Sanomat 24.6.1987.

<sup>135</sup> Lapin Kansa 8.10.1989.

<sup>136</sup> Lapin Kansa 8.10.1989.

<sup>137</sup> Lapin Kansa 14.10.1991.

<sup>138</sup> Laine 2005, 110.

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# Summaries



## *Pohjoisen periferiasta kansainvälisille taidekentille*

*Jonna Katajamäki*

Suomen Lapissa 1970-luvun alussa useimmilla taiteilijoilla oli ns. leipäammatti, joka turvasi toimeentulon. Valtion apurahajärjestelmän kehittyminen paransi taiteilijoiden taloudellista turvaa ja mahdollisuuksia siirtyä kokopäiväiseksi ammattilaiseksi. Taidekoulutuksen kehittyminen sekä Lapin läänissä että sen ulkopuolella lisäsi ammattitaiteilijoiden määrää ja kilpailu apurahoista koveni 1980-luvun aikana.

Valtaosa lappilaisista taiteilijoista kuvasi vielä 1970- ja 1980-luvulla Lapin maisemaa ja luontoa. Pohjoisen alueen tunturimaisemat ja avarat erämaat vetosivat etenkin suureen yleisöön, niille oli julkinen tilaus. Yhä useammat taiteilijat tekivät kuitenkin matkoja maailmalle, mikä lisäsi kansainvälistä kanssakäymistä ja tietoa taiteen uusista suuntauksista. Lapin kuvataide alkoi monipuolistua ja realistinen maisemamaalaus sai rinnalleen uudenlaisia, universaaleja tapoja kuvata ja käsitteellistä pohjoista todellisuutta. Myös uudet tekniikat saivat jalansijaa.

Pohjoisen kalottialueen taideyhteistyö oli vielä 1970-luvun alussa vähäistä, vaikka yksittäisillä taiteilijoilla ja ryhmillä oli jonkin verran näyttelytoimintaa naapurimaissa. Ensiaskelia rajat ylittävän taideyhteistyön kehittämiseksi otettiin Tornion seudun kuvataideseuran toimesta Kalotti-näyttelyiden (1970–1972) ja Raja-näyttelyiden (1973–1986) muodossa. 1980-luvulla pohjoiskalottialueen taideyhteistyö vilkastui ystävyyskaupunkitoiminnan ja kuvataideseurojen vireän toiminnan myötä. Tämä loi pohjaa laaja-alaisemmalle Barentsin alueen kulttuuriyhteistyölle, joka virallisesti sai alkunsa 1990-luvun alussa.



## *Från den nordiska periferin till den internationella konstscenen*

*Jonna Katajamäki*

Flertalet samiska konstnärer tjänade sitt uppehälle genom så kallade brödjobb på 1970-talet, och inte genom sin konst. Det var först när systemet med statliga konstnärsstipendier utvecklades som konstnärerna gavs ekonomisk trygghet och fick möjlighet att ägna sig helt och hållet åt sitt skapande. I takt med att konstutbildningarna ökade både i och utanför finska Lappland blev antalet yrkesverksamma konstnärer allt fler, och under 1980-talet ökade konkurrensen om stipendierna kraftigt bland kandidaterna.

Ett dominant tema i de flesta samiska konstnärers målningar under 1970- och 1980-talet var den lappländska naturen och det nordliga landskapet. Nordliga fjäll och ändlösa vidder föll särskilt den breda publiken i

smaken og efterfrågan på dessa verk var stor. Konstnärerna åkte dock allt oftare utomlands, vilket i sin tur stärkte det internationella samarbetet og gjorde att kunskaper om nya riktningar i konsten spreds. Bildkonsten i finska Lappland blev mer mångfacetterad og förutom det realistiska landskapet började nya, mer allmängiltiga framställningssätt med konceptuella metoder av verkligheten i norr att dyka upp. De samtida bildkonstteknikerna hade därmed fått sina anhängare.

På 1970-talet var samverkan på konstområdet i Nordkalotten ganska begränsad, även om enskilda konstnärer og föreningar periodvis försökte anordna utställningar i grannländerna. Det första initiativet till att starta ett gränsöverskridande konstsamarbete togs av konstföreningen i Torneåregionen i form av utställningarna "Kalotten" (1970–1972) og "Gränsen" (1973–1986). På 1980-talet började konstsamarbetet i Nordkalotten ta fart tack vare vänortsrörelsen og konstnärsföreningarnas aktiva arbete. Detta skapade grund för ett bredare kulturellt samarbete i Barentsregionen, vilket officiellt satte igång i början på 1990-talet.



## *Fra den nordlige periferien til den internasjonale kunstarenaen*

*Jonna Katajamäki*

De fleste samiske kunstnere tjente til livets opphold gjennom såkalte brødjober på 1970-tallet, og ikke gjennom konsten. Det var først når systemet med statlige kunstnerstipend ble utviklet at kunstnerne fikk økonomisk trygghet og ble i stand til å vie seg helt til sitt arbeid. I takt med at kunstutdanningstilbudet økte både i og utenfor finsk Lappland, økte antallet utøvende kunstnere, og i løpet av 1980-tallet ble konkurransen om stipendene større.

Et dominerende tema i de fleste samiske kunstneres malerier på 1970- og 1980-tallet var den lapplandske naturen og det nordlige landskapet. Nordlige fjell og endeløse vidder appellerte særlig til smaken hos det brede publikummet, og etterspørselen etter disse arbeidene var stor. Kunstnerne reiste selv oftere utenlands, noe som igjen styrket det internasjonale samarbeidet, og medvirket til at kunnskapen om nye retninger innen konsten ble spredt. Billedkonsten i finsk Lappland ble mer mangfoldig, og i tillegg til det realistiske landskapet, dukket det opp mer allmenngyldige framstillingsmåter og konseptuelle metoder av virkeligheten i nord. De moderne billedkonstteknikkene hadde fått sine støttespillere.

På 1970-tallet var samarbeidet på kunstområdet på Nordkalotten ganske beskjedent, selv om enkelte kunstnere og organisasjoner jevnlig forsøkte å organisere utstillinger i nabolandene. Det første initiativet til å starte et grenseoverskridende konstsamarbeid ble tatt av kunstföreningen i Torneå-regionen i form av utstillingene «Kalotten» (1970–1972) og «Grensen» (1973–1986). På 1980-tallet økte konstsamarbeidet på Nordkalotten takket være vennskapsby-ordningen og kunstnerorganisasjonenes aktive arbeid. Dette skapte grunnlag for et bredere kultursamarbeid i Barentsregionen, som offisielt startet på begynnelsen av 1990-tallet.



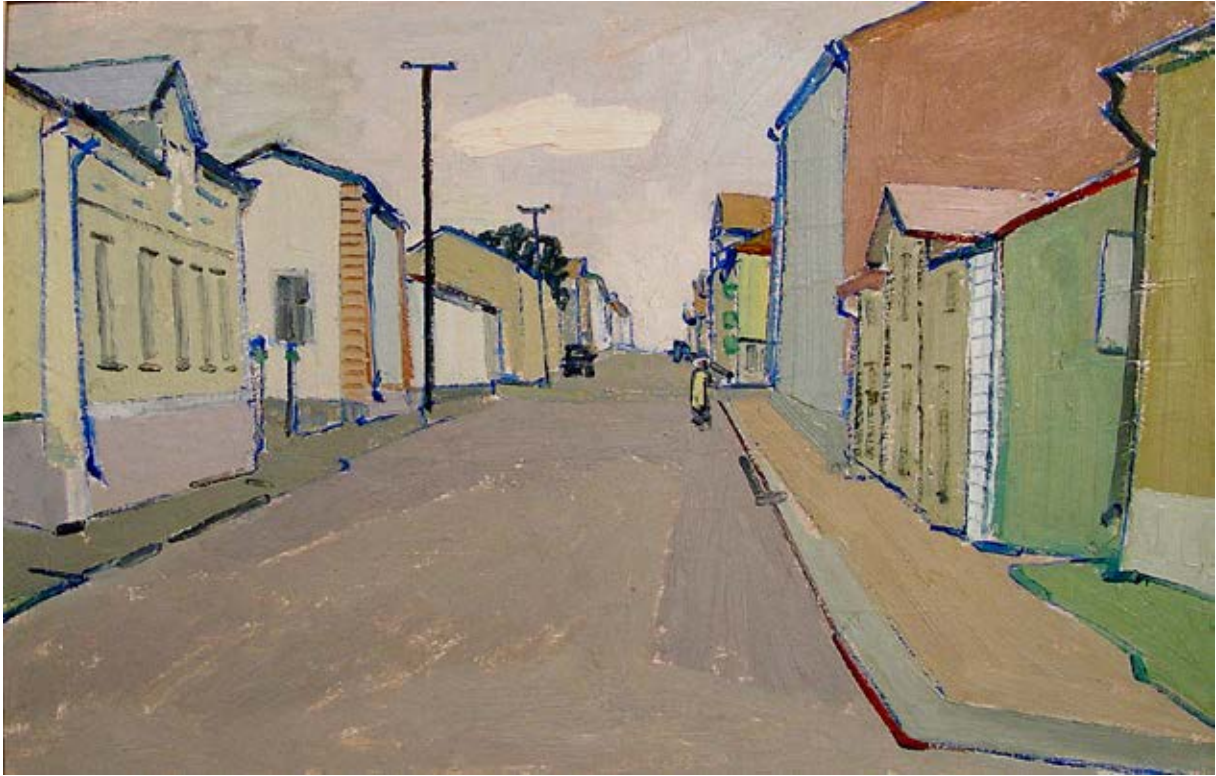
## *От северной периферии к международной арене искусства*

*Jonna Katajamäki*

Большинство лапландских художников в 1970-х годах зарабатывали себе на жизнь т.н. основной профессией, а не искусством. Лишь развитие системы государственных стипендий дало художникам экономическую защищенность и позволило им посвящать себя целиком и полностью творчеству. С развитием художественного образования, как в Лапландии, так и за ее пределами, профессиональных художников становилось все больше, и в 1980-х годах конкуренция среди претендентов на стипендии сильно выросла.

В 1970-х и 1980-х годах на полотнах подавляющего большинства лапландских художников тематически превалировала природа Лапландии и северные пейзажи. Северные сопки и безграничные просторы особенно импонировали вкусам широкой публики, на них был большой спрос. Однако, художники все чаще выезжали и в другие страны, что в свою очередь укрепляло международное взаимодействие и служило распространению знаний о новых тенденциях в искусстве. Изобразительное искусство Лапландии становилось все более многогранным, и в нем, кроме реалистического пейзажа, начали появляться новые, универсальные методы отображения и концептуализации северной действительности. У современных техник изобразительного искусства появились свои приверженцы.

В 1970-х годах взаимодействие в сфере искусства в Северном Калотте было довольно незначительным, хотя отдельные художники и объединения периодически пытались организовать выставки в соседних странах. Первые попытки налаживания трансграничного сотрудничества в сфере изобразительного искусства были предприняты по инициативе Общества изобразительного искусства региона Торнио в форме выставок «Калотт» (1970–1972 гг.) и «Граница» (1973–1986 гг.). В 1980-х годах творческое сотрудничество в Северном Калотте начало набирать силу благодаря движению городов-побратимов и активной деятельности объединений художников. Это заложило основу для более широкого культурного сотрудничества в Баренцевом регионе, начавшегося официально в начале 1990-х годов.



Carl Gustaf Nordin, Tull Street, 1949  
Oil on canvas, 64 x 87 cm



# *To Create a Stage for Art*

Bertil Sundstedt

THE ART SCENE WE have today in Norrbotten should not be taken for granted. Until the mid-1960s, the cultural life of the county lacked public funded institutions to protect the interests of art, or to ensure that public cultural policy was implemented. Neither county councils nor municipalities had cultural committees and there were also no clear goals formulated for culture. For better or worse, the art scene in Norrbotten was largely based on input from the volunteer sector and with this, the work of art enthusiasts to display and disseminate knowledge about art.<sup>1</sup> However, the situation changed during the 1970s and 1980s. Looking back, we get an idea of what it was that created the conditions for today's art scene.

## *Art from 1970-1980*

The beginning of the 1970s was a time of a national cultural awakening: culture began to be regarded as something of importance for society. People debated a fairer distribution of culture throughout the country along with an equal allotment of central government resources. Not until 1972 would a full study of the Swedish national cultural policy be done.<sup>2</sup> Only then would a comprehensive picture of the nation's cultural life emerge. This study formed the basis of a cultural policy proposition of 1974, which formulated the objectives for the cultural policy and proposed that institutions (cultural committees) be established for the enforcement of this.

The mapping of the entire cultural sector and the demand for the fair distribution across the country of cultural funding and intervention resulted in Public Art Agency Sweden. The goal was to decentralise the decision-making processes and cover rural areas by recruiting project managers from different parts of the country. These consultants had local and regional knowledge of what was happening in the arts sector around the country. Their task involved dealing with public art purchases and the procurement of artists for site-specific assignments in publicly owned properties, visiting exhibitions and implementing the installation of art on the premises of the central government building.

The hope was that regional project managers would result in more work exchange opportunities<sup>3</sup>, and that provincial artists could also be considered for public work in the metropolitan regions. The idea was that this would revitalise the art scene across the country. So it did, and it also contributed to a change in the self-image of regional artists. At last they were part of the national art scene. The assignments for Public Art



Alvar Jansson, Hunter on the Mountain, 1985  
Oil on canvas, 230 x 170 cm

Agency Sweden ran for six years and the artist trade unions recommended recruiting a project manager in order to represent and monitor all regions.

Thus, Rune Pettersson, an artist from Örnsköldsvik, was given the task of monitoring Norrland in 1973. He was succeeded by an artist from Boden, Rune Wanler, who worked at Public Art Agency Sweden from 1979 until 1985.<sup>4</sup> Wanler had previously served as a member of the board of the Swedish Visual Arts Fund, part of the Swedish Arts Grants Committee, formed in 1976. It is a government agency that assesses and administers allowances and grants for visual artists and designers.

### *Themes and Tradition*

The most common themes in general among the Norrbotten artists have traditionally been linked to landscape painting and often the mountain landscape. These are also motifs that have had public responses. This has strong links with the time of industrial exploitation of the ore fields in the north. With the arrival of the town of Kiruna at the turn of the last century and with its first managing director of the mine, Hjalmar Lundbohm, a

man very interested in culture, came to the introduction of a tradition of motifs. Even into the 1970s and 1980s, these motifs characterised much of the art in the county.<sup>5</sup> This applies to both artists and the public.

There is however, a difference in the 1900s landscape painting compared to that of the 1970s and 1980s and the relationship to the landscape as a motif. The older painting strived to depict the magnificent landscape with the aim of presenting it as a national asset. The artists of the period were largely characterised by the ideals of Swedish National Romanticism, which found expression in grandiose landscape painting. Wide vistas and high horizons, a Sweden seen through an artist's eyes.<sup>6</sup> It is also no coincidence that, at that time, the relatively new Swedish Tourist Association began to take an interest in the mountains of Lapland. In the more recent landscape painting, the landscape is more of an excuse for painting. The subject is a starting point for the colour spectacle which will then live its own life on the canvas. The goal is not the image but the painting itself.

In his time, Hjalmar Lundbohm wanted to promote this end of the country and its riches above and beyond the rest of Sweden. He also had a personal relationship with art. In his youth, he had attended Chalmers Handicraft School in Göteborg, where he was a scholar of modelling and freehand drawing for three years. During his youth, he became good friends with Karl Nordström, who later became president of the opposition movement, the Artists Association (from 1886 to 1920). This was an organisation of young radical artists who had studied in Paris and came into contact with French plein air painting and who came to distance themselves from the academic art as it was taught at art academies.

One of the first documented art exhibitions in the county was organised by some members of the Artists Association in 1904 at the Bolagsskolan in Kiruna. The following year another exhibition was held at the same location.<sup>7</sup> After these early contacts, the Swedish avant-garde of the period were invited to come to Kiruna in order to depict the emergence of Lundbohm's model community and the gigantic development project, which became so important for the modernisation of Sweden at that time.

The depictions of the Norrbotten landscape by the artist elite in Sweden were to become influential for many local artists. Thanks to the construction of the Iron Ore Line to Narvik, the communities of Björkliden and Abisko had become accessible to travellers and something of a Mecca for landscape painters. Some like Per Leander Engström even built themselves houses in Abisko. His sons, the painters Kjell and Tord Leander Engström, also resided here. Abisko has since attracted painters from the Norrbotten region and beyond for stays both short and long.

In addition to decent work and housing for workers and salaried employees, Lundbohm's vision of a good society also included education and culture. These were ideals of the time that he shared with members of the Artists Association and the British Arts and Crafts movement's ideologues John Ruskin and William Morris. "Art for the people!" was their slogan. Hjalmar Lundbohm's close friend, the sculptor Per Hasselberg, put it like this: "The worker needed education and enlightenment, but not education as a luxury that is detached from his daily work. Education should complement the work, illuminating it, raising the worker's awareness of the significance and the responsibility he took in the course of the great



Rune Wanler, *After the Ore*, 1974  
Oil on canvas, 80 x 60 cm

development.”<sup>8</sup> Richard Bergh, the driving force in the Artists Association, saw this as the social mission of the new radical art.

“Art for the people!” This was an appeal, which gained a new urgency for several Norrbotten artists during the great miner’s strike in the ore fields at the beginning of the 1970s. It came to change the visual imagery for many Norrbotten artists, including the well-established Norrbotten artists Alvar Jansson, John Thorgren, Birger Jonasson and Rune Wanler<sup>9</sup>, who would find new documented subjects and an artistic mandate with more social commentary during this period and for the next few decades. The last of these artists, Wanler, started his career in the late 1950s as a purist with excursions into informal painting; later, during the 1970s he began to engage in colour lyrics, making an expressive form of painting with people in mind that was both social and political.

### *Nature Provides the Atmosphere*

Apart from these exceptions among the recognised artists, the vast majority concentrated on the plein air painting of landscapes and thus often those to be found in the mountains that dominated art in the county. Tex Berg, Sture Berglund and Gun Johansson are three of the most noteworthy creators of the genre at this time.

Tex Berg, like the genuine painter he is, described his relationship to painting in an interview as follows: “I belong to a group of painters who must have a basis in reality. I cannot stand and construct a new world. Therefore, I always work with experience as my basis. If I then process and rework a perhaps completely unrecognisable image is another matter. But reality must exist deep down. I use the motif in order to transmit a feeling. I therefore look for something in, say, a landscape, which is related to the mood I’m in.”<sup>10</sup>

As artist and pedagogue, he has always been fascinated by the creative process. Together with the information scientist, Professor Lennart Gustavsson at Luleå University of Technology, Berg worked on a research project initiated by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education. The project involved the study of neural networks in the brain and creativity, exploring how the brain finds creative solutions to problems of interpretation. “I really wanted to know where that power actually comes from; that strong conviction that suddenly comes while I am working, which I simply have to latch onto and which subsequently makes me pretty damned amazed when I see the results. I rely upon such convictions, which are both natural and spontaneous.”<sup>11</sup> Tex Berg has for example described the creative process in two films, including *Building Pictures* produced by film maker Gunnar Fogelvik.

Also the illustrator, graphic designer and painter Sture Berglund found his subject matter in the mountains from the very beginning. Early on however, he came into contact with the museum world. During his degree project at the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, he contacted then head museum official and antiquarian, Harald Hvarfner at the Norrbotten Museum. Berglund wanted to borrow Sámi artefacts for the exhibition *Old and New Sámi Design* at the Swedish Society of Industrial Design, now Svensk Form. After graduation, that contact led to a part-time job at the Museum of Norrbotten, where

had been a need for illustrated documentation of cultural heritage environments and objects in the Tornio River Valley area.

After this, Berglund came to design the exhibitions at the Silver Museum in Arjeplog, which was opened in 1965. The following year, he worked on the design of the new Jokkmokk Museum. He also became involved in the design of a number of local history museums around the county, such as Pajala, Övertorneå and Töre. The contacts with the Sámi world of design subsequently came to characterise Berglund's art.

After some soul searching, he realised that as a coastal dweller, he was merely a guest in the mountain landscape. It dawned on him that his artistic references lay in the landscape where he had grown up. Since the revival experience, his colour and design represent the flat coastal landscape of the north. Since the early 1980s, Berglund has been linked to multidisciplinary research projects on coastal uplift and coastal district changes as well as interpretation and documentation of natural and coastal landscapes in the Gulf of Bothnia. Berglund, like the driven illustrator he is, processes and simplifies his designs for graphic clarity.

On the other hand, the textile artist Gun Johansson, born in Hillared in southern Sweden, has also found her way to the mountain landscape. The Mountain Lodge in Abisko, set amidst the high mountain region around Tornio Lake, is a retreat and studio where she transforms her many long journeys of inspiration into sketches. Later, down by the coast in Börjelslandet outside Luleå, these sketches are woven into large-scale fabrics. For Johansson, the texture, colour and shine of the material are an important means of expression. In pure form, she seeks to translate her visual impressions and give shape to the views and wide open spaces. As part of the project *Near Mountaine, the Outer and Inner Landscape*, she gave an eloquent summary of her approach to the mountain landscape in a single sentence: "When you get up into the bare mountains, something opens up in your chest"<sup>12</sup>.

Thus, during the 1970s and 1980s, landscape painting dominated Norrbotten. Among those who portrayed the forest landscape, Pelle Granberg from Gråträsk deserves special mention. During this time he was something of a solitary among the Norrbotten artists with his Indian ink paintings. Another artist worth mention is Filip Nilsson from Älvsbyn; using a restrained colour palette, he found his subjects in the forest regions. The coastal country has its portrayers such as Ingvar Jigrud, Stig Winnerskog and Gösta Hedström.

### *Surrealists and the Naïve School*

Although landscape painters were the norm, a small number of artists positioned themselves on the borderline between surrealism and symbolism, such as the Kalix artist Ewald Karlsson, who worked both as a sculptor and painter. Another is the expressive painter Erling Johansson from Sarvisvaara, who has also worked with experimental film. The films, *Anima Mundi* and *Expulsi*, attracted much attention in the early 1970s. The Boden artist Bror Zackrisson, the Arvidsjaur painter Per Fredrik Glommé, Luleå-born Margareta Renberg, and the Luleå artist Jan-Anders Eriksson worked with a design idiom orientated towards surrealism. Zackrisson displayed an unconventional folk style; Glommé leaned towards distinctive, austere

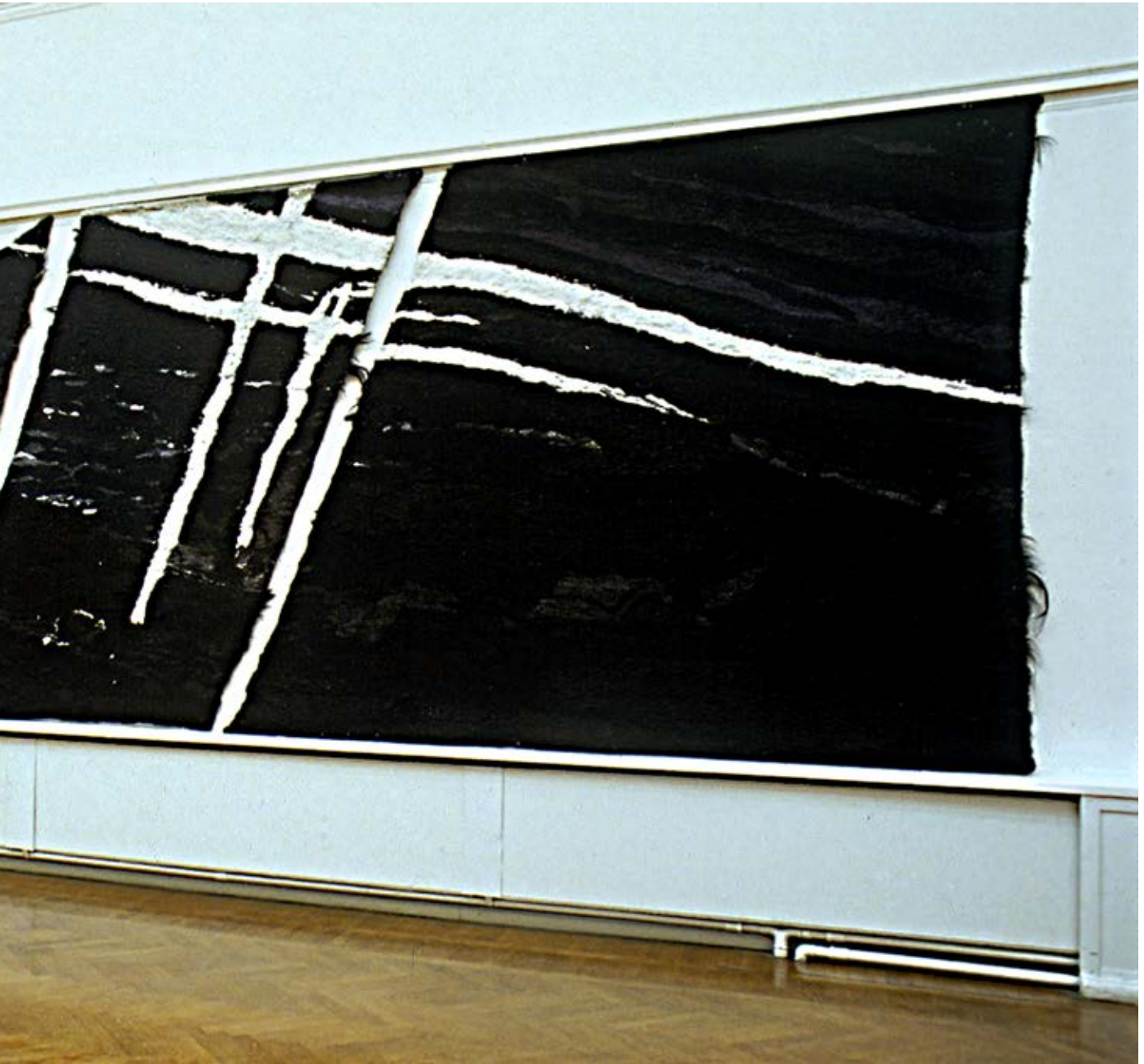


Sture Berglund, Northern Beach, 1978  
Oil on canvas, 150 x 120 cm



Gun Johansson, Alpine Epic, 1987  
Textile fabric , 12,5 x 2,65 meters





abstraction; Renberg had a quiet intimacy often combined with an ironic twist, and Eriksson took expressive turns in his surreal landscapes.

Naïve art was given a boost in the new folk spirit that characterised the period and thus new artists were discovered in the rural areas. Naïve art had its heyday in the 1970s and some artists continued to be successful into the 1980s. Sonja Eriksson (mother to the painter Jan-Anders Eriksson and the illustrator Larserik Eriksson) deserves mention, along with the Kiruna artist Elis Aidanpää, Tora Regina Rensgard from Junosuando, and Uno F. Svensson and Inger Andersson, who both lived in Luleå. Andersson would change to a more abstract imagery towards the end of the 1980s.

For a younger generation of less-established artists, there was nothing desirable about landscape painting and committed art was not a radical new orientation but instead a more natural part of the general political debate in the shadow of youth rebellion and the Vietnam War. It found its expression in more illustrative and idea-based art such as posters, album covers, graphic productions and photo-based exhibitions.

Social debates and documentary art found their expression in travelling exhibitions and books that depicted industry and work, past and present. Photographers like Tommy Tommie, Erik Holmstedt, Ulf B. Jonsson and Ulf Owenede were active in the area. Another example is graphic designer Lotta Hellström Lindbeck's documentation of the *Laknäs kicksled factory* in 1979 or the travelling exhibition *Överkalix* in which she collaborated with photographers Anders Alm, Åke E:son Lindman and Bo Gruselius. Together with watercolour artist Elisabet Englund, she took on the travelling exhibition *Bosnia-Yugoslavia Norrbotten* on behalf of the Swedish Exhibition Agency. There were also multimedia exhibits, which combined text, audio, image and three-dimensional productions such as the Norrbotten Bildgrupp's collaboration with the Norrbotten Theatre in Macke Nilsson's 1978 play, *We never give up*.

### *Collaboration between the Arctic Region of the Nordic Countries and Town Twinning*

As early as the 1960s, committees were established to promote collaboration between the Arctic areas of the Nordic countries in the provincial cities. This became an early regional instrument for cross-cultural collaboration. An early example of such a meeting took place in Kemi in August 1964. Norrbotten artists Ingvar Jigrud and Emil Antman participated with paintings in one of these early gatherings of the Arctic region of the Nordic countries. Their contemporary pictures were supplemented historically with pictures by the Sámi artist Johan Turi. The Soviet Union also contributed with art, though of a more historical nature, with paintings from 1894–1939. From Norway, participants included Marit Bockelie, Idar Ingebrigtsen and Ulf Dreyer Olsen, and from Finland, Reidar Särestöniemi, Liisa Rautiainen, Olavi Korolainen, Ida Juustila and Harry Porko.

Another example of town twinning can be found between Boden and Oulu. Swedish artists like Stig Winnerskog, Rune Wanler, Ingvar Jigrud and Bertil Linné are to be seen in the exhibition catalogues,

while a selection from the Oulu Artists Association, including names like Matti Mikkola, Hilikka Inkala, Niilo Hyttinen and Matti Jaukkuri, showed works in Boden during 1970. Six years later, the Oulu Artists Association returned with an exhibition involving Erkki Sakari Heinonen, Matti Lampi, Esa Jaakko and Ilmari Leskelä. These exchanges continued into the 1980s. In 1984, Boden's new Art Gallery was opened with an exhibition of artists from Oulu.<sup>13</sup> The Oulu artists came back to the Gallery in 1987, with an exhibition called *Ten Citizens of Oulu*, in which artists such as Tauno Ohenoja and Jussi Jääliñoja participated.

Most of the artistic exchanges of Luleå, which had twinning arrangements with Murmansk, Kemi and Tromsø, took place in Murmansk, but not until the 1980s. One of the earliest exhibitions was an exhibition of Norrbotten art at the Museum of Cultural History in Murmansk in 1988, during which textile artist Gun Johansson and painter Elisabet Englund participated. This exhibition was preceded by a group exhibition of photos entitled *Man and the City* in 1986, with photographers Anders Alm, Erik Holmstedt and Hans Granqvist. The Soviets returned the visits with a couple of exhibitions, but this time at the Boden Art Gallery, where Vitali Bubentsov, Sergei Chebotar and Nikolai Kovalev took part, and at the City Library in Luleå, with an exhibition of Soviet photography.

### *The Importance of the Norrbotten Museum*

At the beginning of the 1970s, the Norrbotten County Museum initiated art exhibition activities, which became very important to the region's art scene. In addition, they slowly begin to purchase art for a collection of Norrbotten artists.

During the mid-1960s, the county museums, via *MUS 65*<sup>14</sup>, the government art gallery and exhibition organiser, was given the broader role of overseeing the exhibition activities in the counties and creating collections. Through this, the Norrbotten County Museum, the County Council and the Municipality of Luleå were given an important role for fostering art in the county. With the new cultural policy, the county councils in the 1970s were given greater responsibility for the regional culture, and money was earmarked for the purchase of art and cultural exchanges. The County Museum's broader mission for the arts included promoting the county's art outside the county. Cross-border exhibitions were organised with other regions. Driving forces in that context was the lecturer in art history Claes-Göran Forsberg and exhibition manager Margareta Hallerdt at Norrbotten Museum. Subsequently, in 1978, Börje Ekström was employed as the art curator, and together with Göta Persson, was given the task of working with the county's art. Norrbotten's Educational Association, with Bengt Andersson as the driving force, wanted to spread knowledge about Norrbotten culture to the rest of Sweden. A total of six major exchange exhibitions were staged between 1971 and 1976.

The 1960s and 1970s were decades of exodus. Industry in southern Sweden needed manpower and this came both from overseas and from Norrland. The largest immigrant group in the industrial city of Södertälje came from Norrbotten. In response to this, Adult Education Association and the Norrbotten Museum joined forces with the municipality of Södertälje to stage a major art exhibition in 1971 at the Södertälje Art Gallery, called *People of Norrbotten*. Some 35 artists from Norrbotten participated with a total of 162 works.

Two years later, the County Museum produced a larger exhibition of the North Calotte. It was a travelling exhibition that lasted from 1973 to 1974. It involved, among others, Norrbotten artists Fred Andersson, Björn Blomberg, Per Fredrik Glommé, Mats Risberg and Sture Berglund. It was called *Art and Handicrafts from the North Calotte*, and it commenced in Copenhagen in 1973. In addition to those mentioned above, the exhibition also included around twenty other Norrbotten artists and artisans. An equal number of exhibitors came from northern Finland, Oulu and Finnish Lapland. The following deserve mention: Liisa Rautiainen, Reidar Särestöniemi, Olavi Jäntti, Matti Mikkola and Olavi Korolainen as well as Norwegian, Swedish and Sámi artisans such as Ellen Kitok-Andersson, Esse Poggatz and Thore Sunna.<sup>15</sup> A total of 65 exhibitors took part in the project, which provided a broad picture of what was happening in the field of the arts in the North Calotte.

In 1974, another major art show was organised. It involved some twenty Norrbotten artists in a county council exchange. The show was produced by Norrbotten Museum and was staged in Malmö. It included Charles Portin, Karin Nyberg, Filip Nilsson, Jannot Derid, Kjell Knekta and Bertil Linné. The same year, once again with Margareta Hallerdt as exhibition commissioner, a county council exchange was done with the Västernorrland County Council, where eighteen Norrbotten artists exhibited their work at the Sundsvall Museum.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, an exhibition of the artists of Västernorrland was circulating around Norrbotten.

In 1975, Norrbotten Museum, the County Council and Norrbotten's Educational Association arranged a county exhibition judged by a panel of experts. At the time, this was a relatively rare occurrence on the Norrbotten arts scene. Some 90 artists were invited to participate at the exhibition.<sup>17</sup>

In 1976, it was time for yet another county council exchange, this time with the County Council of Östergötland. A jury from the neighbouring county chose the 14 participating Norrbotten artists. The County Museum was responsible for the production and the exhibition was staged at the County Museum in Linköping and in Kisa.<sup>18</sup> As a result of contacts between the northern county councils, in the mid-1970s an annual *Norrland Salon* was organised. This exhibit alternated between the counties and the county councils in Norrland picked out three artists from each county for the exhibition; responsibility for organising the exhibit alternated between the county councils.

### *To Make a Living from Art*

Several of the progressive art reforms came about in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite many government and regional interventions, for most artists it was still difficult to make a living from their art alone. Therefore, most artists had other occupations, often part-time or temporary work of all sorts, in order to support themselves.

Only a handful were able to live as artists in a region without any real artistic traditions and in the absence of infrastructure in the field of art during the 1970s. There were few art institutions that exhibited or bought art or were able to finance artists. Likewise, there were no private galleries and the ones that tried to become



Ingvar Jigrud, Waste Land, 1982  
Oil on canvas, 61 x 50 cm



Mats Risberg, Gogol, The Accountant, 1989  
Etching, 40 x 30 cm

established were often short-lived. Most of what was on offer was based on private sector initiatives. Cultural practices and public procurement interests were dependent upon social structures.

In some areas, the art scene blossomed more than in others. For example, the emergence of a relatively intense art scene in Boden can be explained by the city's business community. A large quantity of well-educated and affluent people, who worked at the county hospital or in the regiments, came with impetus and cultural habits from the outside and this benefited the art scene. At this time, Boden had the largest number of professional artists in all Norrbotten. This formed the basis of the so-called "Boden School" a loose grouping of artists who came together with the common purpose of making art. The cultural traditions of Kiruna dated to Hjalmar Lundbohm's time where the mining company LKAB had a particular commitment to promoting the arts. The administrative centres such as Luleå and Piteå were other places where the art scene was expanding.

Not until the 1980s communal galleries with employees began to be established. The municipality of Boden established a staffed municipal gallery in 1984. The municipality of Luleå established a municipal gallery in Tornhuset by the City Park in the mid-1980s. Two art pedagogues were employed. These galleries strived to comply with professional art standards during exhibits and handle freight costs, advertising and other necessary obligations. By the end of the 1980s, even Arvidsjaur, Piteå, Kalix and Haparanda had their own municipal exhibition halls.

### *The “Group Formation” Decade*

The community of interests surrounding the arts focused not only on economics or aesthetic or cultural attitudes, but often on practical solutions with regards to workshop and exhibition facilities. Getting organised into work collectives and exhibiting in groups did not require the same financial risk-taking as solo exhibitions and it was therefore often an acceptable solution for artists holding down two jobs. The formation of groups distributed the financial commitment evenly.

The 1970s was the group formation decade, a phenomenon that had a profound effect on the regeneration, education and expansion of the art scene in Norrbotten. Among the young radicals, art was part of the political discussion and it was therefore important to share it with the public at large. Reproduction was the motto of the era. In this atmosphere, graphics blossomed as an important art form. However, the printing of graphics requires equipment and suitable premises. The Swedish Arts Council provided grants for the promotion of artistic and cultural activities. This included equipment grants for collective workshops aimed at professional artists. In Norrbotten, the collective workshops were based solely on graphics production, but the Arts Council's equipment grants were not restricted only to graphics workshops: they covered all techniques. Cultural journals and book publishers were also entitled to production support. Many arts collectives were established during this period.

In the Jokkmokk region, artists got together to form the Jokkmokk group (1964–1978). Influential artists included Hans Andersson (1934–2010) who came to Jokkmokk as a lay preacher in the fifties and remained there as a writer and illustrator. Another, the visual artist, animator and graphic artist Cai Poulsen (1920–1997) arrived to stay from Copenhagen. In 1964, Poulsen settled at the Apokätнос station building on the Inland Line. There he set up his studio, which later became a permanent showroom. His work involved a prismatic fractured form of landscape painting, with high colour temperatures. One of the most famous names in the Jokkmokk group was the craftsman, joiker (the joik is the traditional music of the Sámi people) and visual artist, Lars Pirak (1932–2008). As a painter, he worked in a naïve style, in which he depicts the Sámi culture and above all, work with the reindeer. He was a respected innovator of Sámi handicraft and is represented in many museums around the world.

The Graphics Workshop was started in Luleå in the late 1960s by artists Mats Risberg and Olav Nilsson. Over the decades, it became a meeting place and an educational resource for artists. It later moved to the Adult Education Association building in central Luleå. Many Norrbotten artists were employed or had their



Eva Hagström, Ice Crystalweave, 1980  
Tapestry, 60 x 191 cm



first lessons at the Adult Education Association and in the Graphics Workshop, including the graphic artists Inger Andersson, Lotta Hellström Lindbeck and Brita Weglin. Following his studies at Valand in Göteborg, Mats Risberg became the radical musical movement's foremost artist during the dynamic 1970s in Luleå. In large monumental paintings, he depicted representatives of the young music industry. This period also saw the establishment of the Norrbotten Theatre. Risberg, whose main subject matter was people and who worked in a classical style, documented the rehearsals in memorable drypoint engravings. The music publisher, Manifest, formed the basis for a thriving music scene, where many young artists came to design album covers and do graphic design.

During the 1940s, the art teacher Eje Åsbrink came to Malmberget from Stockholm. She became a driving force on the art scene there and together with Lena Nallo was instrumental in founding "the Tuoddar Group" in 1975.<sup>19</sup> The Tuoddar Group became a workers' collective with its own graphics workshop and came to dominate the arts scene in Gällivare-Malmberget for a number of years. This included, among others, Eje Åsbrink (1917–2010), Stig and Tord Petterson, Lena Nallo, Barbro Törngren, Nicolaus Skum (1928–1995), Berry Kurkkio, Christel Jonsson and later, textile designer Eva Hagström. The Tuoddar Group gathered in the old doctor's house, which was ceded by the mining company in Malmberget. The building served both as a workshop and showroom with private studios on the upper floor. Stylistically, the Tuoddar Group was not a homogeneous group. The close mountain landscape was the natural subject matter for several of the participants, such as Berry Kurkkio, Eje Åsbrink, Nicolaus Skum and Barbro Törngren, but the Pettersson brothers, Christel Jonsson and Lena Nallo worked with more political commentary in their pictures. Eva Hagström was inspired by and often stylised winter colours and shapes. Even the painter Birger Jonasson was involved for a while with the Tuoddar Group. He came from Småland in the south and made his way to the ore fields during the politically radical 1970s; through his lightly defined expressive paintings, he was able to engage in public debate.

The Kiruna Artists Collective was formed in 1973 as a graphics workshop with a lithography press at its centre, one of the few remaining stone presses in the country. Before the Tuoddar Group from Gällivare got their printing press, they had to collaborate with the Kiruna Artists Collective to get their printing done. The painter Mats Berglund and textile artist Solweig Backlund were two of the better known participants. Textile artist Solweig Backlund, arrived in Kiruna in the 1940s as a teacher of drawing and textiles at the Kiruna School for Youth. She became an important figure for the younger generation of Kiruna artists.

Norrbotten's Art Group, which organised young photographers, illustrators and painters, started in 1977. The Art Group also worked with journalists and writers, and together they created multimedia performances. Norrbotten's also published several editions of a newspaper. Many of the group members had received their training at the Art School in South Sunderbyn and had been taught by teachers like sculptor Roland Larsson, painter Ingvar Jigrud, and the illustrator and graphic artist Sture Berglund. In the late 1970s, the Sunderby Art School added a vocational art teacher training course, the motto of which was "learning by doing." Some of these teachers also became artists.

The art journal, *Brainstorm*, was founded in 1976 in Boden, based on an exhibition of the same name. The journal came about as an outspoken force against the increasingly political, rational and utilitarian approach to debates on aesthetics. *Brainstorm* wanted to assert the *l'art pour l'art* aspect of creation. The magazine positioned itself somewhere between image and word, but with the focus on art and based on traditions from Dada, surrealism and expressionism. The Brainstorm Group staged exhibitions and held an intensive debate on the ends and means of art. In addition to the magazine, a book publishing house was eventually founded. *Brainstorm*, which is no longer based in the county, is still published and was nominated for the cultural magazine of 2011 in Sweden.

The Sámi were recognised as an indigenous people in 1977. The Sámi organisation for artists and designers, SDS (Sámi Duodji and Sámi Dáiddačehpiid Searvi), was founded in 1979. SDS organised visual artists and artisans from across Sápmi, with well-known members on the Swedish side such as Britta Marakatt-Labba, Rose-Marie Huuva, root handicraft artist Ellen Kitok-Andersson and graphic artist Eva Aira. Marakatt-Labba developed her visual narrative from the female Sámi handicraft tradition and processed it into a new individual creative artistic expression. In the early 1970s, Rose-Marie Huuva tried to position herself in painting before returning to her own roots and resuming traditional Sámi leather handicrafts, but in a new artistic form. She began to experiment with design as well as tanning and dyeing. With her experience of the conceptual world of art, she has approached these familiar materials and elevated them to a completely new level, a contemporary artistic expression based on thousands of years of handicraft tradition.

### *East, West and New Collaborations*

In order to culturally link “as well as extend and deepen cultural relations between sister nations”<sup>20</sup>, artists living near the Gulf of Bothnia were invited to the *Gulf of Bothnia Biennale* in Rauma, Finland in 1977. The selection of artists for the first Biennale, which was an attempt to establish cooperation, met with a wave of criticism.<sup>21</sup> On the Swedish side, it was the cultural councils of municipalities that had selected participants, while the local art societies had done so on the Finnish side. Commissioner Alpo Sarava hoped that the debate reflected an expression of interest on the part of the artists for the exhibition and its duration. Anyway, things remained the same until 1985, when the catchment area changed to include the entire Baltic Sea and invited curators became responsible for selection.

*Norrbotten OPP, the Light from the North*<sup>22</sup>, was an exhibition produced in 1983 by Margareta Hallerdt and Anita Theorell in the Art Department at the Culture House in Stockholm. The exhibition, held in the gallery at the cultural centre, aimed to show that there was another side to Norrbotten than the side usually portrayed by the media, as a crisis-ridden part of the country. In the exhibition, the county educational organisations collaborated together with cultural producers. Many of the county’s artists were invited to participate with their artwork.

In response to a Soviet art show held in Luleå in 1983 and organised by the Swedish Soviet Union Friendship Society, an initiative was taken by the Norrbotten County Museum to stage a major exhibition of Norrbotten

art in Kirsinov in Moldova in 1984. The exhibition, which largely consisted of graphics and other art on paper, was attended by a large number of professional Norrbotten artists. In the collaborative project known as the *North Calotte Museum*, a large number of regional museums collaborated. As part of this project, Norrbotten Museum's Art Department produced a number of travelling exhibitions, which travelled throughout the Arctic region of the Nordic countries in the 1980s.

In 1985 the northern literary magazine *Provins*<sup>23</sup>, incidentally a forum for northern illustrators, initiated a collaborative project between Nordic artists and writers associated with the northern Literature Society and the Writers' Centre North. This resulted in an exhibition called *Provins 85*, which toured Norrland's municipalities for a few years. From Norrbotten, the artists Rune Wanler, Rolf Selberg and Mats Risberg participated. They collaborated with authors Torbjörn Säve, Gunnar Kieri and Ulla Ekh.

In 1986, the Aine Art Museum initiated a border exhibit, *Raja 86* judged by a panel of experts where artists were invited from Finnish Lapland and the County of Norrbotten. This extended border exhibit was held on several occasions. The interest from the organised Swedish artists, however, was lukewarm because the conditions for artists did not meet certain union demands that the organisations imposed on organisers.

### *The North Calotte Autumn Salon*

In 1986 an initiative came from the KRO district, i.e. the local professional organisation of artists, and the Norrbotten Artist Centre joined forces with the Arcus exhibition in Luleå to stage an art fair, inviting artists from around the Barents region and Iceland. The idea was to actually focus on east-west instead of always working from a north-south perspective. Invitations were sent to all the artist societies, which, for professional reasons, organised the artists. It was thus assumed that all participants had already undergone a qualitative evaluation, leading to their acceptance into the organisations. The exhibition in 1987 had 212 participants from the entire region with over 2 000 artworks and was an amazing success with 7 000 paying visitors.

The exhibition caught the attention of local and national media. For example, *Dagens Nyheter* had a full page dedicated to the exhibition.<sup>24</sup> Swedish, northern Finnish, and northern Norwegian local newspapers all featured full-page reports. Swedish television highlighted the event on several occasions. The arts magazine *Paletten* reviewed the event. Konstfrämjandet's arts magazine, *Synpunkt*, ran a major report, as did the weekly magazine *Vi*. The *KRO Magazine* and many other professional journals offered comprehensive coverage of the event.

The *North Calotte Autumn Salon* came to be a biennial event similar to others that took place in 1987, 1989 and 1991. This was owed to a range of collaborators, including Lapland County's Arts Commission; the Northern Norwegian Artist Centre; the Norrbotten County Council and the County Administrative Board; the Swedish Arts Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers Cultural Fund; the Swedish Arts Grants Committee; the County Councils in the counties of Jämtland, Västernorrland and Västerbotten; the Culture Employment Service; Asea and Assi Norrbotten; and a number of municipalities in Norrland in Northern Sweden.

Each artist had a booth measuring 25 square meters where they could display their art. The artwork was hung by a dedicated staff with a curator who decided where to position the artwork and if anything should be removed due to a lack of space. The artists were offered accommodation in cabins at a nearby campsite so that as many people as possible could participate in the exhibition. The project offered a dinner for all participants on the opening day. Freight and insurance were paid by the project organisers. No sales commissions were taken. Seminars and lectures were free to exhibitors. During each week-long exhibition period, seminars and lectures were conducted by visiting experts, and panel discussions were held to shed light on the northern perspective of the arts. Discussions included what it was like to live as an artist in the Arctic, and how the changing conditions varied between north and south, the similarities and differences.

The following were taken from the seminar program from 30 September to 8 October 1989. *Graphics and Business* was a lecture by graphic artist Hasse Hasselgren from Malmö. Other lecture topics included *Culture's Stepchildren: Art Practitioners in the North and a Review of the Arts Policies in the Nordic Region*. Swedish Secretary of State Gunnar Svensson spoke on the changing regional support for the arts. Norwegian State Secretary Hanna Marit Jahr spoke on the subject *Decentralisation: A Norwegian Cultural Recipe*. The Finnish Ministry of Culture addressed the Finnish model of arts councils. Another theme dealt with *Our Common Space and the Art Therein*. Speeches were given by representatives of the National Public Art Council including Staffan Cullberg. Public art was represented by the artists Sivert Lindblom and Leif Bolter; architecture, by Mats Tormod and Ivo Waldhör. There was a workshop on *Artistic Activity – An Option for Health Care and Personality Development* and another on *New Material – Advantages/Risks* which was given by the country's most eminent expert in the field, Professor Ingvar Hurtig from Stockholm. A session of case studies and a panel discussion concluded the seminar.

The *North Calotte Autumn Salon* created important contacts for future art show collaborations. As a result of the aforementioned contacts, joint initiatives were taken from the Norrbotten County Council and Lapland Art Council for cross-border projects with the aim of bringing together artists from the different countries in the region. The goal was for exhibitions to also extend outwardly towards unique European artists interested in both the north and in the flow of international art.

### ***International Symposium Activities***

In 1988 the non-profit organisation fNIK (Organisation for National and International Cultural Exchange) was launched. It has held ten symposia/workshops with different themes, but with an emphasis on experimental art. Artists were invited from the Arctic region of the Nordic countries and Central and Eastern Europe in order to establish contacts and work on joint exhibitions. The networks that were created provided opportunities for Norrbotten artists to participate in various European symposia abroad. For example, the painter Lennart Holmbom and potter Lars-Lennart Stenberg participated, among others, in the symposium held in Plovdiv in Bulgaria.



Stig Winnerskog, Blue Bottle, 1989  
Oil on canvas, 58 x 52 cm

## *Art Collaborations*

In 1986, the producer at the Swedish Exhibition Agency at the time, Per Bengtsson, initiated a working group called AFFKIN to do a pilot project concerning art in Norrbotten. The group consisted of representatives of the Swedish Exhibition Agency, the County Museum, the County Council, the local authorities, art promotion, art societies, KRO and the Artist Centre. The idea was that if all parties were aware of what the others were doing, and made plans, synergy could result. Thus, the art scene in the region would be consolidated in a more vigorous way while the Swedish Exhibition Agency's production resources could become an asset for the region.

In 1987, the AFFKIN project created the project *Near Mountaine, the Outer and Inner Landscape*<sup>25</sup>. The KRO district, the Swedish Exhibition Agency, the Artist Centre and the Culture Department of the County Council, spearheaded by cultural secretary Jan Johansson, formed a working group around an exhibition idea which was to bring together researchers with a number of artists. The artists were Rune Wanler (Boden), Birger Jonasson (Gällivare), Gun Johansson (Luleå), Eva Aira (Jokkmokk), Britta Marakatt-Labba (Övre Soppero), Hans Andersson (Jokkmokk) and Eva-Stina Sandling (Porsi). They got to meet the researchers Ove Stephansson, Professor of Rock Mechanics at Luleå University of Technology; Ulf Westfal, archaeologist at the University of Umeå; botanist Ulf von Sydow; Luleå priest and ethnologist Bo Lundmark from Funäsdalen; Håkan Håkansson at the County Administrative Nature Conservation Unit in Luleå as well as filmmaker and writer, Boris Ersson from Luleå.

Based on seminars, field trips and workshops, they created an exhibition based on research and art in the mountain region. The exhibition premiered at Åttte Swedish Mountain and Sámi Museum in Jokkmokk in 1988<sup>26</sup>. The following year it was presented in Tromsø, Norway, in Skellefteå Museum Nordanå and the Museum of Västerbotten in Umeå. The tour ended at the Skövde Art Gallery in 1991.

## *Art as a Profession*

In the 1980s, the professional identity of artists was strengthened. It was not just that art was mentioned in the media and in cultural debates but also that from the 1960s onwards, more was spent on higher education in the arts. Many artists from the region had traditionally resided in university towns in southern Sweden. This was simply because they were unable to support themselves as artists in the north. During the 1970s and 1980s, this trend began to change and a certain reintegration began to be noted. Cultural policy decisions gradually led to the emergence of a cultural infrastructure. The demands of the artist union slowly began to be understood. The Norrbotten County Council embraced the suggestion of consultant Gun Johansson that permanent embellishments would routinely be procured by all the county council's new buildings.

In the 1980s, artists were able to gain recognition in Norrbotten. Then a stronger cultural infrastructure began to appear among public sector customers, along with community commitments and growing audiences.

Government grants, funding, public works, working partners, sales from exhibitions and moonlighting all contributed to professional artists living in Norrbotten.

## *A Stage for Art*

It is often said that organisations have no memory or recollections. However, people do. When enthusiasts have other tasks, find other interests, change professions, retire, move away or die, the narratives of the past disappear. What has previously existed fades further and further away. Perhaps it would be possible to find fragments of records, newspaper articles or the fading recollections of those who were once there. When looking back on the expansive 1970s and 1980s, it is possible to see the inexorable time that has gone by. Time has a direction and now almost forty years have passed. It is now more than a generation ago.

It is important to remember that we must not take anything for granted. The efforts that were made, the works and reforms implemented, and the even more dynamic decades that followed, are the foundations of today's art scene. It could certainly have been smoother and more stable, but it could also have been much worse if the initiatives had failed to materialise. This is something to bear in mind when we look towards the future.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Wanler 2001, 8-9.
- <sup>2</sup> Sveriges riksdag, Proposition 1972:28.
- <sup>3</sup> Norrbottens Kuriren 26.3.1983.
- <sup>4</sup> Norrbottens Kuriren 26.3.1983.
- <sup>5</sup> Andrén 1989, 30; Brummer 1993, 16.
- <sup>6</sup> Andrén 1989, 67.
- <sup>7</sup> Andrén 1989, 64.
- <sup>8</sup> Brummer 1993, 16.
- <sup>9</sup> Hjärnstorm 7-8/1978.
- <sup>10</sup> Norrbottens Kuriren 4.12.2009.
- <sup>11</sup> Norrbottens Kuriren 4.12.2009.
- <sup>12</sup> Citat: Johansson, 1986.
- <sup>13</sup> Wanler 2001, 12.
- <sup>14</sup> Sveriges riksdag, Proposition 1974:28.
- <sup>15</sup> Hallerdt 1973, 7.
- <sup>16</sup> Sundsvalls Tidning 23.2.1974.
- <sup>17</sup> Norrbottens Kuriren 3.10.1975.
- <sup>18</sup> Kindaposten 2.10.1976; Östgöta-correspondenten 18.9.1976; Norrköpings Tidningar 17.9.1976.
- <sup>19</sup> Norrbottens Kuriren 18.6.2010.
- <sup>20</sup> Citat: Mäkelä 1977, 8.
- <sup>21</sup> Mäkelä 1977, 9.
- <sup>22</sup> Hallerdt 1983. Katalog Norrbotten opp – Ljuset från Norr.
- <sup>23</sup> Provins 1/1985.
- <sup>24</sup> Dagens Nyheter 3.10.1987.
- <sup>25</sup> Lindgren & Holmstedt 1986. Katalog Fjällnära det Yttre och Inre Landskapet.
- <sup>26</sup> Norrbottningen 21.4.1988.



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# Summaries



## *Att skapa en scen för konst*

*Bertil Sundstedt*

En nationell kraftsamling runt kulturen präglade Sverige under 1970- och 1980 talet då man för första gången utredde och fick en samlad bild av hela landets kulturliv. På konstens område genomfördes många reformer som bidrog till en förändring av konstlivet och konstnärernas självbilder. Även det i perifera Norrbotten upplevde man att man blev en del av det nationella konstlivet.

Generellt kan sägas att de norrbottniska konstnärerna av tradition särskilt omhuldat landskapsmåleriet och då ofta fjälllandskapet, en sedvänja som har sina rötter i den så kallade opponentrörelsens Konstnärsförbundets plein air måleri från slutet av 1800-talet. Det finns dock en viss skillnad, i det äldre måleriet försökte man avbilda det storslagna landskapet med avsikten att redovisa det som en nationell tillgång, medan i det sentida måleriet har landskapet blivit mer enbart en förevändning för att måla. Målet för det senare var inte avbildning utan måleriet i sig. Några undantag från landskapsmåleriet var ett fåtal konstnärskap som rörde sig i gränslandet mellan surrealism och symbolism.

Under 1970-talet politiserades dock tematiken framförallt hos de unga i skuggan av gruvarbetarstrejker, ungdomsuppror och Vietnamkrig. Den fick sitt uttryck i mer samhällskommenterande och idébaserad konst som till exempel i affischer, skivomslag, grafiska produktioner och fotobaserade utställningar. Även den naivistiska konsten fick ett uppsving i den nya folkliga anda som präglade tiden. Det var gruppbildningarnas årtionden, ett fenomen som hade en stor betydelse för en förnyring, skolning och breddning av det norrbottniska konstlivet. I den atmosfären blommade grafiken upp som en viktig konstart. De insatser som gjordes, de arbeten och reformer som genomfördes då, och de följande ännu mer dynamiska decennierna är grunden till den konstscen vi har idag.



## *Skape en scene for kunsten*

*Bertil Sundstedt*

Sverige var preget av en nasjonal mobilisering rundt kulturen på 1970-og 1980-tallet da man for første gang utredet og fikk et samlet bilde av hele landets kulturliv. Det ble gjennomført mange reformer på kunstens område som bidro til endringer i kunstlivet og kunstnerens selvbilder. Selv kunstnere i perifere Norrbotten opplevde at de ble en del av det nasjonale kunstlivet.

Generelt kan det sies at kunstnerne fra Norrbotten tradisjonelt verdsatte landskapsmalerier og da ofte fjelllandskapet, en kunstform som har sine rötter i den såkalte motstandsbevegelsen i Kunstnerforbundets plein

air-maleri fra slutten av 1800-tallet. Det finnes likevel en viss forskjell – i det eldre maleriet forsøkte man å avbilde det storslagne landskapet i den hensikt å få det anerkjent som en nasjonal ressurs, mens i de nyeste maleriene er landskapet mer benyttet som selve årsaken til å male. Målet i den siste perioden var ikke avbildning av landskapet, men maleriet i seg selv. Et fåtall kunstnere som beveget seg i grenselandet mellom surrealisme og symbolisme utgjorde noen unntak fra landskapsmaleriet.

På 1970-tallet ble tematikken politisert, først og fremst hos de unge, i skyggen av gruvearbeiderstreiker, ungdomsopprør og Vietnam-krigen. Den fikk sitt uttrykk i mer samfunnskommenterende og idébasert kunst, som for eksempel på plakater, plateomslag, i grafiske produksjoner og fotobaserte utstillinger. Selv den naivistiske kunsten fikk et oppsving i den nye folkelige ånden som preget tiden. Det var gruppedannelsenes tiår, et fenomen som hadde en stor innvirkning på foryngelse, utdanning og utbredelse av kunstverdenen i Norrbotten. I denne atmosfæren blomstret grafikken opp som en viktig kunstart. Den innsatsen som ble gjort, det arbeidet og de reformene som ble gjennomført, og de påfølgende enda mer dynamiske tiårene, er grunnlaget for kunstscenen vi har i dag.



## *Создавая сцену для искусства*

*Bertil Sundstedt*

Общенациональное внимание к культуре оказало значительное влияние на Швецию 1970–1980-х годов, когда впервые была исследована и сформирована собирательная картина культурной жизни страны. В сфере искусства было произведено множество реформ, способствовавших трансформации художественной жизни и самоидентификации художников. Даже в удаленном Норрботтене стала ощущаться принадлежность к национальной художественной жизни.

В целом можно сказать, что художники Норрботтена традиционно тяготели к пейзажной живописи (чаще всего изображались гористые пейзажи северной Швеции) — эта традиция взяла свое начало в пленэрной живописи Союза художников, принадлежавших к так называемому «Движению оппонентов» конца XIX века. Однако, между этими направлениями есть и некоторые различия: в живописи XIX века художники изображали величественные пейзажи, с целью воспевания их как национально-богатства, тогда как в более поздней живописи пейзаж стал только предлогом для рисования. Настоящей целью такой живописи было не отображение реальности, а сама живопись. Исключением из традиции пейзажной живописи было небольшое количество художников, работавших на границе между сюрреализмом и символизмом.

В 1970-х годах тематика изобразительного искусства политизировалась, что в первую очередь коснулось молодых творцов, развивавшихся на фоне забастовок на шахтах, молодежных бунтов и войны во Вьетнаме. Это нашло свое выражение в более идейном и общественно сознательном искусстве: например, в афишах, обложках музыкальных альбомов, в графической продукции и фотовыставках. В свете характерного для этого периода увлечения народной культурой, наивное искусство также переживало свой бум. Это было десятилетие активного формирования художественных групп — этот

феномен имел большое значение для омоложения, профессионализации и расширения художественной жизни Норрботтена. В этой атмосфере графика расцвела как важный вид изобразительного искусства. Предпринятые усилия, а также работы и реформы, проведенные в то время и в последующие еще более динамичные десятилетия, стали фундаментом для сегодняшнего развития изобразительного искусства.



## Näyttämö taiteelle

*Bertil Sundstedt*

Kansallinen kulttuurivoimien yhdistäminen oli leimallista Ruotsille 1970- ja 1980-luvulla. Tuolloin maan kulttuurielämästä muodostettiin ensimmäistä kertaa kokonaisvaltainen kuva. Taiteen alalla tehtiin monia uudistuksia, jotka muuttivat taide-elämää ja taiteilijoiden käsitystä itsestään. Jopa syrjäisen Norrbottenin asukkaat kokivat olevansa osa kansallisia taidepiirejä.

Norrbottenilainen taideperinne keskittyi maisemamaalaukseen, etenkin tunturimaisemiin. Käytäntö juontaa juurensa oppositioliikkeenä tunnetun Taiteilijaseuran (1886–1920) 1800-luvun lopulla harjoittamasta ulkoilmamaalauksesta. Tyyleissä on kuitenkin eroa. Varhaisemmassa maalauksessa pyrittiin kuvaamaan ylevää maisemaa kansallisena voimavarana, kun taas myöhemmässä maalauksessa maisema toimi vain lähtökohtana värien leikille kankaalla. Maalaamisen päämääräksi nousi itse prosessi, ei sen lopputuloksena syntynyt kuva. Poikkeuksen maisemamaalaukseen muodostivat muutamat surrealismin ja symbolismin välimailloilla liikkuneet taiteilijat.

1970-luvulla aihepiirit politisoituivat kaivostyöläisten lakkojen, nuorisoliikeddinnän ja Vietnamin sodan myötä. Liikeddintä löysi ilmiasunsa yhteiskuntaa kommentoivassa, aatteellisessa taiteessa kuten julisteissa, levynkansissa, graafisissa tuotteissa ja valokuvanäyttelyissä. Myös naivistinen taide sai pontta ajalle omi-naisesta kansantaidetta arvostavasta hengestä. Vuosikymmenelle oli tyyppillistä ryhmien muodostaminen, ja ilmiöllä oli suuri merkitys norrbottenilaisen taiteen nuortumiselle, koulutukselle ja leviämislle. Tässä ilmapiirissä grafiikka kukoisti tärkeänä taidelajina. 1970- ja 1980-luvuilla tehdyt panostukset, työt ja uudistukset sekä niitä seuranneet vieläkin dynaamisemmat vuosikymmenet ovat perusta Ruotsin nykyisillekin taidepiireille.





Synnøve Persen, *By the Sea*, 1988  
Oil on canvas, 170 x 200 cm  
Lillehammer Art Museum

# *Decades of Change: Visual Arts in Finnmark, Norway in the 1970s and 1980s*

Jan-Erik Lundström

FINNMARK, THE NORTHERNMOST AND easternmost county of Fennoscandia and Norway's northernmost county, is first of all defined by its geography and geopolitical position. Its long, meandering, rocky and rugged coastline encounters the North Atlantic Ocean and the Barents Sea, where the Eurasian continent meets the Arctic region. Finnmark harbours the North Cape, identified as the northernmost point of continental Europe,<sup>1</sup> and has all of its territory well north of the Arctic Circle. Vardø, one of Finnmark's 19 municipalities, is both the easternmost area of Norway and one of three municipalities harbouring the northernmost coastline of Europe. Indeed, if one regards this small city of Vardø itself from a Eurasian perspective, it is located east of such eastern cities as St.Petersburg and Istanbul.

Liminal in all senses of the word, no matter how sparsely populated and geographically exceptional, Finnmark is a culturally complex and multifaceted region. Until approximately the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, Norway (Norway-Denmark), Sweden (Sweden-Finland) and Russia had laid continued claims on Finnmark. At times, municipalities such as Kautokeino or Karasjok were even shared between Norway and Sweden and Sør-Varanger, between Norway and Russia. The Sámi population of Finnmark would often find themselves being taxed by more than one state. The present borders were established, more or less, in the treaties of 1751 and 1826.<sup>2</sup> The more recent changes affecting Finnmark were enacted in the World War II treaties, such as the 1944 treaty that handed over the Petsamo region from Finland to the then Soviet Union.

Today, in 2014, Finnmark – bordering Russia (the Soviet Union during the Cold War) and Finland – has three official languages: Norwegian, Sámi and Kven. While native Norwegian speakers are the largest in number in Finnmark county, no other region has such a large and influential Sámi population. The municipalities of Karasjok and Kautokeino currently have a majority Sámi population and thus, mostly native Sámi speakers. In Karasjok, more than 80% of the inhabitants are native Sámi speakers. With the 1989 establishment of the Sámi parliament, Karasjok may also be identified as the political capital of Sápmi and Sámi culture. The Kven community constitutes a much smaller minority, which currently has its foremost presence in the municipalities of Porsanger and Vadsø. The long history of Norwegianisation, including the prohibi-

tion of native languages such as Sámi and an aggressive assimilation politics, of course deeply affected the ethnic minorities, effectively eliminating much of Kven culture. The establishment of the Kven Organisation in Norway in 1987 indicates the late recognition of Kven rights and identity. In 1996, the Kven language was given the status of an official minority language.

In addition to being the northernmost county of Norway, Finnmark is thus a part of Sápmi, that is, the Fenoscandian region traditionally inhabited by the Sámi people. The Sápmi territory stretches from the Kola Peninsula in the northeast, through Finnish Lapland, to the municipalities of Engerdal and Idre in central Norway and Sweden. Incorporating Finnmark and northern Norway, Sápmi extends across four nations: Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Norway as a whole has currently the largest Sámi population, around 40 000 Sámi. The total number of Sámi is estimated at 50 000 – 80 000 in the four countries.<sup>3</sup> Granted its largest number of Sámi people, Norway has as well the most developed political and social infrastructure in relation to Sámi living conditions and rights. Indeed, the interior townships of Finnmark survived better the period of Norwegianisation, preserving Sámi cultural practices. Thus, in the 1970s, during the decade of a growing struggle for independence and recognition, Finnmark was a central arena and site for this struggle.

### *The 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Geopolitics and Independence*

Finnmark,<sup>4</sup> as well as Finnish Lapland, were deeply affected by World War II, being the theatres of confrontation between German and Soviet armies. While the 1940 German occupation passed without much devastation, Finnmark became the site of occupation, resistance and confrontation between German and Soviet troops. Kirkenes, close to the Russian border, was both bombed by the Soviet air force and burned by German troops during their withdrawal. Indeed, it was this final stage of the war that caused such damage to Finnmark. During the German army's withdrawal from Finnmark, beginning in October 1944, which they termed Operation Nordlicht, the German army used a scorched earth tactic in Finnmark to halt the advances of the Red Army. Consequently, few houses and towns survived the war, and a large segment of the population of Finnmark was forcibly evacuated to inner exile. More than 70 000 people were left homeless in Finnmark after the war, and much of the infrastructure and collective resources were incapacitated.

The Norwegian king proclaimed this devastation a national catastrophe, and shortly after the war, the Norwegian government launched a grand reconstruction and resettlement plan for Finnmark and northern Norway. The reconstruction proceeded with full capacity in 1947, and by 1954, the resettlements and reconstruction were completed.

The particular geopolitical position of Finnmark came to define the post-war period as well. With Finnmark's 200-kilometre border with the then Soviet Union, which for decades was the only border between a NATO country and the Soviet Union, Finnmark had firsthand experiences of Cold War tensions and remained a region of much military intelligence activity. This border between Finnmark and the Soviet Union/Russia was more or less closed for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Only during the recent, post-Soviet decades have trade, open exchange and communication been revived across the Finnmark border to Russia.



## *Culture in the North*

The institutional infrastructure of the visual arts in Finnmark in the early 1970s was neither extensive nor voluminous. The artists who resided and practised in Finnmark were either self-taught or educated elsewhere. Few artists were able to pursue a full-time practice. Many maintained other means of livelihood, and of those who aimed for the artistic profession, many left Finnmark to find more substantial opportunities elsewhere. The art community of Finnmark of that time comprised a mix of amateur and professional practices.

Being the largest urban centre of northern Norway, Tromsø was where the first visual arts institutions were established and where an art community was consequently developed. The Tromsø Art Association, the first in northern Norway, was inaugurated in 1924. Without interruption, it has since the start provided an exhibition venue and programme aimed at promoting the visual arts production of the region. The regional art museum, the Art Museum of Northern Norway, also located in Tromsø and responsible for collecting art from all of northern Norway, was only established in 1985. However, with the presence of a museum and eventually, commercial and artist-run galleries and an art academy, Tromsø has been re-established as a centre of the visual arts of the region.

The first and oldest art association in Finnmark, Bodø Art Society, was founded in 1946, an important achievement in the post-war years. Since 1950, the Bodø Art Society has also assumed a vital role in the entire northern region of Norway, as it became the organiser of the *North Norwegian Art Exhibition*<sup>5</sup>, an annual juried touring exhibition for artists from northern Norway, ever since its inauguration as an important venue for them.

In the 1970s, Lofoten, particularly the towns of Kabelvåg and Svolvær in the municipality of Vågan, emerged as a centre of visual art organisation, production and dissemination. Kunstnerhuset, the Artist House, on the small island of Svinøya near Svolvær, has functioned as a residence for artists from the 1950s onwards. The artists Dag Rødsand and Dagfinn Bakke found Atelier Lofoten in 1971, organising it both as an art association of exhibitions and as a teacher-/apprentice-based artist collective. This prominent position of Lofoten is nonetheless not entirely new. Lofoten, as well as the north Norwegian landscape in general, does have an important part and position in Norwegian art history. Already the era of classic landscape painting of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century romanticism, linked with nationalist pronouncements, marked the northern landscape as a significant and powerful motif. Peder Balke (1804–1887), an important painter of his generation and an apprentice of the then leading painter Johan Christian Dahl, was possibly the first Norwegian artist to visit Finnmark and depict its scenery, encountered in renowned paintings such as his 1840 masterpiece of the North Cape cliff bathed in serene afternoon light or his 1850 painting *Landscape with Sámi and Reindeer*. Balke introduced a sublime reading of the North, as well as identified Finnmark and the Sámi culture in his works.

Late 19<sup>th</sup>-century painters such as Ole Juul (1852–1927), who painted majestic and detailed romanticist-realist landscapes, or the neo-romanticist artist Karl Erik Harr (b. 1940), a prolific and respected painter, were later examples. Moreover, influential painter and illustrator Kaare Espolin Johnson (1907–1994), born



Iver Jåks, Dance of the Gods, 1972  
Concrete, wood, 487 x 180 cm  
Riddu Duottar Museat, Karasjok, Photo: Liv Engholm





Iver Jåks, Homo Sapiens IV, 1971, Woodcut, 43,5 x 54 cm  
De Samiske Samlinger, Karasjok, Photo: Marvin Pope

in Vadsø, portrayed his childhood in Finnmark in paintings that in dream-like and luminous, almost surrealist colours, involved both Sámi and Russian motifs. Even as he later moved to Bodø in Nordland, the northern Finnmark landscape continued to define most of his artistic output. Of the same generation was Johan Savio (1902–1938), pioneer Finnmark artist of Sámi and Kven origin, who visualised and articulated the Finnmark landscape, the reindeer and Sámi culture in elegant woodcuts and drawings. Savio's idiom not only expressed the landscape from the perspective of a Finnmark native and within Sámi culture, but also reversed the romanticist and sublime iconography to a lived and known landscape. It was a landscape where nature was not only spectacular and wild, but also a home to peoples, a place where they spent their lives.<sup>6</sup>

The 1970s involved a decade of collective organisation and institutional development, part of and inspired by an overall activist component of the emergent political culture of the time. The artists' organisation NNBK, the Organisation of North Norwegian Artists<sup>7</sup> was founded in 1971 with the goal of organising and supporting visual artists working in the three northernmost regions – Finnmark, Nordland and Troms. The North Norwegian Art Center (NNKS), a professional venue for promoting and mediating the visual arts of

the region, was established by the NNBK in 1979 in Kabelvåg. The first educational institution of northern Norway, Nordland Art School, started in 1983 with a full-year programme for would-be visual artists.

In Finnmark proper, it was the art association format that was provided with the earliest opportunities for a more organised dissemination of the visual arts from the region. Membership-based organisations, with a focus on providing platforms for exhibitions and sales of contemporary art, were in most instances the first existing means for mediating and distributing art and for organised public displays. In 1966 and 1967, four art associations were founded – in Alta, Hammerfest, Kirkenes and Vadsø. The Alta Art Association has been the most persistently active over the decades; it has also maintained one of the few public collections of visual arts in Finnmark, which it began to gather in the 1970s and has made available to the public, presenting the collection in different ways over the years. While the founding of these art associations were not directly linked to decisive developments in the visual art practices of Finnmark, they were important markers and an elementary structure of support.

As stated, the 1970s constituted a decade of artists organising themselves across Norway. Linked to the radicalisation and politicisation of the field of culture at large, regional artists' unions were founded in practically every county. While the art association movement was an expression of interest and support from an art-interested public, including small-scale buyers/collectors, the movement of the artists' organisation was precisely that of the notion of self-organisation. Artists formed their own organisations aimed at a collective and public empowerment of their practice and work as artists. The NNBK, the Organisation of North Norwegian Artists, with the North Norwegian Art Center (NNKS), was indeed one of the earliest, but the format was similar nationwide. The 1970s witnessed the development of organisations on a regional level in all of Norway (similar developments took place in all of Scandinavia, even if the manifest regional structure was exclusive to Norway).

Networking across national boundaries, Sámi artists also organised themselves in the 1970s. The Union of Sámi Artists (Sámi Dáiddačehpiid Searvi, SDS) was established in 1979. Simultaneously, branches or discipline-specific national organisations such as the Organisation of Independent Photographers (FFE, founded in 1977) were founded, promoting agendas relevant to their respective professions or disciplines, in this case, supporting the development of photography as a recognised medium and practice within the arts. Yet another kind of organisation was founded in the 1970s. In 1976, the Organisation for the Promotion of Art in Northern Norway (SKINN, in 2010 renamed *Se Kunst i Nord-Norge*, the Organisation for Mediating Art in Northern Norway) was established as an umbrella organisation coordinating the work of mediating and disseminating art in the region. The most important collaborators of SKINN were of course the art associations of the region,<sup>8</sup> and the organisation rapidly became an important player in the dissemination of art in Finnmark and Northern Norway.

### *The Rise of Sámi Art in the late 1970s*

Across Scandinavia, the 1970s comprised a decade that experienced a multifaceted radicalisation of culture, topics, content and ideology, as well practices and organisation. Artistic practices explored or developed

radically new methods, ideas and most importantly, results. Equally involved in the changing times, Finnmark also found itself at a crossroads of political and cultural transformation. Of all the changes that took place during this period, the most extraordinary one was that Finnmark found itself at the epicentre of the Sámi independence struggle, linked with other developments such as environmental activism and local autonomy claims.

The fight for Sámi independence, basic rights and recognition, acceptance and self-determination picked up speed in the 1970s. While there were activities and pursuits all over Sápmi, in Sweden, Finland, as well as Norway, Finnmark became, for a variety of reasons, a key site for change. What changes began to occur? What were the struggles? One key transformation was that the Sámi language was introduced or reintroduced in public schools and that the right to sustain a minority language, as well as the right to one's mother tongue, was slowly being observed or granted. This development might also be described as a process of self-manifestation, of acknowledging one's identity, in public and in private. On such a demonstration of a new sense of identity and an affirmation of one's Sámi roots, the slogan "Show Sámi Spirit!" (ČSV, Čájjet Sámi Vuoinŋa) was launched in 1972, with the aim of supporting a clear and proud manifestation of one's Sámi identity. In fact, often the earliest initiatives appeared in Finnmark, and the ČSV slogan, although spread throughout Sápmi, lived its most intense life in Finnmark in the 1970s.<sup>9</sup>

This emancipatory process and cultural awakening, which in fact were nothing less than the beginning of acknowledging the colonial and post-colonial structures and histories of Scandinavian societies, found a particular nodal point in Finnmark in the so-called Alta case. The Norwegian government had in the early 1970s made plans for building a major hydropower plant in the Alta River Valley in Finnmark, which would necessitate dam structures that would submerge major parts of this river valley, including the village Masi, which is part of Kautokeino municipality. These plans (which the Sámi artist Trygve Guttormsen living in Masi was among the first to discover when they became publicly known) provoked a major and massive response in terms of protests extending over several years, including hunger strikes in front of the Norwegian parliament or sit-ins and other forms of protest and civil disobedience at the sites of the planned constructions.

Indeed, the protests against the Alta hydropower project turned out to be an exceptional merging of environmental activists, Sámi independence and general political opposition forces. Sámi and non-Sámi activists found common ground in the Alta case, as well as realised their joint potential, spelling more political leverage when combining resources and forces. The common ground and the political leverage were not only tactical but also a real alliance of linked threats – the dam threatened important pasture land for reindeer herders, environmental and ecological values, and issues of political power and self-determination. Eventually, the dam and the hydropower plant itself were built, albeit on a smaller scale than originally intended. Nonetheless, the Alta case became a crossroads and turning point in the struggle for Sámi independence as well as in terms of environmental issues and a catalyst in placing Sámi issues on the national agenda, calling for attention and instigating the many political and other transformations that would follow, culminating in the 1989 inauguration of the Sámi parliament in Karasjok, Finnmark. Curiously, the Alta power plant and dam finally opened in 1987, the same year the important the Sámi law was passed by the Norwegian parliament on the government's agenda.<sup>10</sup>

However, the village of Masi was not only noted for being saved from submersion in the final outcome of the Alta case. It was also the site of the 1978 formation of the artist collective Masi group, a.k.a. Sámi Artists' Group.<sup>11</sup> Formed by seven young Sámi artists, this group occasioned a modernist and contemporary paradigm shift in the language of visual arts, pursued and realised at the heart of Finnmark. The group did not oppose but surpassed tradition. Incorporating tradition in their pursuits, they managed to identify spaces that were not previously articulated, finding paths towards creating art that would be equally indigenous and modern, colonial and post-colonial, and that reviewed and expressed tradition while promoting the new. Most central was the call for an art that was not conditioned by ethnicity, tradition or identity, but articulated on its own independent terms.<sup>12</sup>

Born a generation older than the artists emerging in the mid- to late 1970s, Iver Jåks (1932–2007) maintained an artistic practice, mostly from his Finnmark base in Karasjok, from the 1950s onwards. Educated in Oslo and Copenhagen art academies, Jåks resettled in his native Karasjok in Finnmark after completing his studies. Immensely versatile as an artist, Jåks worked as a teacher in craft, while pursuing his artistic work with craft or traditional Sámi techniques, using silver or bone objects, and also with most of the media of contemporary art – drawing, graphic arts such as woodcuts and lithographs, painting, sculpture, objects and large-scale public works. Already from the 1950s, Jåks' art manifested a characteristic and particular graphic and abstract idiom that was neither immediately figurative nor clearly abstract or nonfigurative. His works linked more closely with concrete art rather than abstraction and abstract art.

Additional characterisations of Jåks' works observed a vitalistic and corporeal iconography which draws from both Sámi and Christian mythology, often layered with an insistent erotic repertoire that was skilfully counter-



Iver Jåks, Čoarveraidu, 1986  
Wood, 93 x 35 x 35 cm  
Karasjok Commune, Photo: Marvin Pope

pointed with a technological or military repetitive geometry, with desire and violence powerfully counter- and juxtaposed. Jåks' graphic works were equally expressionist and minimalist. He may indeed be identified as a hybrid artist that dismantled the opposition between art and craft, as well as that between tradition and contemporaneity. His installations and public works configured a variety of materials such as wood, rope, leather, metal and reindeer antlers. As such, they had explicit roots in duodji, in Sámi handicraft, materials and techniques, as well as in Sámi culture and iconography.

Simultaneously, with an articulate Duchampian strategy of juxtaposition and redefinition at heart, Jåks excelled in interlacing found objects and materials, creating animate and narrative, yet semi-abstract, large-scale sculptures. His *Dance of the Gods* (1972) is an in-situ and relief sculpture in concrete at the entrance of the Riddu Duottar Museat – Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat (The Museum of the Sámi Collection) in Karasjok. This commissioned and public work makes exquisite use of positive and negative spaces in organising an ecstatic and ritualistic procession of human figures. It sides again with Jåks' erotic body of immanent desire. *Drumstick of the Shaman Drum* (1981), another public and commissioned work, is a towering piece in wood, six metres in elevation. It features a monumental drumstick of the kind used with the traditional Sámi shaman drum, which in the history of Sámi relations with the colonising powers had often been prohibited, confiscated and/or eliminated in its traditional shape. Simultaneously, this work has equally explicit associations with artillery and other weaponry, a sort of violent and aggressive iconography parallel with the assertive and ritualistic modalities of the drumstick. These layered associations or intertwined idioms and meanings are characteristic of much of Jåks' work from these decades.

### *Emerging Artists, Emerging Art*

The Masi group was an artist collective of major significance in advancing and establishing a new generation of Sámi artists who would inaugurate novel practices, values and norms. However, Masi group never promoted particular aesthetics or styles in terms of output and production. Synchronised in their tactical and strategic position, working for the independence of Sámi artists and against their insistent ethnification in the emergent and changing field of contemporary art, they were nonetheless individualists in terms of their actual artistic production.<sup>13</sup> The group was short-lived as well and dissolved in 1983. Its members then pursued individual careers; however, in different manners and positions, they were all continuously active in the Sámi art community. A successful touring exhibition with all members was organised in 1980, and the example they set was the seed for founding the Union of Sámi Artists and Sámi Artist Center (Sámi Dáiddaguovddás, SDG, since 2013 Sámi Center for Contemporary Art), as well as marking spaces in the art community for a new autonomous art by Sámi artists.

The founding member of Masi group, Synnøve Persen (b. 1950), an influential activist, persistent organiser and untiring force in the fields of art and Sámi cultural politics, studied painting in Trondheim and Oslo. In the late 1970s, after completing her studies, she returned to Finnmark. She was active in the Alta protests and joined the hunger strike outside the Norwegian parliament in 1980. In her final project at the Academy in Oslo, Persen painted a proposal for a Sámi flag of three differently coloured fields – yellow, blue and red.





Synnøve Persen, *Togetherness*, 1978, Oil on canvas, 100,6 x 92,7 cm  
Collection of the Artist, Photo: Marvin Pope

This flag in fact was used during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The flag as such (although it was not chosen as the official Sámi flag when this decision was made in 1986) is an articulate and pointed linking of art and design with politics-at-large, as well as an exquisite intervention illuminating the power and necessity of cultural capital.

The media of oil painting and written language, particularly poetry, have been Persen's artistic idioms throughout her career. Exploring affective yet vernacular narrative scenes from Sámi everyday life in her early paintings, Persen would then employ her native Finnmark landscape as her key motivational source. While sourced from the northern vistas, including the powerful presence of the sea and the light of her Finnmark surroundings, Persen's art explores levels of the nonfigurative and the abstract in carefully composed colourist paintings. In its mastery of a lyrical abstract expressionism, her art evolves as well towards an even greater focus on the very elements of painting: the lines, geometric shapes, brush gestures and precise properties and effects of paint on canvas.<sup>14</sup>



Britta Marakatt-Labba, *The Crows*, 1981, Embroidery, 83 x 60 cm  
University of Tromsø, Photo: Ola Røe

Aage Gaup (b. 1944), also a founding member of Masi group, engages in conceptual and figurative sculpture, collages of protest and advocacy, such as his agitative *The Equality Act* (1978), as well as large-scale public works of reflection and perception. Similar to Jåks' art, in Gaup's work, the human figure plays an important role, often rendering the human body in a sensual confrontation. Yet equally important are his sculptural projects of a more conceptual character. Already in his school commission in Láhpoluoppal in 1974, invited by Iver Jåks, Gaup found a way to link content and symbolism with a strict form. Since then, much of his work has dealt with how to combine the sensual and the reflexive, the formal and the philosophical. *Sleeping War Machine* (2003), produced with logs imported from Venezuela in an intercontinental fourth-world



encounter, crossbreeds a cannon and a phallus, proposing libido both as aggressor and negotiator. A more instrumental aspect of Gaup's work, from the 1980s onwards, consists of extensive projects in scenography, producing sophisticated set designs for the Beavvváš Sámi Theatre in Kautokeino, among others. Here Gaup often works with such ephemeral materials as snow and ice.

Swedish Sámi artist Britta Marakatt-Labba (b. 1951), after her studies at University of Gothenburg, joined Masi group in 1979. Marakatt-Labba has skilfully developed the technique of embroidery, producing narrative scenarios or tableaux put forth in an elegantly reductive and minimalist style. Trying out painting and



Evahenna Aalto, *Winter of My Childhood*, 1989–1990  
Tapestry, 228 x 190 cm  
Collection of the Artist, Photo: Caroline Greiner

drawing, she discovered her medium of embroidery in the late 1970s, remaining faithful to it ever since. Her motifs are manifold: Sámi mythology, the history of the Sámi people, everyday life in Sápmi, the landscape of northern Scandinavia and present-day politics through topical commentary and reflections.<sup>15</sup> During the years of Masi group, in response to the Alta protests and the actions and decisions of the government and the police, she stitched *The Crows* (1981), an instantaneously iconic allegory of the Alta case. In *The Crows*, the police who dragged away the protesters and sit-in demonstrators are depicted as crows that turn into policemen as they descend upon the scene. This work of Marakatt-Labba manifests magnificently how art entered, expressed and illuminated politics during the decades in question, simultaneously defending its right to remain independent from the issues of the time. Nonetheless, *The Crows* is one of those works of art which manages to couple the topical and temporal with the universal and general.

Josef Halse (b. 1951), another member of Masi group, is active both as a painter and a musician. Halse studied at Norwegian National Academy of Craft and Art Industry in Oslo and afterwards returned to his hometown of Kautokeino in 1979. Halse prefers to work in acrylics, often with a lively and drastic palette exploring abstract landscapes sourced from his native Finnmark.

Hans Ragnar Mathisen (b. 1945), a Sámi artist but not a member of Masi group, pursues a broad practice involving most visual media, from drawing and graphic arts to painting, sculpture and mapmaking. Mathisen's maps, produced from 1975 onwards, are another example of how important links have been established between art/visual culture and politics and identity struggles. Mathisen's maps do nothing less than redefining, geographically but also culturally, the vast territories of the North. Mapping the north without national borders is only one of the challenges that Mathisen manages in his brave and ambitious project.<sup>16</sup> He produced another iconic series of works, comprising graphic prints with the Sámi shaman drum as the motif, in the late 1970s, which has gained much attention as well. Moreover, his artistic output is expansive, comprising the landscape and nature scenery of the Norwegian Sápmi in watercolour and portraits in pencil. The motif is always essential in Mathisen's work – a sacred mountain, portraits of indigenous peoples from across the world, Sámi dwellings or important sites.

Ingunn Utsi (b. 1948), educated in Trondheim, at first worked primarily in pencil, using bird motifs from her home environment in Repvåg, Finnmark. From the mid-1980s, she has developed a sophisticated sculptural practice with a variety of materials, often in combinatory and metaphorical plays. Wood is her primary material, often using found pieces such as driftwood. With a surrealist strategy at heart and as a skilled craftsperson in the use of charged juxtapositions of materials and found objects, Utsi manages to generate sculptures that speak equally of tactile and formal precision and symbolic content.<sup>17</sup>

Annelise Josefsen (b. 1949), educated in Bergen and living in Kokelv, Finnmark, is a sculptor who works primarily with stone, producing physically intense and suggestive sculptures. There is an undercurrent of human relations, corporeal and psychological, as observed through manifestations in reduced forms and surfaces in her work.<sup>18</sup>

Not the home of artists' institutions, with the exception of its own art association, Galleri Vert in Hammerfest has nonetheless been the home of several influential artists during the 1970s and 1980s, such as Eevahenna Aalto (b. 1940). Born in Helsinki and educated in Helsinki and Bergen, Aalto settled in Hammer-



Arnold Johansen, Lay of the Land, 1982, Etching, 59 x 95 cm  
Private Collection

fest, Finnmark in 1970, from where she has built an artistic practice. Some of her early works are in oil and watercolour, but her works in fabric, with weaving as her key technique, are what has sustained her art since the early 1970s. Aalto's art embraces the nonfigurative and the abstract as well, even as her works maintain the landscape of the north and the changing lights and colours of the season as both a visual reference and a source of inspiration. Her large woven tapestries are painstaking projects, requiring months for completion. In 1980, she also won the competition for an altarpiece in the church of Hamarøy.<sup>19</sup>

Arnold Johansen (b. 1953), educated in Oslo in the 1970s, resettled in Finnmark and Hammerfest in the early 1980s. Johansen was initially primarily involved in graphic prints – woodcut and etchings, often grave but expressive portraits and/or semi-abstract landscapes in thick and heavy darker colours. He later turned to photography where he has developed sophisticated and new techniques/perspectives, for example, his dual portraits.<sup>20</sup>

Kåre Kivijärvi (1938–1991) began in the late 1950s as an apprentice at the daily *Finnmarks Dagblad* and worked in the city of Hammerfest as his base. He studied photography with Otto Steinert in Germany. Kivijärvi pursued a career in photojournalism over the following decades. He worked for a variety of newspapers in Norway and Finland, and his documentary images of the lives of fishers in the Norwegian north

and of Laestadian families were well recognised. Parallel with his photo-journalistic practice, Kivijärvi began to explore photographs as singular aesthetic and artistic statements, disengaged from their instrumental use in periodicals and magazines. In 1971, Kivijärvi became the first photographer to be accepted at *Autumn Exhibition* (the national annual juried exhibition of visual arts since 1882 in Oslo), paving the way for the establishment of photography as an independent art form. Indeed, Kivijärvi was a pioneer in his approach with the photographic medium, departing from a vocational and documentary idiom and launching a stark and distilled idiom that he applied with equal distinction to both envi-

ronmental portraits and landscapes. His images were charged with a dark energy of a particular intensity that enabled the linking of inner and outer worlds, of mental and physical reality.<sup>21</sup>



Kåre Kivijärvi, *The District Doctor, Porsanger*, 1970  
B & W photograph, 100 x 90 cm  
Nasjonalbiblioteket

Visual arts in Finnmark during the 1970s and 1980s were not an organised and integrated whole. Nonetheless, over the course of these two decades, several significant developments occurred. These included the establishment of organisations and institutions supporting and working with the visual arts, as well as the birth, emergence and settlement of an influential and new generation of Sámi artists. These events were linked with a period of emancipation and political autonomy of Sámi culture. They were a part of the growth and acceptance of new media in the visual arts such as photography. Finally, it was the beginning and development of powerful, individual artistic careers, reaching beyond the local context with their art. These were decades of change, transformation, growth and rich, intense activity, details of which this essay could only begin to map.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Although the North Cape has laid claim to being the northernmost point in Europe, exact geographical figures point out Knivskjellodden as being a bit farther north and Kinarodden as being the northernmost point on the continent as such (as both the North Cape and Knivskjellodden are located on the island of Magerøya).
- <sup>2</sup> See for example, Lähtenmäki 2006, *The People of Lapland: Boundary Demarcations and Interaction in the North Calotte*.
- <sup>3</sup> Solbakk 2006, 15.
- <sup>4</sup> Literature on the wartime episodes and post-war Finnmark include Bottolfsen 1990, *Finnmark fylkeskommunes historie 1840–1990*; Dancke 1998, *Opp av ruinene: gjenreisningen av Finnmark 1945–1960*; Eriksen & Mikkelsen 1986, *Finnmark*.
- <sup>5</sup> See Bodø kunstforening 2014.
- <sup>6</sup> See Danbolt 2009, *Norsk kunsthistorie: bilde og skulptur frå vikingtida til i dag*; Aubert 1908, *Det nye Norges malerkunst 1814–1900*; Høydalsnes 2002, *Møte mellom tid og sted. Bilder av Nord-Norge*; Nerhus 1982, *John Andreas Savio: Same og kunstner: En monografi*; Rasmussen 2005, *John Savio: en samisk kunstner fra Sør-Varanger*.
- <sup>7</sup> Nord-Norske Bildende Kunstnere 2014, Nordnorsk kunstnersenter 2014.
- <sup>8</sup> See *Se Kunst i Nord-Norge* 2014 for more information on the development of SKINN.
- <sup>9</sup> Smith 1984, *Om samenes rettsstilling*.
- <sup>10</sup> The literature on Alta Case is extensive. See for example, Hjorthol 2006, *Alta – kraftkampen som utfordret statens makt*.
- <sup>11</sup> The founding members of Masi group were Aage Gaup, Trygve Guttormsen, Josef Halse, Berit Marit Hætte, Rannevig Persen and Synnøve Persen. Britta Marakatt-Labba joined the group in 1979. Several publications discuss the development of this group, including Holm & Carlsson (eds.) 2004, *Mázejoavku – Sámi Daidojoavku/Samisk Kunstnergruppe*; Hansen 2007, *Fortellinger om samisk samtidskunst* and Lundström 2009, *Being A Part*. See also Lehtola 2014, p. 117–132.
- <sup>12</sup> Eilertsen et al. (eds.) 2002, *Ofelas/Veiviseren Iver Jåks*; Tveterås 2002, *Samisk kunst og kulturhistorie*.
- <sup>13</sup> Porsanger 2010. For additional material on the work of the Sámi Artists' Group (Masi Group) and the earlier commissioned public work for the elementary school of Låhpoluop-pal, see also Horsberg Hansen 2010, *Fluktlinjer: Forståelser av samisk samtidskunst* and Persen 1994, *Samisk Kunstnerleksikon*.
- <sup>14</sup> See also Synnøve Persen 2014 and Persen 2002, *Njuohtamat-Malerier-Paintings: 1978-2000*. Regarding the history of the Sámi flag, see for example *Store Norske Leksikon* 2014.
- <sup>15</sup> Marakatt-Labba 2010, *Broderade Berättelser/Embroidered Stories*.
- <sup>16</sup> Mathisen 1998, *Elle-Hánsa, Keviselie*. See also Elle-Hánsa \*Keviselie\* Hans Ragnar Mathisen 2014.
- <sup>17</sup> Skavhaug (ed.) 2004, *Billedkunstneren Ingunn Utsi*.
- <sup>18</sup> No publications exist on Annelise Josefsen's work. More information can be found at Annelise Josefsen 2014.
- <sup>19</sup> No monography or other publications exist on Eevahenna Aalto's work. Her website is one source of more detailed information: Eevahenna Aalto 2014.
- <sup>20</sup> Johansen 1998, *Bilder 1981-1997*.
- <sup>21</sup> Hammerstein 2004, *Fotografier av Kåre Kivijärvi: formale grep, underliggjøring og en sivilisasjonskritisk holdning*; Aasbø 2011, *Kåre Kivijärvi: fotografier 1956-1991*; Høydalsnes 2001, *Stillhetens land. Kåre Kivijärvi – fotografier*.



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# Summaries

## *Visuell kunst i Finnmark, Norge på 1970- og 1980-tallet*

*Jan-Erik Lundström*

Finnmark ligger, kraftfullt definert av sin geografi, i den nord-østlige delen av Fennoskandia. Til tross for at området er tynt befolket er det et kulturelt komplekst og flerfasettert fylke i Norge. Med tre offisielle språk (norsk, samisk og kvensk), er Finnmark et kulturelt og politisk senter for den samiske kulturen. Fra starten av 1970-tallet ble Finnmark et knutepunkt for både den samiske kampen for uavhengighet og politiske rettigheter, miljøaktivisme og radikaliserings av det kulturelle uttrykket.

Etter at det ble dannet flere kunstforeninger i byer som Alta og Hammerfest, var tiåret vitne til etableringen av kunstnerorganisasjoner som NNBK (Organisasjonen Nord-Norske Bildende Kunstnere) og SDG (Samisk kunstnersenter). SDG ble foranlediget av det innflytelsesrike kunstnerkollektivet Masi-gruppen. Selv om de ikke har store institusjoner og har liten offentlig støtte, framstår Finnmark som hjemmet til den første generasjonen av moderne samiske kunstnere, et fødested for fotografiet som medium for kunst og en del av det bredere norske kunstfeltet, samt et sted for innflytelsesrik individuell kunstutøvelse, alt i de overskridende og uimotståelige tiårene på 1970- og 1980-tallet.

## *Изобразительное искусство в Рунья (Норвегия) в 1970–1980-х годах*

*Jan-Erik Lundström*

Северо-восточный регион Фенноскандии — Финнмарк — в значительной мере определен своим географическим положением. Несмотря на низкую плотность населения, культура этого региона Норвегии сложна и многогранна. Благодаря трем официальным языкам (норвежским, саамским и квенским), Финнмарк по праву является культурным и политическим центром саамской культуры. В начале 1970-х годов Финнмарк стал одновременно центром саамской борьбы за независимость и политические права, центром движения по защите окружающей среды и центром радикализации форм культурного самовыражения, с движением Альтасакен в авангарде этого процесса.

После основания нескольких художественных объединений (норв. kunstforeninger) в городах Алта и Хаммерфест, это десятилетие стало свидетелем рождения таких художественных организаций как Организация северо-норвежских художников (NNBK) и Саамское художественное объединение (SDG). Вместе с тем, SDG предшествовал влиятельный художественный коллектив «Группа Маци». Несмотря на отсутствие крупных организаций и скудную общественную поддержку, Финнмарк стал домом для первого поколения современных саамских художников, родиной фотографии как средства художественного выражения, частью более широкого художественного поля Норвегии, а также

площадкой для важных индивидуальных художественных практик, — и всё это в течение увлекательных и трансгрессивных 1970-х и 1980-х годов.



## **Kuva- ja taide Ruijassa, Norjassa 1970- ja 1980-luvulla**

*Jan-Erik Lundström*

Maantieteellisesti määriteltyä Ruija (norjaksi Finnmark) on Fennoskandian koillisin alue. Vaikka tämä alue on harvaan asuttu, se on kulttuurisesti kirjavaa ja monipuolista seutua. Alueella on kolme virallista kieltä (norja, saame ja kveeni), ja se on saamelaiskulttuurin poliittinen keskus. 1970-luvun alussa Ruija oli esillä saamelaisten taistellessa itsenäisyyden ja poliittisten oikeuksiensa puolesta, ympäristöaktiivisuuden nostuessa päätään ja kulttuurin radikalisoituessa.

Vuosikymmenen varrella perustettiin useita taideyhdistyksiä esimerkiksi Altassa ja Hammerfestissa sekä taiteilijajärjestöt NNBK (Pohjois-Norjan taiteilijoiden järjestö) sekä SDG (Saamelaiskulttuurin taiteilijoiden järjestö). SDG:tä edelsi vaikutusvaltainen taiteilijakollektiivi Masi ryhmä. Vaikka Ruijassa ei ole suuria taideinstituu-tioita ja seutu saa niukalti julkista tukea, alue on ensimmäisen modernin saamelaiskulttuurin sukupolven koti, valokuvataiteen kehto ja osa laajempaa Norjan taidekenttää, jossa on tehty merkittävää yksilöllistä taidetta mullistavien ja kiehtovien 1970- ja 1980-lukujen aikana.



## **Bildkonst i norska Finnmark på 1970- och 1980-talet**

*Jan-Erik Lundström*

Med sin storslagna natur tillhör Finnmark den nordöstra delen av Fennoskandia. Finnmarks län, eller Finnmark fylke, är trots att det är glesbefolkat, ett komplext och mångfacetterat område i Norge. Med sina tre officiella språk (norska, samiska och kvänska) är det ett kulturellt och politiskt centrum för samisk kultur. Vid början av 1970-talet blev Finnmark centrum såväl för samernas kamp för självständighet och politiska rättigheter som för miljöaktivism och radikaliserings av kulturella uttryck.

Efter att flera konstföreningar hade upprättats i städer som Alta och Hammerfest såg konstnärsgenier som NNBK (nordnorska bildkonstnärerna) dagens ljus och likaså SDG (samiska konstnärsgenier). Föregångare till SDG var det inflytelserika konstnärskollektivet Masigruppen. Trots att Finnmark saknar stora konstinstitutioner och tilldelas knappa resurser framstår området som ett hem för den första generationen samtida samiska konstnärer, och det är här som fotografin uppstod som konstmedium och blev en del av den större konstscenen i Norge. Det är även här som inflytelserika konstyttringar tog sin början under de starka och överskridande 1970- och 1980-talen.



Tatiana Kovalev, Polar Night in Murmansk, 1970  
Colour linocut, 30 x 40 cm  
Murmansk Regional Art Museum, Regional Culture Committee

# *Fine Arts in Murmansk in the 1970s and 1980s*

Svetlana Romanova

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ART in the Arctic began in late 19th century. Famous Russian painters Alexander Borisov, Konstantin Korovin and Valentin Serov visited Murman. They turned this wilderness sanctuary into an inexhaustible source of inspiration for future generations. The rapid development of the regional economy in the 1920s and 1930s attracted new people, including many intellectuals. In the 1940, the first exhibition of artists who worked in Murman was held at the Palace of Culture named after S. M. Kirov. The Great Patriotic War merited a special page in the regional history of art. Nearly thirty artists fought in the forces of the 14th army battalion on the Karelian Front, in the units and ships of the Russian Northern Fleet, and in the partisan campaigns. In 1945, a creative gathering of Arctic artist war veterans took place in Murmansk; it featured 177 art works by twelve authors. This event laid the foundation for the regular exhibition activities of the northerners. Over time, the need for a professional creative union became evident. It was founded by a group of artists led by Vasili Baranov.

## *The Post-War Soviet Art*

One of the distinctive features of post-war Soviet art was an active promotion of the regional fine arts, especially in the remote northern and far eastern regions. The foundation of the Murmansk Union of Artists of the RSFSR, preceded by the history of artists who had worked in Murmansk and served in the Russian Northern Fleet from the late 1930s until the mid-1960s, played an important role in the development of fine arts in the land of Kola. The Murmansk Union of Artists of the RSFSR was founded on 18 February 1965 by resolution of the Union of Artists of the RSFSR. The union was later renamed the Murmansk Organisation of UA of the RSFSR in 1968 (renamed in 1999 Murmansk Regional Social Organisation of the All-Russian Creative Social Organisation “Russian Union of Artists”). Vasili Baranov took charge of the organisation in 1962 and he held this post until 1971. Later, the post was occupied by: Gennady Glukhikh (1971–1973), Grigory Karpovich (1973–1975), Anatoly Lepkov (1975–1979), Tatiana Chernomor (1979–1983), Vitali Bumbentsov (1983–1992), Sergei Chebotar (1992–1993), Vladimir Chernov (1993–1998) and Vladimir Kuzin (1998–2006).<sup>1</sup> Since 2006, the organisation has been chaired by Aleksander Feofilaktov.

## *First Exhibitions*

The Murmansk organisation brought together many professional authors from the Kola region. The number grew every year, the artists worked actively and achieved considerable success. The works by artists of the North were presented at the following exhibitions: *Soviet Russia* (1969), at the regional exhibition *Soviet North* (1970) and at the republican exhibition *In the Home Country* (1972), dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the USSR. Murman artists became known in Norway, Sweden and Finland. The Murmansk Regional Museum of Local Lore opened an exposition of fine arts that started a collection of works by artists from Murmansk. The halls of the Regional Museum of Local Lore, the Palace of Culture of S. M. Kirov and later, the halls in the new building of the regional scientific library, erected in 1970, became venues for large scale exhibitions.

In the late 1960s, the artists were provided with workshops for creative work on Polyarnye Zori Street. In 1974, an art gallery opened in the centre of Murmansk and regularly exhibited the works by creators from Murmansk. Connoisseurs and art lovers had the opportunity to buy their favourite works by painters and graphic artists from Murmansk.

Since 1974, the youth association at the Murmansk Regional Social Organisation of the Union of Artists regularly organised youth exhibitions entitled *Polyarnye Zori*. This association not only refined its creative potential but also gathered around a new creative force, welcoming young artists to the team. "During this period, the youth association was active at the Murmansk Regional Social Organisation of the Union of Artists. Tatiana Chernomor was the organiser of the work with young artists until 1979 and then Viktoria Zubitskaya took over. The members of the association included Anatoly Barannik, Grigory Gogol, Aleksander Ivakhnenko, Vladimir Puzankov and many members of the Creative Union."<sup>2</sup>

The most prominent feature of Murmansk art of this period was its introduction to a broad regional, national and international exhibition arena. A small group consisting of five people has grown into a large creative organisation comprising painters, graphic artists, sculptors, applied art artists and theatre designers. During this period, the team of masters was constantly replenished by young artists with a professional education who eagerly came to the Arctic after finishing their education at art schools and art institutes.

## *The 1970s - Years of Creation*

In the 1970s, the mature masters who were the founders of the Murmansk branch of the Union of Artists continued to work productively along with the artists who joined the Creative Union in the 1960s. Vasili Baranov, Mikhail Kirin, Valentin Chudzin, Valentin Alekseev, Nikolai Morozov, Vadim Konev, Yuri Ankudinov, Evgeny Grenke, Gennady Glukhikh, Gennady Gerasimov, Viktor Ershov and many others were involved.

The 1970s was the decade of the most fruitful creative work among the artists who are now considered the older generation. Grigory Karpovich, Nikolai Novikov, Vitali Bubentsov, Arvi Huttunen, Tamara Zueva,



Anatoly A. Sergienko, Visiting Pomorka, 1975  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 100 cm  
Murmansk Regional Art Museum



Nikolai M. Morozov, Kovda, 1973, Oil on canvas, 90 x 120 cm  
Murmansk Regional Art Museum, Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation



Vasili G. Baranov, Floating Dock, 1970, Oil on canvas, 85 x 120 cm  
Murmansk Regional Art Museum



Anatoly Sergienko, Nikolai and Tatiana Kovalev, Vladimir Chernov, Boris Syuhin, Anatoly Rubanov, Yuri Pankov and Tatiana Chernomor are among these artists. Along with creative maturity, they joined the veterans, constituting the main backbone of art production. In the 1980s, Viktoria Zubitskaya, Aleksander Feofilaktov, Sergei and Vera Chebotar, Vladimir Kuzin, Vladimir Kumashov, Anatoly Shakovets, Nikita Dukhno, Mikhail Lapin, Nikolay Zavertaylo, Vladimir Skoklenev, Raisa Chebaturina and others became part of the artistic life of Murmansk.

The artists actively participated in all aspects of artistic life of the city and the region: they decorated the interiors of public buildings, developed an aesthetic urban environment, decorated venues for public events, created posters and memorable signs, and worked in the arts and production workshops of the Art Fund of the Union of Artists of the RSFSR. In different years, Mikhail Kirin, Valentin Alekseev and Vitali Bubentsov were the major painters of Murmansk. The Murmansk publishing company released books for children and adults designed by local graphic artists. Theatre artists worked very intensely as well. Besides creative activities, the artists have also done a great deal of community work. By order of the Regional Department of Culture, painters and graphic artists introduced the northerners to their art, engaged in discussions, gave lectures on fine arts and provided expert assistance to amateur art studios and rural folk galleries in the most remote corners of the Kola Peninsula.

Beginning with the founders of the union, Vasili Baranov, Mikhail Kirin and Nikolai Morozov, one essential feature stood out in the art: devotion to the beauty of the Kola Peninsula, its nature, architecture and maritime themes. The exhibitions of those years featured a variety of themes and genres. The main themes of the paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures of the masters were their native region, the sea, the hard work of fishermen, the vast expanses of tundra and the life of reindeer herders, the industrial cities of the Arctic with their plant and mines, in addition to the Khibiny Mountains and the courageous people who have scaled them.

### *Landscape Painting*

The leading genre was landscape painting (V. Baranov, V. Alekseev, N. Morozov, A. Huttunen, G. Karpovich, G. Gerasimov, V. Bubentsov and others), which evolved hand in hand with other genres. Industrial landscapes were especially popular. Creative assignments, trips to the mines and ship repair yards, and voyages to sea provided extensive and diverse material. "In the 1970s and 1980s, many artists in Murmansk turned to the industrial landscape, portraying working life in the region"<sup>3</sup>. Industrial landscapes by N. Morozov are constructive in composition and emotional in colour (*Working Morning* and *The Arctic* from 1970s). A laconic, general image of the industrial region is depicted on canvas by V. Ershov (*Surface Mining of Apatite Ore* from 1972). Energy, dynamics, tension and unexpected perspectives distinguish the paintings of G. Karpovich (*New City Blocks* and *Seaport* from 1973) and H. Shemyakina (*Portal Cranes* from 1969 and *Port* from 1970).

Artistic images of the landscape pieces became more emotionally versatile. Along with the industrial and epic themes, an exposure of romantic and lyrical motifs also gained momentum. V. Bubentsov did works

in the delicate lyric style (the series *My City* and *Treasure Trove of Kovdor*). Melodiousness and poetry are distinctive in the compositions by A. Sergienko (*The Songs of Northern Coast*). Landscapes by V. Alekseev are optimistic and cheerful (*My Arctic* and *Strut of the Cranes* from 1970s). A special romantic spirit prevails in the landscapes by A. Huttunen (*Autumn in the Arctic*, *Lake Vudyavor* and *On the Northern Expanse* from 1970s).

Urban landscape was particularly prevalent in the fine arts. Almost all artists portrayed new and old cities of the Murmansk region, especially V. Alekseev, G. Gerasimov, G. Karpovich and N. Morozov. Some elements of cityscape are present in the compositions by V. Bubentsov and N. Kovalev. "Majestic panoramic landscapes appear in Bubentsov's work while intimate backwoods are prevalent in the work by Kovalev. But a real, very imaginative urban series has been created by Vladimir Kumashov and Sergei Chebotar."<sup>4</sup> S. Chebotar avoids beauty, sparingly, but very accurately conveys the state of a northern city "drowning in the snow." Murmansk by Kumashov - almost fairytale-like, folk parables that combine reality and fiction. "The artistic unity and integrity are characteristic of the talent of Tatiana Kovalev, an ethereal and lyrical master. The artist creates a poetic, light, warm and spirited image of the city."<sup>5</sup>

A narrative scene evolves in painting, characteristically embodying the connection with modern life. "Its emergence and development in the art of Murmansk region is associated with the creative works of Vitali Bubentsov and Anatoly Sergienko"<sup>6</sup>.

### *The Mature Artists of the North*

Born and bred in Murmansk, Vitali Bubentsov is a very versatile artist, the creator of landscapes, still lifes, and thematic and genre paintings. He was one of the first to delve into a new range of themes and genres. V. Bubentsov travelled all across the Arctic, Khibiny, the tundra, and the coasts of the Barents and White Seas looking for themes and inspirations. Numerous sketches, drawings and rough drafts were the foundation for expressive portraits, landscapes and compositions (*Fishing Season* from 1975).

The development of narrative during this period is also associated with the work of Anatoly Sergienko. When he arrived to the region, Sergienko immediately captured attention with a successful debut of his realistic portraits at the regional exhibition in 1973. Sergienko gravitates towards a diversity in genre and narrative, seeking to convey his own vision of the world. The canvases display the Russian Northern Fleet and the unique Pomor way of life; realist paintings, they show the diverse and genuine life of the northerners. (*Naval Artist* from 1979, *The Songs of Northern Coast* from 1975–1976 and *Visiting the Pomor Woman* from 1975.)

Many portraits were done during of this period of art in Murmansk, including V. Alekseev, G. Gerasimov (*Anode Operator* from 1973), N. Morozov (*Fisherman* from 1973 and *Pomor Woman from Umba Village* from 1977), V. Bubentsov (*Grandmother Katja* from 1971, *Folk Craftswoman* from 1973 and *Portrait of M G. Kozlov* from 1979) and A. Sergienko (*Pomor Woman Portrait* from 1975, *Portrait of the Oldest Member of*



Anatoly A. Sergienko, *The Songs of Northern Coast*, 1975–1976, Tempera on canvas, 100 x 100 cm  
Murmansk Regional Art Museum, Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Photo: Tuomo Ylinärä

Nikolai M. Morozov, Kola Land, 1981  
Oil on canvas, 55,5 x 81,5 cm  
Murmansk Regional Art Museum  
Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation







Vitali N. Bubentsov, Umba Mountains, 1978, Oil on canvas, 55,5 x 62 cm  
Murmansk Regional Art Museum, Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation

*the Pomor Choir*, *Kichigina* from 1975 and *My Friend from Sovkhoz "Tundra"* from 1978.) Portrait artists are largely defined by a genuine interest in working people, in this case, the fishermen, reindeer herders, miners, construction workers, intellectuals, indigenous peoples of the north.

The appreciation for local culture, nature, the Sámi tundra, folk art and the northerners' traditional ways of life became a distinctive feature of the art. One of the most famous and prominent painters in the region, Nikolai Morozov was among the first to explore these themes. The success of this artist can be attributed not only to his natural talent but in the exceptional performance, the adventurous attitude to life and painting. The Sámi land and people become one of the key themes in his artwork. When he first embarked upon his creative path, becoming acquainted with the tundra, culture and lifestyle of the indigenous peoples, the artist was captivated by its originality. The impressions of his first trips went on to become the most vibrant of his later works (*Sámi Beauty* from 1980, *Sámi Fishermen* from 1983, *Reindeer Herder* from 1981 and *Winter on Seyd Lake* from 1989). In the 1980s, this theme was firmly established in the works by Alexander Feofilaktov (*Muster of the Tundra* and *Sámi* from 1984, *Mending the Net* from 1985).

## *The Art of the Northern Cultural Heritage*

In graphic arts, local themes could be found in the artwork of Mikhail Kirin, a northerner by birth, one of the founders of the Murmansk Organisation of the Union of Artists. All the work of this artist has been infused with an interest in the historical past and cultural heritage of the north. The ancient culture of the Sámi people, the unique monuments of Russian architecture in the old Pomor villages and the everyday life of Pomors were reflected in the engravings, watercolours and drawings by the master (*Reindeer – Sun* from 1970, *Women of Kizhi* from 1979, *Kola Land* from 1970s and *Lovozerskaya Tundra* from 1981). Mikhail Kirin mastered many techniques of printmaking, but favoured black and white linocuts. He did much more than simply capturing the sights. His canvases are distinguished by a thoughtful, serious depiction of the scenery.

The north and its nature and people were the main theme in the works of graphic artists Boris Syuhin (*Voice of Moscow* from 1969) and Vadim Konev (*For Spring* from 1970), who were fascinated with the unique everyday life of the indigenous peoples of the north. The interest in Sámi folklore and the modern life of reindeer herders were manifested in the works of the masters of applied arts. Yuri Ankudinov created a series of marquetry inlaid panels dedicated to the Kola Land (*Children of the North*, *Little Herder* and *Delicious Cloudberries* from 1970). Vladimir Ivazhov did expressive compositions using metal chiselling and wood carving techniques (*Encounter in Tundra* from 1971, *Competition* and *Family* from 1973).

## **Graphic Art**

This is the time of evolution and flourishing of the graphic arts. The development of graphic art of this period in Murmansk is inextricably linked with a representative of the older generation, Mikhail Kirin, and his colleagues Boris Syuhin, Vadim Konev and Yuri Pankov. Using different techniques, these masters have created emphatic art works known for their parsimonious style and natural compositions.

Tatiana and Nikolai Kovalev, who came to Murmansk in the late 1960s, played a prominent role on the local art scene in the early 1970s. When displayed at art shows, Tatiana's linocuts and lithographs devoted to the city and the family immediately captured attention because of their warmth and sincerity. Although she limited herself to just a few themes, the artist was able to find many variations and a variety of scenes (*Murmansk in Winter* and *Murmansk in Autumn* from 1973, *New Year's Morning* from 1979). As for Nikolai, his lithographs, tempera and watercolours revealed his acute perception of the world. The main features of his work included careful compositions, a clear conception of space and parsimonious resources. The authors were also successful book illustrators (*Sampo – a Little Laplander*, *Geese-Swans*, *Winter Fairy Tale* and *Operation Chukotka* from 1970). For all the diversity in themes and genres, the main theme in the graphic arts was the landscape and compositions were the main genre.

The decades of the 1970s and 1980s gave rise to the development of original techniques. Many artists in Murmansk did particularly well with watercolours. N. Morozov, G. Karpovich and M. Kirin achieved great success, and young artists like V. Chernov, V. Bubentsov and A. Sergienko stepped into the spotlight. The

sudden popularity of watercolour painting in the region could be scene across the country: there were large exhibits dedicated to watercolours, creative tours of the All-Union and republican groups of watercolourists. “The Baltic school was one of the most reputable in that period and it had a special influence on the creative growth of watercolour artists in Murmansk”<sup>7</sup>.

In 1974, the first watercolour art exhibit was held in Murmansk, which attested to a growing mastery of the Murmansk artists. It demonstrated the “diversity of techniques and the individuality of each artist. Industrial landscape occupied a dominant position in the themes.”<sup>8</sup> “Printmaking has actively developed and an interest in pencil and quill pen drawings has grown”<sup>9</sup>. Illustration art continued to evolve. Vadim Konev, Tatiana and Nikolai Kovalev and Anatoly Shakovets illustrated many of the books of the local publisher.

### *Sculpture and Applied Arts*

Sculpture did not keep pace with the other areas of the fine arts, yet some pieces of easel and monumental sculpture were created. Sculpture was associated with such names as Gennady Glukhikh (*Conqueror of Monche Tundra* from 1972, *Portrait of A. Bredov* from 1986) and Irina Marilova (*Chef* from 1975, *Master Fisherman Marilov* from 1975–1976).

Applied art also claimed its niche. While the development of applied arts in the other regions of the country was associated primarily with the preservation of national traditions, the development of applied arts in Murmansk was manifested in a modern search. The artists of this field were always sparsely represented in the region, but they were also distinguished by high level of professionalism. They are the authors of impressive easel and interior compositions created with marquetry techniques (Y. Ankudinov), tapestry and batik painting (T. Chernomor, V. Zubitskaya, R. Chebaturina).

### *New Life of Art*

In the 1980s, a new generation of artists would come to define the face of Murmansk art. Art becomes more diverse in its forms, themes, genres and style, a diversity which is largely attributed to the young artists who joined the organisation: Sergei Chebotar, Nikita Dukhno, Mikhail Lapin, Nikolay Zavertaylo, Aleksander Feofilaktov, Vladimir Skoklenev, Vladimir Kumashov, Igor Kluyskin and others. The main stylistic trends of youth art in the USSR significantly influenced the creative method of these young artists. “This can be seen in the works by Alexander Feofilaktov which show an influence of the ‘hyperrealism’ that was popular at the time (*Muster of the Tundra* from 1985). The work of Vladimir Kumashov reveals the author’s fascination with the Natalia Nesterova’s style and the naïve art technique. Imaginative solutions specific to graphic illustration and montage technique can be seen in the graphic canvases by Vladimir Kuzin (triptych *Ice Exploration* from 1981).”<sup>10</sup>

In the Murmansk region, graphic artist and painter Nikolai Kovalev was a major figure whose work influenced the development of young artists in the 1980s. Like many graphics artists in Murmansk, he gave





Vitali N. Bubentsov, Portrait of Tralmeyster, 1979  
Oil on canvas, 100 x 88,5 cm  
Murmansk Regional Art Museum, Regional Culture Committee



Alexander G. Feofilaktov, The Muster of the Tundra, 1985  
Oil on canvas, 85 x 110 cm  
Murmansk Regional Art Museum, A.G.Feofilaktov, Photo: Tuomo Ylinärä

preference to painting in this period while maintaining the clarity of expression and precision inherent to the graphic arts. For him, the most important aspects in art are artistic integrity and meaningfulness (*Winter Road* from 1983, *City Landscape* and *Girl in Green Sweater* from 1985).<sup>11</sup> “The influence of this master can be seen in the styles of different artists such as Nikita Duhkno, Nikolay Zavertaylo and Sergei Chebotar”<sup>12</sup>. At the end of 1980s, these artists organised the creative group Three N, after doing several joint exhibitions. S. Chebotar worked with the traditional theme of life in the city. In his work, a precise vision is combined with broad artistic integrity. This artist identified the characteristic features of both landscape and people (*Winter* from 1985, *Murmansk Bus* from 1985).

V. Kumashov (*Holiday* from 1981) and A.I. Kluyshekin (*Pre-War Tango* from 1985) chose another path for motifs and thematic compositions. A more conventional but playful tone with a simpler approach is characteristic of these artists. The art works by A. Feofilaktov are filled with an interest in the country’s history, a philosophical exploration of the world and environment. Feofilaktov worked a great deal on portrait paintings, creating convincing and familiar images (*Alyosha* and *Olya* from 1980, *Portrait of Sámi* from 1985). During years, he was one of the few to be inspired by thematic painting (*Timber Floaters* from 1984, *Mending Nets* from 1985, *Morning of a New Day* and *Lone Sentry* from 1989). Thematic painting continued to evolve in synergy with other genres in the work of V. Bubentsov (*Breath of the North* and *Origins* from 1984, *Encounters* from 1987), A. Sergienko (*Sasha* from 1985), S. Chebotar (*At the Window* from 1983, *Winter* and *Murmansk Bus* from 1985), and other masters. The themes of labour, industrial motifs and real life problems still play significant role in Murmansk art.

The works of artists of the decade underwent substantial changes. Realism remained important but the individual creative search gained an increasing importance. Traditional realist landscapes remained a leading genre in this period. It appealed to almost all of the artists (N. Morozov, V. Bubentsov, A. Huttunen, V. Skoklenev, A. Feofilaktov, N. Kovalev, M. Lapin, A. Shakovets, V. Chernov, and many others). Lyrical and intimate landscape gradually replaced the industrial landscape that had previously dominated all the exhibitions (M. Lapin, *Summer Night in Kovda* from 1986; A. Huttunen, *Summer Evening at Nordenskjold Archipelago* from 1989; A. Feofilaktov, *Kola Bay* from 1987; V. Bubentsov, *Khibin Sentry* from 1987).

## **New Horizons**

Artist life of this period boasted richness and diversity. Artists participated in the creative groups in the Baltic States, Central Asia, Siberia, the Volga region and other regions of the country. This contributed to honing the professional skills of the artists from Murmansk.

A group of artists from Murmansk formed a collective known as Arktika (mentored by Arvi Huttunen) from 1978 to 1986; they joined expeditions on the Northern Sea Route. The artists became acquainted with the life and work of dock workers, sailors and polar explorers, painting portraits of these workers and making sketches, watercolours, drawings and drafts. “Members of the Arktika group met with sailors and polar explorers to share these creative achievements. Altogether, more than thirty exhibits have been shown and about fifty meetings have been organised.”<sup>13</sup>

In the late 1980s, at the initiative of the young artist Anatoly Barannik, the AVAN group was established. "It was the experience of bringing together artists of around the same age who studied at different institutions but joined together based on their desire to have say in art, especially looking towards the example of St. Petersburg and Moscow, where young artistic groups spring up like mushrooms after the rain"<sup>14</sup>.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the artists from the Arctic successfully participated in the regional, republican and All-Union shows. The works by the creators from Murmansk have also been introduced to viewers in Norway, Sweden and Finland. The development of creative relationships with foreign colleagues was of great importance. In 1964, during the first celebration of peace and friendship of the North Calotte countries, the first joint exhibition of the works by artists from the USSR, Norway, Finland and Sweden was organised in the city of Kemi. Since that time, joint exhibitions of the artists' paintings became part of the cultural holidays within the Calotte movements. "The exhibitions were held in Northern Finland - in Ivalo in 1967 and in Rovaniemi in 1968. Visitors warmly welcomed the exhibitions of the Soviet artists."<sup>15</sup>

### *International Cooperation*

The artists from Murmansk invited guests from Scandinavia, and have had collective and personal shows of their work abroad. Joint exhibitions of the artists from Murmansk were held in the Nordic countries in 1970, 1974, 1985 and 1986 (Rovaniemi, Finland), in 1987 (exhibition *For Peace and Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in Northern Europe*, Tornio, Finland) and in 1989 (Vadsø, Norway).

In connection with strong international cooperation, new opportunities opened for the artists in Murmansk, though personal shows abroad was very rare among the artists from Murmansk in that period. In 1978, the first solo show of paintings by Vitali Bubentsov was held in Rovaniemi, Finland. Almost ten years later, Bubentsov showed his paintings at a solo show in Luleå, Sweden in 1986. According to the artists, both exhibits aroused great interest from Scandinavian art lovers and the local press published impressive reviews.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the skill level of the artists in Murmansk further developed in all forms and genres of the fine arts. Stylistic techniques became more versatile and complex creative tasks were resolved. Many masters continued to participate in all-Union, Russian and international exhibitions. Reflecting broader changes across the country, in the mid-1980s the union of artists began to change as well. By the end of the 1980s, state support for creative unions had fallen considerably; the moral compass of life had changed, and fewer young artists with an artistic education were arriving to the Murmansk region. These processes were characteristic of all the regions of the USSR. In general, the art in Murmansk developed in line with the trends typical of native art, but also retained its local identity and unique northern features.

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# Summaries



## *Изобразительное искусство Мурманской области в 1970 – 1980-е годы*

*Светлана Романова*

Главным достижением Мурманского искусства этого периода является выход на широкую всесоюзную и международную выставочную арену. В этот период коллектив мастеров постоянно пополнялся профессиональными художниками, которые приезжали на Север после окончания художественных училищ и институтов. Это помогло молодому мурманскому искусству подняться на более высокую ступень в своем профессиональном развитии.

В 1970–1980-е годы активно работали мастера, стоящие у истоков создания мурманского отделения СХ, а так же художники, которых сегодня относят к старшему и среднему поколению. Художники принимали активное участие во всех направлениях художественной жизни города и области. Развитие изобразительного искусства в 1970–1980-е годы стало реальным фактом художественной жизни Кольского Заполярья. Сформировалась творческая индивидуальность многих мастеров. Разнообразными стали стилевые приемы, решались сложные творческие задачи. Произведения, созданные в этот период, раскрыли тему родного края.

Ведущую роль играла живопись, которая опиралась на высокие традиции русского реалистического искусства. Ведущим жанром живописи был пейзаж, который развивался в тесном взаимодействии с другими жанрами. Именно с пейзажем связаны поиски живописной формы и достижение эмоциональной выразительности, постижение своеобразия уникальной природы Севера. В целом, мурманское искусство развивалось в русле тенденций, характерных для отечественного искусства, но при этом сохраняло местное своеобразие и особый северный колорит.



## *Murmanskin alueen kuva- ja taide 1970- ja 1980-luvulla*

*Svetlana Romanova*

Murmanskin taiteen tärkeimpänä edistysaskeleena 1970- ja 1980-luvulla voidaan pitää sen avautumista kohti laajempia, koko Neuvostoliiton kattavia ja kansainvälisiä taidepiirejä. Tänä aikana taiteilijayhteisöön saapui tasainen virta ammattitaitoisia taiteilijoita, jotka matkustivat pohjoiseen käytyään taidekouluun tai taidekorkeakouluun. Tämä auttoi nuorta murmanskilaista taidetta kehittymään.

1970- ja 1980-luvulla eri taiteilijasukupolvet työskentelivät aktiivisesti muodostaakseen paikallisen taiteilijaorganisaation Murmansiin. Taiteilijoilla oli näkyvä rooli kaupungin ja alueen kaikissa taidetapahtumissa. Kuvataiteesta muodostui merkittävä tekijä pohjoisen alueen taide-elämän kehitykselle. Tyyliseikat moni-



puolistuivat, taideteoksista tuli moniulotteisia ja monille taiteilijoille kehittyi omaileimainen, tunnistettava tyyli. Teokset käsittelivät usein kotiseudun tematiikkaa.

Murmanskin taiteessa keskeisen aseman sai maalaustaide, jonka juuret olivat venäläisessä realistisen taiteen perinteessä. Maisemamaalauksesta tuli huomattavin genre. Erityisesti maisemien kuvauksessa maalauksellisen muodon ja tunneperäisen ilmaisun tavoittelu yhdistyivät. Ainutlaatuinen pohjoinen ja rikas luonto sekä luontosuhde kohtasivat maisemamaalauksessa. Murmanskilainen taide kehittyi käsi kädessä koko maan taiteelle ominaisten piirteiden kanssa, mutta samaan aikaan se säilytti myös paikalliset ominaispiirteensä ja erityisen pohjoisen värimaailmansa.



### *Bildkonst i Murmanskregionen under 1970- och 1980-talet*

*Svetlana Romanova*

Det mest betydelsefulla framsteget för Murmansk konst under denna tid har visat sig vara öppningen mot den breda allunionella och internationella konstscenen. Under denna period berikades konstnärskollektiven ständigt av yrkesverksamma konstnärer som åkte norrut efter att de avslutat konstskolor och konsthögskolor. Detta hjälpte den unga murmanska konsten att utvecklas till en högre nivå.

På 1970- och 1980-talet arbetade konstnärer aktivt för att bilda en lokal konstnärorganisation i Murmansk, och detta gällde även konstutövare som i dag tillhör mellangenerationen och den äldre generationen. Konstnärerna spelade en aktiv roll i stadens och regionens alla konstyttringar. Bildkonstens utveckling kom att utgöra en verklig faktor i polarområdets konstliv på 1970- och 1980-talet. Många utövare kännetecknades av en konstnärlig särart. Stilgreppen mångfaldigades och konstverken blev komplexa. De alster som skapades under denna period behandlade ofta temat hemtrakter.

En central roll upptogs av måleriet, som var förankrat i den upphöjda, ryska traditionen av realistisk konst. Landskapsmåleriet blev den mest tongivande genren. Det är just med landskapsmåleriet som sökandet efter målerisk form och emotionellt uttryck är förenat, liksom förståelsen av den enastående rika naturen i norr. Den murmanska konsten har på det hela taget utvecklats i linje med de tendenser som är karakteristiska för den inhemska konsten, men har samtidigt behållit sin lokala särart och speciella nordliga kolorit.



### *Billedkunst i Murmanskregionen på 1970- og 1980-tallet*

*Svetlana Romanova*

Det mest betydningsfulle framskrittet for kunsten i Murmansk i denne tiden viste seg å være åpningen mot den brede kunstscenen i unionen og internasjonalt. I denne perioden ble kunstnerkollektivene beriket av

yrkesaktive kunstnere som dro nordover etter at de var ferdig utdannet på kunstkoler og kunsthøgskoler. Dette bidro til at den unge murmanske kunsten ble utviklet til et høyere nivå.

På 1970- og 1980-tallet arbeidet kunstnere aktivt for å danne en lokal kunstnerorganisasjon i Murmansk, selv kunstutøvere som i dag tilhører mellomgenerasjonen og den eldre generasjonen. Kunstnere spilte en aktiv rolle i byens og regionens ulike kunstuttrykk. Billedkunstens utvikling kom til å utgjøre en reell faktor i polarområdets kunstliv på 1970- og 1980-tallet. Mange utøvere kjennetegnes av et kunstnerisk særpreg. Stilgrepene ble utdypet og kunstverkene ble komplekse. Verkene som ble skapt i denne perioden hadde ofte hjemtraktene som tema.

Maleriet fikk en sentral rolle, og var forankret i den opphøyde, russiske tradisjonen av realistisk kunst. Landskapsmaleriet ble den mest toneangivende sjangeren. Det er nettopp med landskapsmaleriet at søken etter malerisk form og emosjonelt uttrykk er forenet, som en forståelse av den unike rike naturen i nord. Den murmanske kunsten er stort sett utviklet i tråd med de trendene som er karakteristiske for den innenlandske kunsten, men har også beholdt sine lokale særegenheter og spesielle nordlige koloritt.





Artists Seppo Öfverström and Markku Malmivaara were involved in putting together the Lapland Visual Arts Exhibition that was presented in Murmansk. They also designed a poster for the exhibition. 1987. Photo: Martti Tyynelä.

# *Differences and Similarities in the Visual Arts in North Calotte*

Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja

IN THE LATE 1800s, artists began travelling all the way to the North Calotte region to paint. There were many different reasons for this interest, including the expansion of the mineral and forest industry to the north, greater travel opportunities, the emerging tourism market and the national needs to incorporate northern landscape to the national imagery. Peoples and regions considered primitive and exotic also sparked the cultural interest, which culminated in the 1800s when ethnic minority groups visited major European cities as human exhibits. Sámi people with reindeer represented the North at such exhibitions. In art, the desire to depict an authentic, exotic community untouched by Western influence clearly showed in Paul Gauguin's Tahitian paintings. In the late 1800s, "en plein air" realism and impressionism dominated artistic expression, leading artists to travel to the subjects they wanted to portray.

In Norway, Lofoten was relatively easily to reach by the Hurtigruten route. The Lofoten Islands quickly became a popular destination for both foreign and Norwegian artists. Otto Sindig, Christian Krohg, Thorolf Holmboe, Jean Heiberg and Per Krohg were amongst the visitors. They had a keen interest in the rugged coastline of the Arctic Ocean and in the lives of the fishermen. The villages and landscapes of Northern Norway and the life of the Sámi people became a subject matter of art only in the 1920s and 1930s, along with the paintings and woodcuts by the Sámi artist Johan Savio. Plein air painter Juho Kyyhkynen, who was born in Finnish Lapland, portrayed the nature of Northern Finland and the life of the Sámi people in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Russian painters Konstantin Korovin, Aleksander Borisov and Valentin Serov adopted the impressionist and "en plein air" style and often took painting trips to the Kola Peninsula. Korovin and Serov also visited Northern Norway. Aleksander Borisov, born in the Arkhangelsk region, focused on painting the shores of the Arctic Ocean, the landscapes of Novaya Zemlya and the life of nomadic Nenets. Owing to Hjalmar Lundbohm, the general manager of the Kiruna iron ore company LKAB, a number of Swedish artists like Karl Nordström, Bruno Liljefors and Prince Eugen visited the area in the first decade of 1900s. The style and themes of artworks depicting North Calotte were relatively similar in the late 1800s and early 1900s; plein air dominated the artists' motifs and landscapes were the central theme of the paintings.

However, a description of the Arctic decreased in due to the First World War, the independence of Norway and Finland, the Finnish Civil War and the Russian Revolution. Later, the interest in the Northern regions sparked by travels in the 1930s was cut short when the Second World War broke out.

## *Northern People and Nature as a Theme*

In the 1970s and 1980s, the artists in North Calotte still favoured landscapes and portraits, but with a different approach: the techniques and styles were more diverse than in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Watercolours, graphics, photography, sculpture and textiles emerged as fundamental techniques in addition to oil paintings.

Landscape paintings became more diversified in the 1970s and 1980s. A lot of paintings depicted the barrenness and vastness of northern nature; fells and seascapes in particular seemed to have a solid buyer base. Summer brightness and a cool winter light were a unifying factor in the paintings. In particular, the works by artists from Murmansk prominently displayed the built landscape: city, village and port sceneries. For them, the city and port reflect the new aesthetics of urban life, a kind of utopian future. On the other hand, old houses in the village landscapes evoke a touch of nostalgia and a longing for the past. Even Finnish village scenes look nostalgic, though abandoned and quiet. Russians artists depict the landscape and nature as part of technological development. In contrast, Scandinavian artists express the nature experience in a more abstract way or the landscape manifests itself as a state of mind, a kind of Northern mindscape or protected object.

The Northern people are often portrayed as part of the cultural and natural landscape. Pictures show austere life in the midst of harsh nature or a man, working to change nature, in a dominant position in the industrialised environment. Sometimes, Northern people appear victorious, adapted to Northern nature; at other times, they look lonely, distressed and vulnerable. Some of the artists observe the everyday life of the Sámi people, Pomors, fishermen and labourers: work, family, home and celebrations. The artists often did self-portraits where they are depicted as cultural representatives. Occasionally, references to folklore and mythology may be present. Left-wing movements that spread across Finland in the 1970s and the demand for art democratisation in Sweden are exhibited in the paintings in a figurative manner and as a prominent argument for humanity, nature and peace.

The filling of the Lokka and Porttipahta reservoirs in Northern Finland in 1968–1973 made people notice the drastic changes reservoirs brought about in the cultural and wilderness landscape. Structural changes, unemployment and migration to Sweden and to Southern Finland, which all took place at the same time, aroused great concern. The anxiety caused by these changes can be seen in the works of some artists. In Norway, construction along the Alta River sparked fear of the Sámi cultural disappearance, in addition to environmental protection issues. Sámi artists in Scandinavia used their art in the ethnic and political struggle. For them, the art was unifying, a validation of the Sámi identity.

The visual arts in North Calotte emphasised locality and the characteristics of Northern nature, which may look too colourful and even gaudy to the outsider, though it could sometimes be colourless, bare and quiet, though also exotic. However, Northern art's connection to locality reflected a commitment to the artists' own territory and strengthened the Northern cultural identity.

## *A Spectrum of Varying Styles*

By the 1980s, the themes and artistic techniques became more diverse in the North Calotte region. Social realism was the dominant trend in the Russian art up until the 1990s. However, the euphemistic and meticulous realism has already subsided in the late 1950s and acquired a number of stylistic nuances. In the 1970s and 1980s, Russian artists took advantage of the opportunities offered by the techniques. Watercolours could be painted in a recognisably impressionist manner or could favour flat colours. The expression of different techniques in graphics varied from symbolic to expressive, while textile arts were geometrically stylised. The world of colours in the paintings could be vivid, almost in the style of fauvism, but sometimes the transitory effects of impressionism or emotional expression were evident in both portraits and landscape paintings. The influence of folk and naïve art could also be seen in the Russian art of the 1980s.



Two artists encounter: on the left Reijo Raekallio from Kittilä and Nikolai Kovalev from Murmansk in 1987. Photo: Martti Tyynelä.

In the 1970s, Scandinavian art represented different styles of modern art. The return to realism was partly attributed to politicisation: in order to convey a message, the subjects had to be depicted clearly and expressly. It could also be attributed (in partly) to the interest in pop art and photorealism. Photography became an important form of expression, and documentary photographs portraying people's lives became especially popular. Art trends were followed in art publications. In particular, the *Kassel Documenta* and the *Venice Biennial* were followed with interest. In the 1980s, the young generation of artists was more proficient in languages than the previous generation. They represented the so-called InterRail generation who travelled in Europe on a monthly rail pass. In the 1980s, a new wave of expressionism and an expanded concept of postmodern art diversified the expression.

## *The Art World and Cooperation in the North Calotte*

The life of the artist in Murmansk was professionally oriented already in the 1970s. The artists were trained and considered painting a profession; they had studios and a union has been established in the late 1960s. In the 1970s, Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish artists were often self-taught or art teachers. Visual arts did not constitute a living and many of them had a breadwinning job to support their livelihood. In the 1970s, Norway had only a handful of visual arts associations. In contrast, in Sweden and Finland the 1970s was the most active decade for the foundation of visual arts associations and artist groups. The Museum of Norrbotten and the Kemi Art Museum played a major role in making the regional arts popular. There were many exhibitions in the mid-1970s across the North Calotte region, but the shows were mostly local or national. Town twinnings, fine arts societies in dif-



Lappish artists exhibition was held in Murmansk Drama Theatre lobby. In the photo artists Pekka Hermanni Kyrö and Eero Kumpula are building the exhibition. 1987. Photo: Martti Tyynelä.

ferent countries and exhibitions in Calotte endeavoured to establish links among the artists in North Calotte. In the late 1970s, the cooperation between Sámi artists has already crossed national boundaries when the Sámi Artists Association was founded in 1979.

In the 1980s, the cooperation among artists in North Calotte expanded and deepened. Fine arts societies organised diverse activities and the number of skilled artists increased. Exhibitions increased along with new exhibition spaces. New art museums were established in the North Calotte region: the Murmansk Regional Art Museum, the Art Museum of Northern Norway, the Särestöniemi Museum, the Aine Art Museum and the

Rovaniemi Art Museum. The Kemi Art Museum became the Regional Art Museum of the Province of Lapland; the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art was established in Karasjok and the Museum Gallery Alariesto was founded in Sodankylä. In 1987, 1989 and 1991, the *North Calotte Autumn Salon* was an important exhibition held in Luleå with a purpose of introducing the art of the North Calotte region from its east-west axis.

### *The Cooperation in North Calotte Becomes Official*

The Rovaniemi branch of the left-wing Union of Cultural Workers organised an informal cultural exchange trip at the end of August 1987 together with the artists from Murmansk. More than 60 people joined the trip, including writers, visual artists, musicians, actors (Theatre 41 from Tornio) and photographers from the different parts of Lapland. Twelve visual artists took part, including Eero Kumpula, Pekka Hermanni Kyrö, Kalervo Palsa, Reijo Raekallio and Teuvo Tuomivaara, who put together the Lappish artist exhibition in the lobby of the Murmansk Drama Theatre. The programme included visits to the studios of the artists from Murmansk, discussion forums and meetings as well as a friendly get-together. The following year, the Cultural Administration of the Murmansk Region and the Province of Lapland agreed on cooperation with the aim of initiating and consolidating the cultural exchange on both sides.

Officially, the collaboration for the entire North Calotte region was agreed upon in early 1993 in Kirkkonieni. At the time, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council was established; the presidency of the Council moves between Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia every two years. It is composed of the Barents Council and the Local Barents Regional Councils formed by the representatives from the foreign ministries of the member states. The Barents Euro-Arctic Council strives to promote intergovernmental cooperation in the Barents region in the fields of science and technology, the environment, trade, tourism, health, education, culture and youth cooperation.

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# Summaries



## *Pohjoiskalotin kuvataiteen erot ja yhtäläisyydet*

*Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja*

Taiteilijat alkoivat ulottaa maalausmatkojaan Pohjoiskalotin alueelle 1800-luvun lopulla. Tähän vaikuttivat malmi- ja metsäteollisuuden laajeneminen pohjoiseen, liikkumismahdollisuuksien lisääntyminen, alkava turismi ja kansalliset tarpeet. Myös kulttuurinen kiinnostus primitiivisinä ja eksoottisina pidettyjä kansoja ja alueita kohtaan lisääntyi. Pohjoiskalotin kuvaukset olivat aiheiltaan ja tyyllisesti hyvin samankaltaisia; taiteilijoiden ilmaisua hallitsivat ulkoilmarealismi ja impressionismi.

1970- ja 1980-luvulla Pohjoiskalotin taiteilijat suosivat edelleen maiseman ja ihmisen kuvausta, mutta tekniikat ja tyylit monipuolistuivat. Maisemamaalaukset olivat usein pohjoisen luonnon karuutta ja avaruutta kuvaavia teoksia, etenkin tunturi- ja merimaisemia. Venäläisten taiteilijoiden teoksissa keskeisessä roolissa olivat myös rakennetut maisemat: kaupunki-, kylä- ja satamanäkymät, jotka kuvasivat urbaanin elämän uutta estetiikkaa. Skandinaavisten taiteilijoiden luontokokemus sai sen sijaan abstraktimman ilmaisun, tai se näyttäytyi pohjoisena mielenmaisemana tai suojeltavana kohteena.

Pohjoiskalotin alueella näyttelytoiminta oli vilkasta 1970-luvun puolivälissä, mutta näyttelyt olivat pääosin paikallisia tai kansallisia. Ystävyyskaupunkitoiminta, eri maiden kuvataideseurat ja kalottinäyttelyt pyrkivät kuitenkin luomaan yhteyksiä Pohjoiskalotin taiteilijoiden välille. 1980-luvulla taiteilijoiden yhteistyö lisääntyi, kuvataideseurojen toiminta oli vireää ja koulutettujen taiteilijoiden määrä kasvoi. Virallisesti koko Pohjoiskalotin aluetta koskevasta yhteistyöstä sovittiin vuoden 1993 alussa Kirkkoniemessä, jolloin perustettiin Barentsin euroarktinen neuvosto.



## *Det som skiljer och förenar bildkonsten i Nordkalotten*

*Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja*

I slutet av 1800-talet började konstnärer att resa ända upp till Nordkalottområdet för att måla. Det berodde i hög grad på utvidgningen av mineral- och skogsindustrin i norr, större resmöjligheter, en växande turistsektor och nationella behov. Folkslag och regioner som ansågs som primitiva och exotiska väckte ett kulturintresse. De motiv och konststilar som framställde Nordkalotten var mycket likartade; det konstnärliga uttrycket dominerades av realistiskt och impressionistiskt friluftsmåleri.

På 1970- och 1980-talet var landskaps- och porträttmåleri fortfarande populärt bland konstnärerna i Nordkalotten, men därefter har teknikerna och stilarna skiftat. I landskapsmålingarna avbildades ofta den karga och vidsträckt nordiska naturen, speciellt fjäll och kustlandskap. Även bebyggda landskap har spelat en

central roll i ryska konstnärers målningar: genom stads-, by- og hamnmotiv skildrades det nya stadslivets estetikk. Det sätt som skandinaviska konstnärer uttryckte sina naturupplevelser på var dock mer abstrakt. Här avbildades naturen som ett nordiskt sinneslandskap eller som ett skyddsobjekt.

Det pågick många utställningar i Nordkalottområdet redan i mitten av 1970-talet, men dessa var huvudsakligen lokala eller inhemska. Genom vänortsverksamhet, konstföreningar i olika länder og utställningar i Nordkalotten ville man främja kontakter mellan konstnärer i området. På 1980-talet ökade samarbeidet konstnärerna emellan, konstföreningarna organiserade en mängd aktiviteter og antalet skickliga konstnärer tilltog. Officiellt enades man i början av 1993 i Kirkenes om ett samarbeide for hela Nordkalottregionen, og det var även då som Barents euroarktiska råd inrättades.



## *Forskjeller og likheter i visuell kunst på Nordkalotten*

*Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja*

På slutten av 1800-tallet begynte kunstnere å reise helt opp til Nordkalotten for å male. Dette skyldtes først og fremst utvidelse av mineral- og skogindustrien mot nord, bedre reisemuligheter, gryende turisme og nasjonale behov. Mennesker og regioner som ble ansett som primitive og eksotiske vekket kulturell interesse. Temaene og stilene som avbildet Nordkalotten var svært like, og det kunstneriske uttrykket var i hovedsak "en plein air" (friluftsmaleri), realisme og impresjonisme.

Kunstneren på Nordkalotten foretrakk enda på 1970- og 1980-tallet landskapsmalerier og portretter, men teknikkene og stilene hadde blitt flere. Landskapsmaleriene portretterte ofte den nøkterne og enorme naturen i nord, spesielt vidder og kystlandskap. Bebygget landskap har også spilt en sentral rolle i de russiske kunstneres malerier: byen, landsbyen og havneutsikten skildrer det urbane livets nye estetikk. Måten skandinaviske kunstnere uttrykte sin opplevelse av naturen på var imidlertid mer abstrakt, og ble presentert som det nordlige «mindscape» eller som et beskyttet objekt.

Det var allerede mange utstillinger på Nordkalotten på midten av 1970-tallet, men utstillingene var i hovedsak lokale eller nasjonale. Aktiviteter gjennom vennsksbyer, kunstforeninger i ulike land og utstillinger på Nordkalotten tok sikte på å etablere forbindelser mellom kunstnerne på Nordkalotten. På 1980-tallet økte samarbeidet mellom kunstnere, kunstforeninger arrangerte mange aktiviteter og antallet dyktige kunstnere økte. Offisielt ble samarbeidet for hele Nordkalotten avtalt tidlig i 1993 i Kirkkoniemi, da Barents Euro-Arctic Council ble etablert.



## *Различия и сходства в изобразительном искусстве Северного Калота*

*Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja*

В конце XIX века художники стали приезжать в регион Северного Калота для занятий живописью. В значительной степени это объяснялось расширением на север горнодобывающей и лесной промышленности, улучшением транспортных возможностей, ростом рынка туризма и национальных потребностей. Народы и регионы, считавшиеся примитивными и экзотичными, вызвали культурный интерес. Темы и стили в описании Северного Калота были очень похожи: в искусстве доминировали реалистическая живопись на пленэре и импрессионизм.

В 1970-х и 1980-х годах художники Северного Калота по-прежнему предпочитали пейзажи и портреты, однако техника исполнения и стили стали разнообразнее. Пейзажная живопись чаще всего отображала суровое величие северной природы, в особенности сопки и морского побережья. Рукотворные ландшафты также занимали центральное место в произведениях русских художников: городские, деревенские и портовые пейзажи отражали новую эстетику городской жизни. Скандинавские художники, однако, выражали свое понимание природы более абстрактно, что проявлялось в характерном для севера видении мира или защищенности объекта произведения.

К середине 1970-х годов в Северном Калоте уже проводилось много выставок, но это преимущественно были показы работ на местном или национальном уровне. Сотрудничество городов-побратимов, художественные общества в разных странах и выставки в Калоте – всё это было направлено на налаживание связей между художниками Северного Калота. В 1980-х годах углубилось сотрудничество между художниками, ассоциации изобразительного искусства провели множество культурных мероприятий, а количество талантливых художников значительно возросло. Договоренность о сотрудничестве в регионе Северного Калота была официально достигнута в начале 1993 года в Кирккониemi, когда был образован Баренцев Евро-Арктический Совет.

# *University of Lapland*

## *On Behalf of the North for the Rest of the World*

The northernmost university in the European Union is located in Rovaniemi, near the Arctic Circle. Founded in 1979, the University of Lapland is an international education and research centre that promotes sustainable development, wellbeing and equality, both regionally and globally, through research, artistic activity and higher education. Most of the academic facilities of the University of Lapland are located on a modern campus close to the Rovaniemi city centre.

The fields of education and research at our science and art university include education, tourism, business, law, applied art and social sciences. Research at the University of Lapland focuses on two multidisciplinary and international areas: the Arctic and northern people, society and environment, research on the interaction among these areas and tourism research. In addition to joint research sites, all the faculties and research units have their own profile.



disciplinary and international areas: the Arctic and northern people, society and environment, research on the interaction among these areas and tourism research. In addition to joint research sites, all the faculties and research units have their own profile.

The centre of creative activity at the University of Lapland is the Faculty of Art and Design. Artistic activity is a central part of the faculty's undergraduate and postgraduate education, research and adult education, as well as regional development. The faculty staff includes experts in many areas, including the visual arts, media arts, art and

design as well as environmental and community arts, and their artistic activity is spirited and multinational. Students create artwork for their theses and study projects. The faculty also coordinates innovative projects which combine art and research and maintains gallery spaces and web galleries.

# *Kemi Art Museum*

The Kemi Art Museum is the oldest art museum in Northern Finland. It was founded in 1947 when the lecturer P. A. Rantaniemi donated his art collection of 136 works to the city of Kemi. This collection includes art by Albert Edelfelt, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, Pekka Halonen, Eero Nelimarkka, Marcus Collin, Tyko Sallinen, Ellen Thesleff and Magnus Enckell.

The founding of the Kemi Art Museum marked an important impetus for art in the northern world, as already in early years the art museum opened a cultural window onto the art of Northern Finland. Thanks to the museum, northern art made an impressive emergence onto the art scene. Ever since, the Kemi Art Museum has been a referential art institution in Northern Finland.

After receiving the Rantaniemi collection, the Kemi Art Museum acquired a collection from the Kemi Lyceum for girls in 1975. The legendary Lyceum collection consisted of 45 works including some of the world's most famous names in art such as Marc Chagall, Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso.

One of the most recent and most prominent art donations to the Kemi Art Museum was made in 1992: a donation of works by Emilia Appelgren (1840–1935), including 25 paintings and one reproduction. This donation is a significant contribution to the older art history of Northern Finland and also serves as an introduction to the female artist from Kemi who has been largely unknown until then. In 1994, the museum added to its collection 94 pieces from the Finnish Savings Bank and then another 60 works from the Cooperative Tradeka Corp. collection in 2012.

In Finland, the concept of the regional art museum was initially introduced in the early 1970s in Kemi, and in 1981, the Kemi Art Museum became a regional art museum. Today, the Kemi Art Museum's collection includes more than 2,500 works.



## Art Gallery in Luleå

The Art Gallery in Luleå was founded twenty years ago and has been at its current premises, in the Culture House of downtown Luleå, since 2007. But as early as 1993, the doors opened to what was then known as The Arts House and more than 570 exhibitions have been staged there for both initiated art audiences as well as the general public. Naturally, it is mostly residents of Luleå who visit the Art Gallery for its varied exhibitions but naturally all visitors are welcome and the gallery is pleased to see those who are willing to travel in order to take advantage of the collection and gallery activities and to discover the city of Luleå through its art.

Over the years, the gallery has hosted mainly solo exhibitions but also a number of group exhibitions. It primarily shows Swedish artists from various disciplines, although various types of collaboration have allowed the gallery to exhibit international art as well. We are proud of these collaborations with various organisations and institutions in Luleå, but there has also been international collaboration with neighbouring countries and nearby institutions in the Barents region as well.

It is most gratifying to host this exhibition, *Northern Beauty*, which illustrates the breadth and extent of artistic techniques and expression in the vast and magnificent Barents region. The art is much more than grandiose, but even sparser, more exquisite than the wide expanses, deep valleys, dark forests and sweet berries. It is possible to recognise the artists of the north through gestures both large and small. There is so much that is unique in each individual expression and yet there is something they all share.



The Art Gallery in Luleå is municipally run i.e. it is owned by the citizens of the municipality and jointly financed by taxpayers. Admission is free and I hope that as visitors, you will be able to find something here to interest you. This could be different things at different times: it could relate to the aesthetic pleasure upon discovering something beautiful, or it could be feelings of exhilaration, excitement, upset or anger. At another time or better still, at the same time, the feeling could be one of consolation. The Art Gallery is a place for reflection

and experiences of various kinds, and as visitors to our art gallery, I hope that you leave here with new thoughts and ideas and take a new experience with you. Art can of course be beautiful and pleasant, but perhaps an even more important task is for art to arouse emotions, irritate and even annoy us and not least - to encourage us to formulate questions.

## *Sámi Center for Contemporary Art*

SDG, the Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš/ Sámi Center for Contemporary Art, was established in 1986. It is the leading center for Sámi contemporary art and a renowned arena for contemporary expression. SDG is a mediation, information and knowledge agency for Sámi visual art, handicraft and duodji.

At our exhibition spaces, the SDG Gallery in Karasjok, we stage year-round exhibitions of international contemporary art with a particular focus on Sámi visual art. At the SDG Butik, we sell Sámi art, handicrafts, design and duodji.



Photo: Tuomo Ylinäjä.

Under the heading SDG c/o we work on external projects of various kinds both nationally and internationally, in collaboration with other institutions in the field of art.

## *Murmansk Regional Art Museum*

The Murmansk Regional Art Museum was founded in 1990. It is the only art museum in the Arctic, with a collection comprising more than 8000 artworks. Its main collection includes the 18th–19th century paintings, Northern icons and twentieth-century Russian Art (paintings, graphic art, sculpture, decorative and applied arts). A collection of works by artists from Murmansk gives a fairly complete picture of the development of the fine arts in the Arctic during the second half of the 20th century and has a significant place in the museum collection. The museum has six exhibition halls, a music room, a multimedia theatre, a computer centre, a library and a museum depository.

The Murmansk Regional Art Museum organises many interesting projects, including exhibitions. More than 80 exhibits open to visitors every year. Shows of works from the collections of the largest museums in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Pavlovsk and Petrozavodsk are particularly important. They enrich the cultural life of our region



and present the museum visitors with an opportunity to enjoy genuine art. Many exhibitions also travel from abroad, mainly from the Scandinavian countries. But the exhibitions are largely dominated by the work of local artists – regional, solo exhibitions of the great masters of painting, graphic artists, sculpture, decorative and the applied arts.

Museum staff conduct extensive educational work at kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, and institutions of higher education as well. The museums seek not only to reflect the cultural life of the city, but also to participate in its formation. This is mani-

fested in the desire to cooperate more closely with the educational system. For instance, since 2003, the museum operates an interactive educational program called The Young Museum Workers School. For many years, it has served as the place where students from the universities in Murmansk get hands-on experience.

Conferences and round table discussions on issues important to the artistic life of the city and region are carried out on an annual basis. The museum offers its visitors a variety of educational and entertainment programmes, activities based on exhibitions, lectures, evening meetings and concerts. The most popular are the lectures on the history and theory of art by renowned art historians and museum experts who visit the museum from Moscow and St. Petersburg. The popularity of the museum is growing: over eighty thousand people visit the Murmansk Regional Art Museum every year.



## *Arts Promotion Centre, Regional Office of Lapland*

The Arts Promotion Centre continues the activities of the Arts Council of Finland, which was founded in 1968. The mission of the Arts Promotion Centre is to promote the arts on both the national and international level. The centre is also tasked with promoting cultural aspects, but only to the extent that this promotion is not covered by any other public institution. The centre operates as an expert body under the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The Regional Office of Lapland serves grant customers of the Arts Council of Lapland. In addition, it promotes national and international knowhow of Lappish artists. Currently, four provincial artist laureates are working in Lapland in the fields of Sámi culture, media culture, production and popular music. The Regional Office of Lapland is an experienced operator on the international cultural arena.

Over the years, the office has implemented numerous international projects and has a representation, for example, in the Joint Working Group on Culture under the aegis of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, which defines, among others, the cultural policies in the Northern region.



# Searching for the Northern Beauty 2012-2014

## University of Lapland, Faculty of Art and Design Rovaniemi, Finland

- Responsible Leader of the Project, Professor of Art History **Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja**
- Former Project Manager **Anne Ihalmo**
- Current Project Manager **Irina Gerashchenko**
- Researcher **Jonna Katajamäki**
- Former Financial Secretary **Heli Järvenpää**
- Current Financial Secretary **Minna Kangasvieri**

## Kemi Art Museum Kemi, Finland

- Museum Director **Kari Silvennoinen**
- Art Curator **Tanja Kavasvuo**
- Museum Secretary **Jaana Pulkkinen**

## Art Gallery in Luleå Luleå, Sweden

- Art Curator **Eva Gun Jensen**
- Artist, Art Educator and Art Critic **Bertil Sundstedt**
- Project Coordinator **Tomas Lind**

## Sámi Center for Contemporary Art Karasjok, Norway

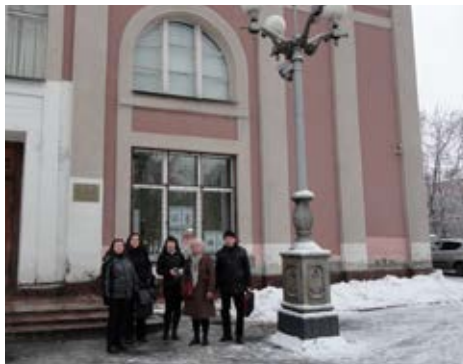
- Acting Director of Norrbottens Museum and the Former Director of the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art **Jan-Erik Lundström**
- Current Director **Hjørdis Kurås**
- Office Manager **Randi Olstad**

## Murmansk Regional Art Museum Murmansk, Russia

- Museum Director **Olga Evtyukova**
- Former Deputy Director for Research at the Murmansk Regional Art Museum **Svetlana Romanova**
- Project Coordinator **Olga Kiseleva**

## Arts Promotion Centre, Regional Office of Lapland Rovaniemi, Finland

- Secretary General **Tomi Aho**
- Regional Artist **Katja Rakkolainen**
- Former Secretary General, the Father of the Northern Beauty Project **Kari Laine**



Project Meeting in Murmansk, Russia 6.11-9.11.2012. In the background the Murmansk Regional Art Museum. From left Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja, Anne Ihalmo, Olga Kiseleva, Eva Gun Jensen and Bertil Sundstedt. Photo: Jonna Katajamäki.



Project Meeting in Karasjok, Norway 25.2-27.2.2013. In the background the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art. From top left Olga Kiseleva, Olga Evtyukova, Randi Olstad, Tomas Lind, Kari Laine, Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja and Eva Gun Jensen. Photo: Jonna Katajamäki.



Expert Group Meeting  
in Murmansk 7.11.2012.  
From left Olga Evtyukova,  
Svetlana Romanova and Katja  
Rakkolainen. Photo: Jonna  
Katajamäki.



Opening of the exhibition  
Northern Beauty and  
symposium in Kemi, Finland  
16.1.2014. Project's lecturers  
in a large auditorium of the  
Cultural Centre of Kemi.  
From left Bertil Sundstedt,  
Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja, Jonna  
Katajamäki, Olga Kiseleva and  
Jan-Erik Lundström. Photo:  
Anne Ihalmo.



Opening of the exhibition  
Northern Beauty in Luleå,  
Sweden 23.4.2014. In the  
foreground Eva Gun Jensen  
and Bertil Sundstedt. Photo:  
Jonna Katajamäki.

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The purpose of the *Northern Beauty* publication is to increase the awareness of the rich and diverse visual arts and cultural heritage of the North Calotte. The publication includes several art-historical research-based articles written by art professionals and art researchers from the institutions involved in the project. The publication is intended for all those who are interested in the history of the art and culture of the North Calotte region.

