

The background features a light cream color with abstract, hand-drawn yellow brushstrokes. These strokes form various shapes, including elongated ovals and irregular polygons. Interspersed among these strokes are several concentric circles, also drawn with a textured, brush-like quality. The overall composition is dynamic and organic.

learning xperiences

ART PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES IN X-BORDER ART BIENNIAL 2013

EDITED BY MARIA HUHMARNIEMI, ELINA HÄRKÖNEN & TIMO JOKELA

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Learning Xperiences – Art Pedagogical Approaches in X-Border Art Biennial 2013

Editors

Maria Huhmarniemi
Elina Härkönen
Timo Jokela

Design

Elina Härkönen

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INTRODUCTION

MARIA HUHMARNIEMI & JOKELA TIMO

Art education has a simultaneous local and global nature. It always takes place in a certain place and community, but at the same time it is part of a larger cultural, political and social phenomenon. In this publication, we present activities at the intersection of art education and contemporary art under the theme of 'borders'. The importance of collaboration between Nordic countries and Russia in the Arctic region, is the background for the activities. Since then president of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbatshev, announced in Murmansk in 1987 that the Arctic region should be a zone of peace and collaboration between East and West, there have been possibilities for cultural collaborations. Since then, fine arts crossing borders has had great publicity as part of the international relations between the Nordic countries and Russia. This publication is based on a large-scale cultural project, New Horizon (2013–2015), which was put together to join cultural actors in northern Sweden, Finland and Russia. During the project, the political atmosphere changed significantly and some features of the Cold War returned.

As a part of the New Horizon project, the X-Border Art Biennial was an international art exhibition that had an art education program as an integral part of it. The aim of the exhibition was to increase the interaction of cultural institutions in the Barents region (North Calotte and Northwest Russia), to create a new collaboration and a mutual understanding. The aim was reached by producing an art Biennial simultaneously in three cities: Luleå in Sweden, Rovaniemi in Finland and Severomorsk in Russia, and by showing artworks dealing with the theme of borders. Nine curators from three countries selected 48 artists from over 500 applications.

New Horizon was funded by the European Union program, Kolarctic ENPI CBC. The program strengthens people-to-people and civil society contact at the local level. Action in the educational and cultural fields, as

well as enhanced cross-border contacts, aimed at promoting local governance and mutual understanding, and improving people's knowledge of history and cultural heritage. The program also aimed to impact identity, building towards a strong and positive northern identity by celebrating the great variety of cultural traditions and languages, and the existence of indigenous peoples in the



*Japanese artist, Tokio Maruyama presented performance art connected to his art work Geographical Movement in the X-Border Exhibition opening at the Gallery VALO.
Photo Marko Junttila*

Barents region.

The themes of borders and border crossings were studied from many angles in the Biennial. The artists presented issues and questions about borders and lack of them, around themes of belonging to something or being an outsider. Artists who came to the Biennial from various parts of the globe, highlight-

ed their own cultural backgrounds and political situations between nations in relation to their home countries. The exhibition spread to several exhibition halls and outdoor sites in Luleå, Rovaniemi and Severomorsk. Also, there were public artworks, some of them permanent and some temporary, and some were presented on the Internet.

Although the exhibition closed in October 2013, there are still some permanent public artworks, such as 'Murals', in Luleå, Rovaniemi and Severomorsk. The project also produced a catalogue which was then printed to a book and a newspaper and published in the Internet. Moreover, there are people-to-people networks between the artists and the administration staff of the project. Those are the most important results fulfilling the aim of the project.

The art education that took place in Rovaniemi is presented in this publication. Part of the activities included community art projects, pedagogical workshops and guided tours of the exhibition and outdoors. The events made the themes of the artworks easier to understand among the locals in Rovaniemi as well as the tourists. The program was carried out by artists and art education students from the Department of Art Education at the University of Lapland. In this publication, they tell about their experiences from the activities.

There are short articles as an introduction to pedagogical activities at the beginning of the publication. Timo Jokela opens up the discussion on the Arctic region and peripheries as a place of contemporary art. Tuija Hautala-Hirvioja gives the background to the Biennial as continuation of joint exhibitions in the Barents region. Anniina Koivurova describes the work of teachers in museums and tells that pedagogical activities are shared experiences.

The possibilities of new media were studied in the Biennial. In this publication, Seppo Kuivakari thinks over the concepts of borders, transitions, interference and otherness in the field of media art. Pilvi Keto-LeBlanc, who was one of the curators of the exhibition and responsible for creating the online gallery, tells how web-based technologies were used to connect the three exhibition venues and to reach new audiences.

Heidi Hänninen ran a street art-workshop called 'Neighbour-secrets'. In the workshop, the young people of Rovaniemi got to know the Cyrillic alphabets by spraying 'code-language' straight onto the public walls in the Rovaniemi city centre. In the workshop, a variety of stereotypes and experiences concerning Russia were discussed and these ideas were painted on the walls.

Aino Mäntyvaara describes her 'Thoughts about Borders' project in which

the visitors to the exhibition were photographed and passport-style photos were set up to an installation with short notes of those visitors next to their photographs.

Sofia Waara presents Street Art workshops in which she invited town folk to participate in art walks to see the public art of the Biennial and to make their own temporary artworks by means of environmental art and street art.

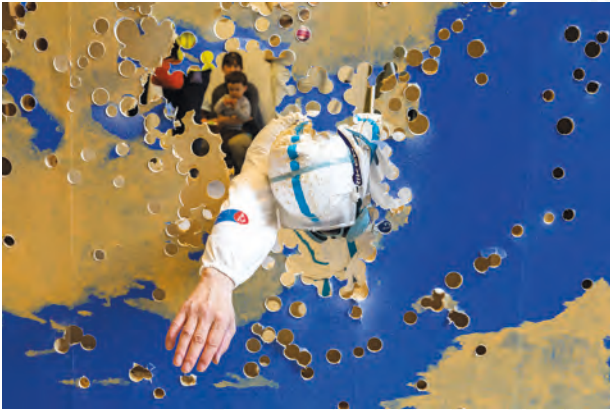
Several pedagogical workshops were offered to schools in Rovaniemi. Children from day cares, comprehensive schools and high schools got to familiarize themselves with the exhibition by guided tours and workshops. Kia Tallgrén and Jenna Ihalainen presented Art Activity Bag, which is a pedagogical tool they designed for Art Picnics. They ran the adventurous Art Picnics for children aged 4-8. Johanna Tuovinen, Heini Hokkanen and Maiju Oja arranged workshops for disabled adults in Gallery Napa, one of the Biennial galleries. One aim of the art education program was to create a connection between the exhibition towns: Luleå, Rovaniemi and Severomorsk. There were X-Border web-TVs in the exhibition halls, streaming online video from each country. In addition, in the Valo Gallery, the guest book of the exhibition was used as a blog on the Internet, which produced the possibility for interaction between the different locations of the exhibition. Terhi Marttila and Iiris Tuisku explain the use of the virtual guest book in their article.

The X-Border Art Biennial took place as one of the first activities in the New Horizons project in the summer of 2013. Since then, the political relations between Finland and Russia, as well as Sweden and Russia, have changed. At the moment there are discussions on the Ukraine crisis, economical sanctions against Russia, propaganda, information war and psychological war. Russia has confirmed its military strength in the Arctic region, where it has started to use military bases again. Today, the situation in Ukraine also throws a shadow over northern and Arctic cultural cooperation, but that does not need to reduce the trust between cultural operators, artists and art organizations. Therefore, the theme of the X-Border Art Biennial is more topical than we could have imagined at the beginning of the project.

The X-Border Art Biennial was a collaboration among the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland; the Centre for Socio-Cultural Technologies, Severomorsk, Russia; and Luleå Art Biennial / Kilen Art Group, Luleå, Sweden.

OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND





*In his Art work
Geographical Movement
Tokio Maruyama uses
the issue of radioactivity
diffusion as a metaphor for
the psychological conflicts
created in human lives by
the existence of borders.
Photo Marko Junttila.*

CROSSING INTO THE NORTH

JOKELA TIMO

The X-Border Art Biennial was a remarkable endeavour and a concrete step over national and geographical borders. However, human activity, which extends throughout North Calotte, including Northwest Russia, is not a novel phenomenon. In fact, the regions' economic and cultural life used to be much more integrated than it is today. The establishment of national borders, and particularly the descent of the iron curtain, led to segregation within the region. As a theme in art, borders can also be metaphorical, and thus the works presented in the Biennial were various representations of this metaphor. Being set in northern locations, the exhibition spaces allowed us to examine the north-south demarcation from the perspective of art.

Since the enlightenment, the western worldview has understood phenomena in art as originating in cultural centres and then radiating to the periphery, usually following a path from west to east and south to north. This mind-set during the dominion of modernist thinking pushed the North, as well as the artists of the North, into the marginal zone. Later, on the eve of contemporary art, people became interested in phenomena related to regions, places and communities. It seemed as though both the artists and the researchers were stimulated in particular by occurrences in the grey area of borderlands.

It is no coincidence that the University of Lapland was part of the implementation of the Biennial. The European Union's northernmost university has striven for some time now to devise such contemporary art practices, which will ensure artists' ability to act as specialists in their respective fields, on all matters related to the North. It has become clear that art and science complement each other in a valuable way. They both exemplify an attempt to express our continually more accurate understanding of the North, and together the two disciplines belong to a sound image of the societies, the cultures and the human beings. Art and science share an interest in trying to understand the complex interaction between the North and the Arctic environments and the society of its human inhabitants. Like scientific research practice, art also engages in falsifying stereotypical conceptions while attempting to formulate new representations based on the ever more specific understandings of the North.

The North and the Arctic are no longer just a notion of untouched, peripheral wilderness, where resources are ample but culture is scarce. Currently, the Arctic is seen as an arena for economic and political battle, as the world is growing continually more dependent on the Arctic and sub-Arctic circumpolar areas. The Finnish president, Sauli Niinistö, has indeed proclaimed that we are moving towards an 'Arctic era'. The cumulative effects of global warming will pose new challenges for the Arctic regions' means of livelihood, natural resources, social structures, welfare and culture. The integration of indigenous culture and the way of life of other northern nationalities is typical in the entire circumpolar region. This multinational and multicultural bundle gives birth to sociocultural issues, which may be difficult to unravel, and which may even attain political dimensions in the neo-colonial landscape of the evolving North. Solutions call for local know-how, participatory research, participatory artistry and communality.

Sociocultural issues relate closely to our cultural identity. Art plays a central role in building up this cultural identity. Identity has its own geography, since identity is always constructed in relation to time and place. Identity is never static, but it is, instead, a type of hybrid, which, by its nature, is bound to cross borders. Art serves as a medium for negotiating these borders. By familiarizing themselves with forms of contemporary art and by creating novel applied art

practices, northern artists have dispelled the longstanding colonialist situation whereby outside visitors are the ones to create representations of the region. The symbiosis of art and science has given form to contemporary art practices, which have been passed onto communities through education, and now allows actors in the North to both analyse from within and express their own culture. Meanwhile, the social tools of contemporary art have allowed the communities to renew their own culture. Art not only is a tool for representing cultures, but also is a means of constant renewal and strengthening of culture. For this reason it is important to create networks of co-operation between art education institutions, research institutions and international artists' organizations. Such networks are vital, not only for northern culture, but also for the wellbeing of the northern people and the economic life of the region.



*Heidi Hänninen
teaches Cyrillic alphabets
in her Neighbour Secrets
-workshop.
Photo Liisa Karintaus*



*Piece of
Anders Sunna's
North Gate Collection.
200 x 100 cm
(displayed in Luleå)
Photo Erik Homlsted*

A REVIEW OF THE CO-OPERATION IN THE VISUAL ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR WITHIN THE BARENTS REGION

TUIJA HAUTALA-HIRVIOJA

The economic and cultural exchange within the Barents region was active up until the late 1800s. The lands formed the North Calotte commons area, which was ruled jointly by Norway, Sweden and Russia. Salesmen, fishermen, hunters and reindeer herders travelled within the region, scouring for sources of income. But with the rise of nationalistic sentiment, borders were closed and movement became controlled and even prohibited; in 1889, all movement between the countries was forbidden. Despite the borders, people and goods still moved and even the active pomor trade continued. The Russians of the White Sea and the Norwegians of the Varanger Peninsula engaged in pomor trade, which began around 1740 and continued up until the 1920s. At the end of WWII, Finnmark of Norway and Finnish Lapland, as well as the northern parts of Kuola, mainly Petsamo, were destroyed and burned to the ground.

The era after the WWII was politically difficult and was known as the Cold War between East and West. Toward the end of the 1950s, relations began to stabilize, and in the 1960s, international friendship associations were founded and town twinning activity began. In the summer of 1966, a group of over 100 Norwegians, Swedes and Finns visited Murmansk together. After a few years, the region's artists also became active. Photographer Matti Saanio, textile art-

ist Elsa Montell-Saanio and painter Reidar Särestöniemi exhibited works in Murmansk in February 1986. The Soviet Union–Finland Association’s local committee participated in organizing the exhibition.

In the 1970s, co-operation within the field of the visual arts saw an increase in activity. The museum of Norrbotten in Luleå organized the first *Kunst og Kunsthåndværk fra Nordkalotten* exhibition, which was on display in 10 municipalities in Norway, but in only two cities in Sweden and Finland. The co-operation continued in the form of the *Nordkalottens Höstsalong* event, which was organized in Luleå from 1987 to 1989 and in 1991. The Nordics Arts’ Center was founded in 1978 in Helsinki and it organized the first exhibition of Sami art in an exhibition called *Samí daidda*, which then toured around the Nordic countries in 1981. After the mid-1980s, several art institutions were formed in the Barents region whose work further stimulated co-operation within the area. Towards the end of the 1980s, the Norrbotten County Administrative Council and Board, the Art Council in Lapland and the Northern Norway Arts Center organized several exhibitions, which even toured through Europe. Among them were the *Zonehenge*, *Polasbogen* and *The Edge* exhibitions.

In 1997, the Art Council in Lapland published a CD titled *Polar Arc*, which presented the work of 43 artists from the Barents region. The *New Potatoes 2001* project was a co-operation between the Lapland Arts Commission, the Rovaniemi Art Museum, the Oulu Art Museum, the University of Lapland Faculty of Art, the Northern Norway Artist Center, the Murmansk Regional Administration Cultural Department, the Archangelesk Regional Administration Culture and Arts Council, the Republic of Karelia Cultural Ministry, and the Norrbotten County and Västerbotten County Councils. As a result of the project, an exhibition and two-day seminar were organized at the Rovaniemi Art Museum. The exhibition was held from 2 February to 31 March 2001, and it presented the works of around 50 young artists from the Barents region. In 2013, the tenth Barents Spektakel festival was organized in Kirkenes. The festival addresses issues related to the northern region using contemporary art, literature, theatre, film and music. During 1995–2010, the Artists’ Association of Lapland organized five *Hallaa I-V* art projects: the 40 artists in the associa-

tion presented their works in 18–19 municipalities and each Hallaa exhibition was opened at the same time. The latest Hallaa VI exhibition was organized in the autumn of 2014.

In 2014, Northern Beauty – Barents Visual Arts in the 1970s and 1980s –exhibition visited the Kemi Art Museum, the Art gallery in Luleå, the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art in Karasjok and the Murmansk Regional Art Museum. In each country of the North Calotte, the artists for the touring exhibition were selected among the professional artists who were active in the northern area's collaboration in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Artists' Association of Lapland's practice of parallel exhibitions in various places met the historical development of cultural co-operation within the Barents region in the fresh and compelling implementation of the recent X-Border art exhibition.

*South African
environmental artist
Strijdom van der
Merwe produced a per-
manent environmental
artwork 'Diaspora'
to Lainaarranta,
Rovaniemi. He placed
words that reflect
movement and crossing
borders onto each
of the stones.
Photo Marko Junttila*





MEDIA IN THE MODULATIONS OF EXISTENCE

SEPPO KUIIVAKARI

Media (single form, medium), is conceptualized in its etymology as being something in between. For instance, in chemistry, medium refers to a substance that transmits. As such, in terms of its definition, media refers intrinsically to the dismantling or crossing of borders. Within the field of art, the concept of media retains a philosophical uncertainty relating to the constituents of coming, of various fossil operations, or the ethics of encountering The Other.

The Politics of Otherness reveals to us the movement of cultural, social or societal borders. Particularly within the field of media art, this movement of the borders is seen as a utopian opportunity of the destruction or redefinition of our sociocultural horizons. The recent video works of Eija-Liisa Ahtila stand as an emblematic example of this tendency. This utopia, with its foundations deep in the history of the historical avant-garde, is one of the prime instigators of media art.

The discussion within the discipline of media art on the more or less imagined borders within our culture has, however, penetrated deeper than just to manifest itself as societal activation: it has flown into our cognition, skin, breath, body and towards the endless economy of animals. In media art it has become prevalent to redefine the border between our body and technology (as

*Strijdom van der Merwe
explores the voice
and art installation
Unapproved Roads by
artist Brian Flynn in
Gallery Valo, Rovaniemi.
Flynn is originally from
Northern Ireland now
living in Canada.
Photo Marko Junttila*

explored by Sterlac), yet it is also evermore common to redefine the presence of insect logic in our cybernetic ecology. Garnet Hertz's roach-steered robots automatically belong to this representation.

We are to witness the birth of an insect utopia, which will split the seemingly stable entities within the darkness of visible power structures. The logic of the transcendence of various ontologies follows the development of new technologies, bringing all the more astounding physics to our field of experience. This implies the opening of our perceptual structures to those outside of us. Even in the historical process of our spiritualization of infections, art and its movement can be – and, in fact, it often has been – thought of as a virus. The coming of vire, then again, as art.

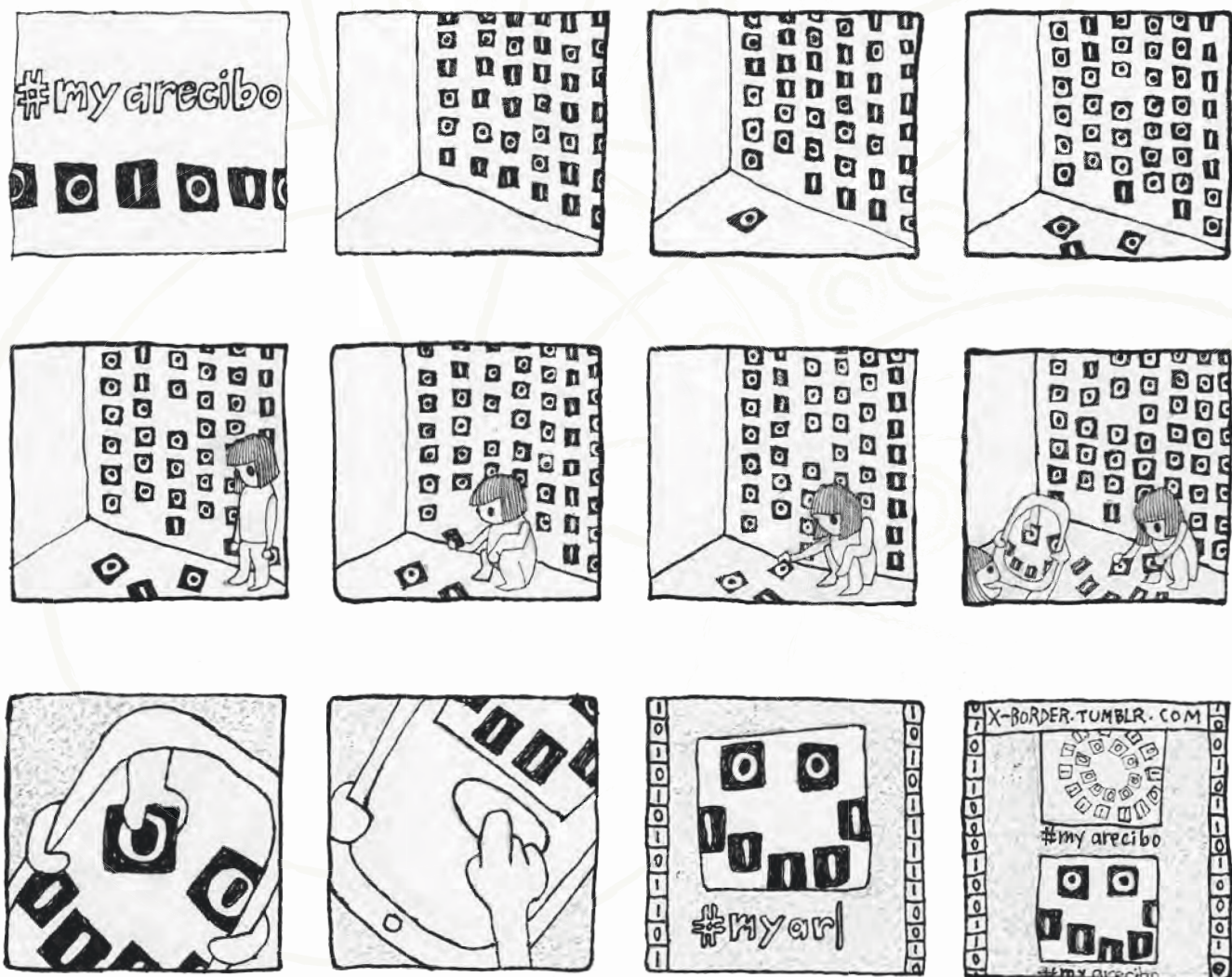
Inherent in every technology is the idea of manoeuvring forces. This interest projected towards the source code of our modernity is exemplified by the idea of cybernetics as the art of steering; of the ability of technology to profile the invisible into a representative and perceptible form. But if we approach media art as a compilation and movement in the footsteps of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattar, we would conclude that media art in fact disassembles protocol in order to re-erect it, always in a new (non)place; media art de-territorializes and territorializes in its rhythm of run and movement.

A prime example of this is media art's flirtation with interference. As a utopia of art, this flirtation is older than the avant-garde and is a result of the development of European experimental culture. If we understand interference as noise, which, in itself, is an ambivalent phenomenon, we can begin to understand how media art, in giving structure to interference, recurrently flirts with new techniques for constructing life. Interference is never an attribute of definite presence or absence, but finally always an attribute of coming.

Modern movement is not unidirectional. Media art often comes to be defined as an opportunity to put together or define our conception of self, of existence and of the world in which we live, in a multifaceted way. In these representations our beings are open to receive, in all their implications, culture, cyborgs and modulations of animals.

Finnish Visual artist Jouko Alapartanen's installation Plan X Time of Beasts consists of video and three-dimensional components. Plan X Time of Beasts was displayed in Gallery Valo, Rovaniemi. Photo Marko Junttila





Terbi Marttila's comic strip My Arecibo describes how the participatory Off the Borders Biennial blog served as a tool for sharing the experience and thoughts about the exhibition virtually with other visitors.

OFF THE BORDERS? TRANSCENDING PHYSICAL BORDERS THROUGH THE INTERNET

PILVI KETO-LE BLANC

In the X-Border Art Biennial, one of the curatorial goals was to connect the three exhibition venues – Sweden, Finland and Russia – through contemporary web-based technologies, and to find and reach new audiences that perhaps could not, or did not want to, access the physical exhibition venues but had access to the Internet. Three key solutions were then developed: a real time web-TV, an online gallery and an Off The Borders blog.

Web TV was developed specifically for connecting audiences from one venue to others, and to give access for online visitors to enter the exhibition. Each country had their own web TV channel showing real-time video footage from their venue. All three channels could be simultaneously watched on TV screens installed next to each other in each of the venues. Audiences could communicate from one exhibition to another through web cameras that were installed on the TV screens. Tablet computers that were connected to the TV channels, were, on the other hand, a more mobile solution for hosting guided or audience-made exhibition tours for online visitors.

The idea behind the online gallery was to offer a venue that could be experienced online, across the borders. When the idea was further developed, it became clear that we did not seek to exhibit Internet Art as a genre, but

wanted to show works that (1) connected with the theme of borders; and (2) were made to be experienced online. In the end, we selected only two online artworks, Antti Tenetz' *Rule of Three* (p.46) and David Molander's *Slussen (City Heart)*, that were, in fact, works of contemporary photography and experimental journalism, both mediums where practitioners explore and develop online spaces as options to exhibit their work. The installation of the gallery was simple. Links that forwarded the viewer to the website of the artworks, were found on the biennial's website. Yet, the biennial was only one of the simultaneous gateways to find the online works. In a utopian sense of the 'global village', web wanderers with various interests and backgrounds could come across any of the artworks at any time, challenging the spatial and institutional restrictions of the traditional gallery.

The Off The Borders blog was developed to shed light on the background of the artists and the artworks, to follow the process of making the exhibitions and to serve as a participatory tool to share the experiences of the exhibition from the point of view of audiences, artists and staff of the biennial across the borders. The blog was successful in reaching wide audiences around the world; for example, for the artists' video interviews that were published online. Interviews discussed the values, intentions and practical choices behind the artworks, and became an excellent curatorial tool to share meaningful information with the enthusiastic audience. Also, an online guestbook was maintained by the pedagogues working in the venues in Rovaniemi. They encouraged and guided audiences to publish photos and comments online, creating a dialogue of artwork interpretations. Through the guestbook, artists' received insight of the thoughts of the audience that varied from being critical, confused, excited and descriptive of their own experience in the exhibition space.

At its best, all these solutions instigated meaningful, interactive moments between people and the artworks across physical borders and built artistic networks. Nonetheless, technology can be like a disengaging wall between its user and its purpose if it does not work properly, is not simple enough to use or is not interesting enough. Engaging new audiences for art through web technologies is a complex challenge. Audiences might not find the work or stay interested in artistic content when it is easy to browse forward. On the other hand, developing meaningful web-based exhibition solutions for artists and audiences that are already engaged with art, is an exciting development in contemporary art and has endless, fascinating possibilities.

*Swedish Media artist David Molander's artwork Slussen was displayed on the Internet (<http://www.urbananatomy.se>) during the X-Border Art Biennial.
Photo David Molander*





*'Oivaltaja' (Heureka! Insightful) workshop in Three-Body Problem exhibition
in Rovaniemi Art Museum, Autumn 2014. Sami Evinsalo as 'Assistant Open-Minded'.
Photo Rovaniemi Art Museum / Arto Liiti*

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM PEDAGOGICS

ANNIINA KOIVUROVA

A group of upper secondary school students together with their teacher enter the Rovaniemi Art Museum lobby. A museum educator from the museum greets them and soon the group is escorted to the museum according to the planned visit content and schedule. The students are divided into smaller groups and instructed to observe the gallery space in general and then select a specific art object according to a given task. The small group then discusses the art piece and performs the art object in a haptic and auditive way, while others keep their eyes closed. Discussion follows. From there, the group moves to the workshop classroom and everyone makes a small object based on a given task on the gallery visit. The museum workshop ends with a short discussion on the process and products. Teachers lead the group back to the lobby. This fictitious museum visit follows a somewhat typical format of a contemporary art museum visit and workshop.

According to John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, the museum experience is a personal, physical and social phenomenon. An art museum educator deepens visitors' experiences by creating bridges between the artist, the art object and the visitor. Thus, the museum educator helps the viewer to interpret and create new meanings for the artworks, built on one's personal and shared conceptions and memories.



The aim of art museum pedagogy is to offer a holistic experience of a museum visit. The museum educator encourages and supports visitors' personal experiences and activates personal interpretations and creative thinking. Museum education conveys information on art, deepens the understanding of art and increases the knowledge of art. Through museum education, visitors consider and widen their understanding on the museum as an institution and a space.

The aim of museum pedagogy is also to commit the whole museum organization to pay attention to the various audiences of art museums. Hence, the cultural services for visitors are to increase the understanding of art in general. The museum enhances this understanding by maintaining forums for discussions and by creating

new possibilities for sharing one's experiences and thoughts.

The questions of the purpose of the art museum and its educational aims are multiple. It is a challenge to attract larger audiences to experience contemporary art in a museum setting. One can ask if the art museum is a temple, a quiet shrine for personal experiences, an everyday market square, or an active participant in the contemporary societal issues through art; a place that selects and cultivates high art and spiritual experiences, or a place for easy-to-learn play grounds and high-tech amusement parks. One may also ask if the art museum is a physical space and place, or something more. What is a museum-without-walls like? What kind of a role should museum education take in the social media, or how variable are museum



*'Hullu Metsä'
(Crazy Forest)
-workshop
Autumn 2014
Pöykkölä Day Care
group in Rovaniemi
Art Museum.
Photo Rovaniemi Art
Museum / Arto Liiti*

education methods for public learning?

An upper secondary school group enters the museum lobby. The chamber orchestra is practicing in the auditorium. The scent of coffee drifts in from the cafeteria. Some tourists are browsing through art books in the museum shop. The museum educator greets the students and begins to share about the new exhibition.

At its best, the museum pedagogy is a shared experience, an encounter with art in cooperation between the audiences and the museum educator. The workshop proceeds at a calm pace; discussions provoke open-ended questions and answers in an atmosphere of mutual respect; and authentic, genuine interaction between art, artist, the visitor and the museum staff happens.

Art museum pedagogics are part of the

studies of art education at the University of Lapland. During the course, students are introduced to the basics of art museum pedagogy in theory and in practice. As part of their studies, the students plan and organize workshops in the Rovaniemi art museum for different target groups, mainly for comprehensive school pupils and day care children. In the X-Border exhibitions, the workshops were offered to schools, day cares and citizens of Rovaniemi. The studies promoted art-based museum education and raised students' awareness of museum educational practices among the public.

Reference:

Falk, John H. & Dierking, Lynn D., 2013: The Museum Experience Revisited. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.



ART PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES



THOUGHTS ABOUT BORDERS

AINO MÄNTYVAARA

Visitors to Gallery Napa, Rovaniemi, had an opportunity to participate in the “Thoughts about Borders” workshop during August 2013. They could take an unofficial passport photo and write a note of their thoughts about borders. Both the photos and the notes were pinned to the gallery wall for everyone to see. All in all, there were 51 pictures and texts gathered during the course of one month. From five printed passport photos the participants could take one as a memory.

A passport is required when crossing the borders of countries as proof of one’s identity. It’s related to politics, and questions about safety and identity. A passport photo without an official document can be held as a memory, affirmation of one’s existence and a sign for belonging to a community. In the workshop, participants could define how they wanted to be presented in the photo and interpret the theme as they wished.

The photos and writings started to live their own life. There were participants from different backgrounds, age distribution and nationalities. Passers-by, some familiar



to others and some total strangers, joined the workshop. In addition to participants communicating the theme independently, there was also interaction between the photos and notes on the gallery wall.

The others’ thoughts about borders were interesting and were reflected in their own personal notes. Everyone was unique but still part of a wall-sized group, and the place for the photo and note had significance. The people in the photos were smiling, serious, playful, doubting and enthusiastic. In the notes, insightful and profound pondering, humour and observations of everyday life and their surroundings came across.



Image Right: In addition to writing, participants used drawing to tell their thoughts. Photo Pilvi Keto-LeBlanc.

Image Left: The photo shoot equipment gave a formal sense to the photos. Photo Aino Mäntyvaara

*Note on the wall:
"The collective limitations of mankind:
A. Friction B. Time. Nothing else."*

CONVERSATION GUIDE & VIRTUAL GUEST BOOK

TERHI MARTTILA & IIRIS TUISKU

In the summer of 2013, visitors to the X-Border Art Biennial in Rovaniemi had the opportunity to view the X-Border exhibition in the Valo Gallery with a conversation guide. The guided tours were based on interaction, and visitors were simultaneously encouraged to share their thoughts in the Biennial blog.

While preparing the tours, the assumption was that contemporary art would not be very familiar to all visitors. The preconception was proved partly true, though some of the visitors were artists and art enthusiasts. The tour progressed normally through an overview of the works, and visitors participated in the interpretation according to their interests. It was fascinating to see how different visitors had very different perspectives on the same works; thus, the nature of each tour moulded into a dialogue with the attending groups. Visitors were asked to share their interpretations and feelings with the rest of the group, which often led to interesting debates, either on universal or very personal issues. Discussions were born effortlessly as many of the works provoked spontaneous reactions and diverse



opinions.

Sometimes visitors were expecting a more traditional exhibition tour where only the guide would talk about the works. If a visitor did not immediately dare to wonder aloud, the guide would, for example, invite them to reflect on the connection between the work and its title. When visitors saw that art did not need to be described in official art terms, they were encouraged to take part in the conversation. One visiting family was especially thankful for the fact that the unfamiliar issue was made accessible by the means of conversation.

The guided tours worked as windows for the exhibition, allowing visitors to interact and discover personal perspectives on the exhibited works. Aside from the conversation tours, a



Biennial blog was established for visitors to share their thoughts online during the tour. This was done with a tablet, which enabled the bloggers to attach pictures of the works that they were commenting on. Thus, the Biennial blog acted as a virtual guest book where engendered feelings, reactions and interpretations of the works were documented. The aim of the tours and the blog was to enable visitors to leave the exhibition with a feeling that they understood contemporary art and that their opinions were important. Later, the artists of the exhibition praised the method as it allowed them to gain straight feedback from the visitors' experiences and opinions. In this respect, the exhibition with the blog experiment proved to be a successful approach.

Visual artist Erika Kassnel-Henneberg's The Lost Home Project consists of two artworks: Heimat is Somewhere Else (displayed in Luleå) and Letters from Utopia (displayed in Gallery Valo Rovaniemi). Part of Letters of Utopia in the image. Kassnel-Henneberg is originally from Romania, now living in Germany.
Photo Marko Junttila

*Blog, VISITOR's comment:
The places in the pictures
don't actually look very pleasant.
Maybe the letters remind us,
that utopia doesn't really exist.*

STREET ART

SOFIA WAARA



The workshop designed for New Horizons was a collaboration between art and pedagogy. The four-language workshop on street art in Rovaniemi was held in conjunction with the X-Border Biennial. The aim was to enable visitors to experience public art in the city in addition to the exhibition in the galleries. The key interest was to learn more about Rovaniemi as a place for public creativity, having noticed how its lively street-art culture had been left in the shade by other tourist attractions.

Carrying out public workshops with design- and art-based pedagogical methods offers many inspirational possibilities and challenges. From the teacher's perspective, the planning and preparation process differs from the normal indoor activities, and the voluntarily participating 'student group' sets a demand for a teacher to be more like a facilitator than a regular art teacher. In this sense, the interactive dialogue is put forward and allows more 'hands on' directives.

The weekend workshop included several places in the city, and started at the graffiti wall near one of the biennial's locations, Gallery Napa. On the wall, the participants painted a street map of the town centre. The idea was to map the created site-specific artworks, doc-

ument them onto the wall map and, in this way, share the possibility for the public to view the works, encouraging them to move around the city by cycling or walking.

A visit to the library and its green park became the first stop on the journey. Historical and contemporary books about Rovaniemi served as a starting point of inspiration. The books presented historical views from the destroyed city from WWII through old photo documentation. They also provided newer information of the city from tourists' perspectives. Altogether, the information formed a broad contemporary sense that was utilized by exploring the city further. Sketches and illustrations were done with a focus on the street-art phenomenon of stickers.

The workshop continued to a wind shed (laavu) by the riverside. The shed is a popular hangout place in

Rovaniemi where all locals go to spend time and enjoy the river view. Passers-by were invited to participate in the workshop. Spray-paint stencils and environmental art were used to create works around the area. The participants included families, local artists, local older men, students and young people.

The workshop also utilized the backyard of the central Kauppayhtiö restaurant where many people go to have lunch or coffee. On the pavement, the group drew mandala shapes filled in with coloured chalks. A sign was put

up encouraging anyone to join in and a box of chalks was left at the site. In a parking lot nearby, artists put up easels and painted more street drawings and installations. In all the workshops the atmosphere was relaxed. Afterwards, it seemed it had been easy to involve passers-by, and the news about the workshop travelled fast by word of mouth for more people to get involved. The workshop led to new meetings between artists and became a starting point for new public artworks in Rovaniemi.



Image Right: Street drawing in a parking lot. Photo Sofia Waara

Image Left: Passers-by joining the workshop around a popular laavu by the riverside. Photo Sofia Waara

ART ACTIVITY BAG

KIA TALLGRÉN & JENNA IHALAINEN

The Art Activity Bag was created as an art and museum pedagogical tool to be used in workshops intended for small children aged 4-8. The tool was developed for museums and art pedagogues to help them arrange inspiring art picnics for children in art exhibitions. It can be used in guided tours or workshops and the content of the bag is designed to function in several kinds of exhibitions. In addition, there are worksheets for specific tasks for specific exhibitions.

Art exhibitions in galleries are often difficult to reach for families and little children and the guided tours are often too passive or too abstract. The aim of the art activity bag was to increase the approachability and functionality of the guided tours, and emphasize the multi-sensory experience and explorative approach to the arts. The art activity bag was intended to be a fun and meaningful tool to explore art. The special focus was on the difficulty small children may experience when trying to verbalize their thoughts. Therefore, we tried to develop

different tools, such as the packs of cards to ease the verbal expression. The bag consisted of packs of colour, sensation and mood cards, coloured glasses, wooden binary code tiles, a peephole card and a laminated drawing pad. In addition, there were some diplomas, stickers and homework for the children to take home. The bag's main character, Käpy Vesala, could be found on the diplomas, stickers and mood cards.

The workshops with the art activity bag and the Art Picnics were organized at Valo Gallery in Arktikum, in autumn 2013. The Picnics were planned to last for about 30 minutes to 1 hour, depending on the group's needs. When they arrived, each par-



*Pack of sensation cards
Photos Kia Tallgrén, Jenna Ihalainen*

ticipant was given the bag. The Picnic concentrated on a few selected works that were examined with the tools found in the bag. At the end, all the children tied a red thread onto a cylinder made out of chicken wire, which functioned as a guestbook.

The contents of the art activity bag functioned well, as they activated the children to participate. It gave them their own channel to process the exhibition. The bag proved to be a good museum pedagogical tool and seemed to inspire children to experience art. The feedback was encouraging and the teachers had gained many ideas for their work from the tool. The teachers thought that the art activity bag and the Art Picnic made art more approachable. The children were proud of their diplomas and said they had fun at the exhibition.



*Children examining Ulrica Beritsdotter's artwork
Lost in translation at Art Picnic in Gallery Valo.*



Binary codes made for the Art Picnic.

NEIGHBOUR SECRETS

HEIDI HÄNNINEN



The street-art workshop ‘Neighbour-secrets’ was planned and led by Heidi Hänninen, an artist who specializes in monumental painting and concrete sculpture, together with the assistant artist Valtteri Halmetoja. During the workshop, all participants got to know Cyrillic alphabets by using sprayed ‘code language’ on public walls in the Rovaniemi city centre. The words about Russia were written in Finnish using Cyrillic letters. These words could only be understood with the knowledge of both Finnish and Cyrillic letters, in addition to guessing, which is an old method for learning new languages. In the workshop, the variety of stereotypes and experiences concerning Russia were discussed and these ideas were painted on the walls using uniformed stencil fonts and professional spray paints.

All participants were enthusiastic about the technique used and the theme of the workshop. For some, it was their very first time using spray

cans, and for many this was also their first encounter with the Russian language. Most of them had never visited Russia, even though they might have had schoolmates and close friends who were part-Russian. There were also a few participants who had learned Cyrillic alphabets at home, thanks to their Russian roots. They helped those who were less familiar with Cyrillic. After the workshop, some participants were even considering taking up Russian language studies. One of the best results of the workshop was to unwrap some of the mysteries about Russia.

There were four different walls to be painted altogether. Unfortunately, one of the most colourful and joyful walls had to be painted over later. The owner of the wall wanted to neutralize it because some of the citizens had criticized having Russian writing on a public space. This raises many questions relating to the Finns’ relationship with their Russian neighbours. Si-



multaneously, a common interest to learn the Russian language is increasing in Finland, and the government is under pressure to provide the opportunities of learning it in schools. Overall, this theme appeared quite contradictory and the workshop managed to bring up the debate about values and the ownership of public space.

Finally, it was a pleasure to see the results of the workshop also resonating with the mural made by one of the biennial's artists, Carolina Falkholt. Every city deserves street art; permanent paintings on a big scale as well as temporary works such as Neighbour-secrets.



Artists enjoying their finalized artwork. The wall was painted back to white later. Photo Valtteri Halmetoja. Alphabet Images: Neighbour-secrets on the wall of Kauppapyhtiö. Photos Heidi Hänninen

OPEN TO ALL CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION

JOHANNA TUOVINEN, MAIJU OJA,
HEINI HOKKANEN

The X-Border Art Biennial also consisted of art pedagogical workshops for mentally disabled adults, which were arranged in the Gallery Napa exhibition. The aim was to develop activities for visitors with special needs. Approaches that activate senses, like touching, were utilized in the interpretation of the exhibition.

The workshop examined the José Luis Torres' piece, 'Mutations'. The installation of old forsaken things filled the gallery entirely. Participants of the workshop explored the installation carefully, sought familiar objects and shared something about their findings with the others in the group. The workshop participants were first asked to draw images on a joint large sheet of paper. The Biennial's colourful geometric shapes acted as inspiration and a starting point to the task. After finishing the drawing, the participants created their own installations corresponding to Torres' installation. Finally, they named their installation, A Dream of the Future and discussed what it might mean for them.

A relaxed and tolerant atmosphere in the workshops enabled a safe working environment for all participants. They seemed to enjoy the physical activities the most; thus, the emphasis was kept on such action.

Contemporary artists use references to a variety of visual culture imagery in their works and recycle them.

Works of art deal with all areas of life, which are approached in an interdisciplinary manner. Also, in this workshop, a variety of areas of life were met, and participants had the opportunity to approach and reflect on these works from their own perspectives.

Torres' installation consists of all kinds abandoned objects that are familiar to any viewer and perhaps provokes them to rethink the way today's consumer society operates. In addition to just visiting the exhibition, the viewer will have wider opportunity to explore the presented works by participating in the workshop where the artists' techniques are introduced. By having a chance to create their own artworks involves people at a deeper level and not only opens up discussion and interpretations, but also opens up the doors of invisible art and human dialogue.



*Argentinian sculptor José Luis Torres (now living in Canada) built the Mutations installation to Gallery Napa, Rovaniemi.
Photo on the Top Marko Junttila*

Workshop participants designed and built their own installations that dealt with all areas of life. Photos Johanna Tuovinen, Maiju Oja, Heini Hokkanen



EVALUATION OF THE X-BORDER ART BIENNIAL

MARIA HUHMARNIEMI

For the evaluation of the X-Border Art Biennial, one of the artists, Antti Tenetz, and one of the curators and initiators, Dan Lestander, thought over some of the key questions of the project. Antti is a Finnish artist who worked in all three cities of the project. He is an artist who has worked in similar regions and projects before. Dan Lestander is an artist and curator from Luleå. He has been arranging the Luleå Art Biennial for several years and is involved in many large-scale art projects in Sweden.

The aim of the project was to increase interaction and cultural collaboration between the North Calotte region and Northwest Russia. Do you think that the aim was fulfilled? Did the project create new contacts and networks?

DL: The X-Border Art Biennial was arranged simultaneously in Luleå, Sweden; Rovaniemi, Finland; and Severomorsk, Russia. The organizers in the three countries collaborated during the preparation, the curatorial work, the exhibition and the end of the project. I got the feeling that the three exhibition cities came closer to each other during the project. The audience made trips between the cities, and, for the first time, international artists exhibited in Severomorsk. People in Severomorsk found the X-Border Art Biennial interesting and asked for more international art projects in their city.

AT: I think new contacts were created and I got a positive feeling about the collaboration. Since the exhibition, I have been in contact with some of the artists I met. Networks and collaborations will occur naturally when further opportunities occur or are made.



*Curators examining the arrived artists' applications. In the image: Alain James Martin's artwork *The Future belongs to Crowds* displayed in Severomorsk, Russia during the Biennial. Photo Marko Junttila*

The theme of the exhibition was the borders. Did this theme bring something essential to the project?

DL: Many artworks in the exhibition faced the theme in interesting ways. The theme 'borders' also inspired those of us who were working on producing the Biennial to find new ways to make the exhibition visible and coherent. Therefore, at the exhibition forums, there were virtual windows in the form of digital screens. Via them, visitors were given an opportunity to view the exhibition halls in each country and to communicate with visitors in these art galleries. It was also possible to invite friends from all over the world to personally show them the exhibition via iPad.

AT: Borders are the constant element here. It is important to acknowledge, study and transform cultural notions out of them through artistic work – again and again.

At the moment the political situation has resulted in conflicted on the Russian borders. What is the importance of projects such as the X-Border Art Biennial in the current political situation?

DL: Arranging an art biennial brings knowledge, culture, art and understanding across the borders. It's important to continue the collaborations in order to bring the citizens of Barents together, not to divide them. Art is the best border opener I know.

AT: Borders are not going fade away but cultural co-operation makes the border fence smaller and easier to cross. International cultural projects have a strong internal and external value on showing our arts and culture and seeing those from other countries. This goes for people too. This talk about Russian reality and dehumanization between people across borders is making me uneasy, particular when you meet it among artists, scientist and other actors in cultural sector. Dehumanizing people makes them easier targets for aggression. There are many generalisations about humans or groups in the air nowadays. We should fight against this in a strong but gentle way. I am going to Russia to do works like this in the future too.



Part of Antti Tenetz artwork The Rule of Three displayed in the Internet (<http://www.tenetz.com/xborder/>) Photo Antti Tenetz

What were the best results of the project?

DL: I think the exhibitions brought up many interesting aspects concerning borders, and an important task is to make Barents a place where artists from all over the world can gather in order to bring important issues to the table instead of always travelling south when you are looking for something interesting. The Barents region needs to be an important platform for creative arts projects in order to live. In addition, many school classes took part in the guided tours and had many interesting discussions about borders in all their aspects.

AT: Getting to work in Severomorsk in Russia was exciting. Meeting people who opened up their lives in many ways in the artwork was great. Collaboration between artists and organizations worked well.

What were the biggest challenges you faced in the project?

DL: The communication and cultural differences are something to learn more about. The distances between the participating cities are long and the fact that Severomorsk is a closed city, allowing only citizens of the city to pass the city border, forced the project organizers to be extra creative.

How should the activities in the project be continued?

DL: The X-Border Art Biennial had opened many doors, and I think some kind of continuation is the way to go on.

AT: I think projects that have a dialogical nature should be established and continued, especially with Russian organizations, even if that can be challenging. We need to show that cultural and person-to-person cooperation continues even in this harsh situation. The political atmosphere should not dictate our relations on that level. Once cultural co-operation has been achieved in the name of peace, it should continue. Artists are the most intermediating people between ideas, disciplines and cultures. All healthy relations and equality between neighbours are stabilizing and supporting peace between nations.

