

The Art path of Enontekiö

Huang Liu and Juho Hiilivirta

The Art path of Enontekiö, 'Enontekiön taidepolku' is a series of environmental and community-based art events in Enontekiö in Finnish Lapland. The art events are connected to the local stories of Enontekiö and realized together with local people and art students from the University of Lapland. The idea of an 'art path' was introduced when the idea of a place to showcase their art came from among the locals. Soon the idea was transformed into action.

The concept was developed by Arctic Art & Design program students Juho Hiilivirta and Huang Liu with guidance of Elina Härkönen and Timo Jokela. The project ideas were then further developed in cooperation with the municipal mayor of Enontekiö and local actives.

Through environmental and community events, the project aims to develop the attractiveness of the area in order to raise the awareness of the uniqueness of Enontekiö. The art path encourages creative movement and engagement with artists, researchers and municipality participants by expanding understanding of making art together. As a long-term impact, this project builds up the identity of the community by involving locals in co-operation, co-creating their own environment and by encouraging them to use their artistic skills and knowledge in the process. Besides, The result of the project not only benefits the local people but also the tourists from all over the world. It also has potential to develop the local economy.

The first stage of the art path took place in Hetta, a village of Enontekiö. Hetta which is located in the north-west part of Finnish Lapland. The place of the art event was determined together with the local actives. The workshop was called 'Fox was here'. According to a Finnish folk tale, the fox is running through the forest, swiping snowy hillocks with its tail. The particles are flying off into the sky creating the northern lights. This constantly shapeshifting mythical fox has left abstract tracks in Hetta. The work was done by walking on snow with the help of snowshoes (see Figure 1).

The second stage for the art path took place in an another village of Enontekiö, called Vuontisjärvi. According to a local story over a hundred years ago, a farmer called Rovaniemi wanted to increase his harvest by artificially flooding his meadow. He started digging a ditch towards a currently flooding Vuontisjärvi lake. However, the ditch made the water burst and suddenly a new strong river was running wildly. Due to the



Figure 1. A rope was a big help to make perfectly round circles. Image: Juho Hiilivirta, 2017.



Figure 2. Old wooden hay poles were used for the traditionally built structure called 'haasio' and hay and willow for the decorations. Image: Huang Liu, 2017.

event, the surface of Vuontisjärvi lake had fallen several meters and now the place has a large sandy beach in the area. 'The Haasio of Memories' was a temporary environmental artwork, made on top of the sandy beach to recall the actions of Rovaniemi.

Our part of the project was carried out in one year, from Autumn 2016 until Autumn 2017. We produced a final documentary video of the two workshops and the video was shown in a local art festival called 'Täyten kuun taithessa'. The community members had highly appreciate it. We believe that the art path has already gained some popularity among people and has a good change to reach the heart of every villager in Enontekiö, just like Enontekiö reached ours during the project.