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EXPERIMENTING WITH
ARCTIC SOCIAL PHENOMENA.
A multicultural workshop model

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Introduction

This chapter reports on experiences from an intensive course focused on fostering the discussion of social issues in the Arctic through the creation of art and design solutions. This course was carried out as a weeklong workshop in Murmansk in November 2014. The course was organized by the University of Lapland's Faculty of Art and Design in co-operation with Murmansk State Humanities University, both members of Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design Thematic Network of University of Arctic. During this course, students examined social phenomena of the Arctic territory from the perspectives of service design, graphic design, photography, video, textile design and fine arts. The course was funded by CIMO (Centre for International Mobility) from its FIRST-ARTSMO programme, which supports the student and instructor exchange between Finland and Russia.

The aim of this chapter is to contribute to the educational field in the form of a Multicultural Workshop Model (MWM). The chapter first reports on how the theme of the course and created model are in connection to wider arctic discussion. In the second part it presents the experiences of the instructors and students of the course and workshop. As the multicultural workshop model is based on these experiences and happenings, next the model is presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with lessons learned and conclusions.

A case study approach (Yin, 2014, pp. 9–15; Eriksson & Koistinen, 2005, pp. 4–5) was used as a research strategy for investigating the course and its outcomes. This method of study was especially useful because of its flexibility and focus on the practical point of view. Case orientation allowed students to introduce and encounter new and unexpected results together. This led to cultural collaboration through which their cases developed much further from the initial expectations.

The MWM is an attempt to visualize and explain the complexity that happens in courses where students and instructors from different cultural and educational backgrounds come together to work around a mutual topic. As the course was planned and realized in 2014 a need for a mutual framework emerged. The model is a proposal to enhance multicultural conversation in art and design studies: offering methods and possibilities to express the local culture

and identity, and the dialectics between cultures. The model was created through the practical design case of planning and running the ARTSMO course.

Background

In the Arctic, the focus of developing societies should be in investing more in its people. The Nordic Council of Ministers (2011) have identified nine megatrends of the Arctic areas. These trends have the potential to transform society at all levels, and eventually to change our ways of living and thinking (Hansen et al., 2012). The focus of the course was especially in two of the megatrends; urbanization and demographic challenges. While urbanization leads to a further concentration of the Arctic population on fewer and larger places, like Rovaniemi and Murmansk, demographic challenges are mostly linked to out-migration of young persons (Nordic Council of Ministers, 2011, pp. 9–10). Many of them are moving to bigger cities in the South after study or in search of job opportunities.

The one week intensive course to master level art and design students aimed at understanding and proposing change to these particular challenges that arctic environment poses to us. Course was a part of FIRST-ARTSMO network activities. The goal of the FIRST-ARTSMO network is to strengthen the links between the central and the periphery and the focus is on the arctic and northern issues (Nurmela, 2013, p. 1). The network was established in the year 2000 in order to develop the range and quality of student mobility between Finnish and Russian higher education arts and design institutions. At the moment there are six member institutions from Finland and six from Russia. The institutions are among the leading national higher education institutions in the fields of arts and design. In Finland, the University of Lapland is one of the founding members of the network.

A one-week intensive workshop in Murmansk allowed 13 Finnish and 13 Russian art and design students to explore the social aspects of Arctic life. During the course students chose an arctic social phenomena that interested them. They worked with that topic through the week, first by aiming to under-

stand the phenomena more deeply and then by generating solutions or making comments based on the findings. Students came from different educational cultures and artistic traditions which raised the possibility of learning from each other and to create new kinds of multidisciplinary results. Design and art provide opportunities for expressing the regional culture and identity and opening up a dialogue between cultures (Miettinen & Tahkokallio, 2014).

Social issues have long been an interesting topic for designers and it is an even more topical now with today's many social challenges, such as ageing, healthcare issues, and waste. The Arctic perspective on these issues is somewhat different because of our special conditions, such as long distances, particular weather conditions, and a sparse population. During the time of globalisation and globally shared habits and meanings, designers and artists should still find ways to move towards locally based, rich and native traditions, rituals and symbols. It is necessary to look further and include values such as authenticity, aesthetics and compatibility, and to see the real value of culture as designing through the lens of humanity, to create memorable experiences, and emotionally rewarding objects (Carlson & Richards, 2011).

One of the aims of the workshop was to encourage the students to focus on local issues and knowledge for a while.

“Designers are interested in culture. But sometimes they treat it in a way corporations used to treat design: something consulted too little, too late; it is odd when we consider how often designers have shaped culture” (McCracken in Carlson & Richards, 2011, p. 6).

The course provided a ‘playground’ to explore and experiment cultural facts, habits and beliefs of the Arctic. The educational goal of the course was to learn ways of finding, seeing and respecting cultural facts and to use this knowledge to create positive impact in communities through design and art solutions. During the course students explored how to use design process and multidisciplinary team forces to develop arctic design and art solutions, which might have influence on the ability of people to live and prosper in the region.

The ARTSMO course in colourful Murmansk

The ARTSMO intensive workshop was held at Murmansk State Humanities University from the 27th to the 31st of October in 2014. Students were selected for participation in the course based on their pre-tasks and motivation letters. Instructors from Murmansk and Rovaniemi prepared the pre-task together. The pre-task had multiple phases. First, students were invited to read and see websites, which dealt with Arctic issues and especially cultural and social activities in Murmansk. One of the webpages was Mr. Pink¹, which was an active communal meeting place for young people that offered support for creative initiatives. Secondly, students chose a phenomenon which interested them. Topics were varied, like the use of individualized media in public spaces, the connection between waste and nature, and the phenomena of silence. After this, students made an A4 size presentation with words and images. The pre-tasks and review process was completed separately in both countries. Instructors in Finland read all the motivation letters and assessed all the presentations. All the applicants were accepted to the course as the quality of the pre-tasks was so high.

Before the workshop instructors from Finland and Russia had three Skype meetings where practical matters of the course and the student group formation were discussed. Students were divided in six groups based on their initial interests. The community of this course included instructors and students from Finland and Russia. The community was formed at the stage of applying grant for the course. Then as it was received, instructors gathered and a call for participation was launched to students in different art and design schools. As students applied, instructors were discussing what group formations would be the most beneficial. Also the theme of the course “Murmansk – A Social Phenomenon” implies a wider connection with the arctic people and community.

At the beginning of the workshop, the goal of the student groups was to share their interests and pre-task ideas in order to find a common goal. The next stage was to find deeper ways of understanding the chosen a social phenomenon, for example, polar light and how it affects people. After this, they proposed a solution to or a comment on the current situation by using

design and fine art as mediums. The aim was to create an installation piece that reflected their understanding, thoughts, and ideas. Together, the six student groups produced an exhibition at Murmansk State Humanities University. The exhibition was held on last day of the workshop.



Figure 1. Colours of Murmansk in the evening. Photo: Hannu Vanhanen.

Murmansk provided an interesting setting for the workshop. Most of the Finnish instructors and students travelled to the Kola Peninsula for the first time. While crossing the bridge over the fjord to Murmansk city centre, the view was impressive in the evening light (Figure 1). After the bridge, on the coastal road, beside the railway tracks, there were endless queues of tank wagons, followed by extensive garage, suburban and port areas.

The colours of the apartment building windows were a picturesque sight: light blue, red, and yellow. The suburbs looked like a decorative mosaic. Every window and apartment building looked different, unlike in many Finnish town houses, where the custom is to keep white venetian blinds tightly closed in the evening. These open windows were like stories of ordinary people and their northern lives.

Traveling 400 kilometres from one culture to another, from Rovaniemi to Murmansk, the colours change from natural to festive. Murmansk city traffic appears in all shades of dusty grey, and as the night falls, the urban air smells like a combination of fuggy coal and oil. Science journalist Marjo Laukkanen (2013, p. 11) writes in the University of Lapland Kide magazine that northern art is like a bar of soap. Just when you imagine you have caught it, it slips elsewhere. Contrasts are present all the time. Like rapid weather changes from the sunshine to snowfall. On the opening day of the exhibition, there was ten centimetres of snow. For a while, everything was like a black and white photo, but then the colour feast started again.

Intensive week of workshops

The ARTSMO intensive course involved fine art, design, and media students from Finland (the University of Lapland, Rovaniemi; Aalto University, and the University of the Arts (Academy of Fine Arts), Helsinki; Lahti University of Applied Sciences) and Russia (Murmansk State Humanities University, MSHU). The instructors were also from both countries. All the student groups included Finnish and Russian students. Murmansk State Humanities University's Philological Education and Pedagogy students assisted as interpreters in the groups. This made overcoming the language barrier much easier, even though many expressed a desire for increased English language proficiency among all students in the final feedback.

Opening round

The workshop lasted for five days and prior to that a timetable for those days was created. Every day had a theme: first day was about planning, second focused on collecting data, ideation happened on third day, during fourth day prototypes and exhibition pieces were built, and last day was for presenting. During the first day of the workshop, after the students were divided into groups, a questionnaire based on their initial expectations was completed.

Each student filled the questionnaire independently. The questionnaire sought information about their individual feelings towards making change in the chosen phenomena. As the aim of the course was to make impact on some social phenomenon through artistic representation, the questionnaire asked students how they felt about their own role and possibilities in affecting the current situation and how confident they were that they could make a difference.

The questionnaire included seven questions that were asked before and after the workshop. The questions were:

1. I feel like I can have an effect in the current situation,
2. I feel like I can help with my actions,
3. I feel like I have means to have an impact in the situation,
4. I feel like my role is important in solving this challenge,
5. I feel that I have ideas how to make the situation better,
6. I feel like my ideas and comments are being heard and
7. I feel like I can easily tell or show my ideas to others.

Answers were given in a scale of one to five, one being “*not at all*” and five being “*a lot*”. This questionnaire was completed anonymously because it is part of data collection for Essi Kuure’s dissertation thesis and the same questionnaire was also done in other workshops.

Overall, before the workshop, students felt that they could help with their actions, but did not see their own role in solving the challenges connected to the social phenomenon as very important. In the beginning of the workshop students felt that they already had a fair amount of ideas to test and means to execute them. In addition, they did not feel very strongly that their ideas and the results of the workshop would be recognized by wider audience. One of the students expressed his expectations: “*I think taking part would teach me a lot about international cooperation, experimental design, and about my own identity as a designer.*”

Students in action

This chapter concentrates on three of the student cases that best express the richness and diversity of the group work. These three cases focus on the social phenomena of (1) the challenge of outflow of young people through the eyes of local people, (2) northern bionic, the effect of polar night through the lens of cultural stories and history and (3) environment challenges through the eyes of kittiwake² and humans.

Case 1: Mapping the outflow of young people

In the *My Murmansk – My Rovaniemi* group, the main theme was outflow of people from Northern areas. Students chose this very topical theme and described that outflow in many of the Northern areas share the same challenge: younger people want to move to larger southern cities. For many people, this is a question of work or discovering oneself. Some feel they are forced to leave; others feel that the city does not have anything to offer anymore.

During their data collection, the group performed journalistic face-to-face interviews and photographed local people. It highlighted the Northern dimension, location-specific problematic and interactivity. It also gave student a direct link to the community of residents who all had a story to tell. This kind of perspective created the idea of the local residents functioning as a form of everyday aesthetics and thus highlighted their relationship with the northern surroundings.

During the local interviews, various perspectives to the outflow were revealed: *“I like the city itself, the people here, but I would prefer to live in another climatic zone”* and *“In general I like Murmansk, but I haven’t seen many cities, so I can’t be objective. I suppose that I would prefer to live in a town in the central part of Russia. Here, it is mostly ok, but people are gloomy, and natural resources are poor.”* The interviews conveyed the idea that beauty is created during the interaction between people and the environment. According to Rautio (2010), beauty should not be thought of only in terms of artefacts but also in terms of what we do.

Students described in their report that *“In the first place, we had the idea to make a huge map of Murmansk, showing how people express warm feelings*

towards their city. As the workshop proceeded and interviews were conducted, the idea developed into a more interactive direction.” (Haapanen, Salo, Tatiana, Fomina, Aleksandrova, & Galleva, 2014.) Ultimately, in the exhibition, there was much more than just a map. There was a three-dimensional piece with two boxes (Figure 2). The squares inside the boxes are covered with pictures of local people and their comments from the interviews. The boxes represent the Arctic area and world in general. The exhibition visitor can decide if the people in the photos will stay in the northern region or move. As it says in one of the boxes: “Should I leave or should I stay? It is your decision.” The installation also included stickers that the visitors could take with them and that way disseminate people’s comments also outside of the exhibition space.



Figure 2. My Murmansk–My Rovaniemi group’s installation at the exhibition. Photo: Hannu Vanhanen.

Case 2: Story of the effects of polar night

In the *Trendy North* group (as they called themselves), the theme was Polar night as a social phenomenon. Modern science explains that our visual perceptions is not based on the quantity of light, but on the quantity of contrast, so that

our sight senses are contrast-sensitive. The light creates an atmosphere, forms shadows and defines space, it also gives information about three-dimensional forms, distances and depth (Edwards, 2011, p. 158 & p. 160). A designer Ettore Sottsass takes this idea still further. He considered that light express sense of drama: *“Light does not illuminate, it tells a story. Light gives meanings, draws metaphors and sets the stage for the comedy of life”* (Malnar & Vodvarka, 2004, p. 207).



Figure 3. Trendy North group presenting their outcome. Light and jacket as wearable products as well as on the video. Photo: Hannu Vanhanen.

Light plays a crucial part in the arctic and northern life. In the group’s video installation students considered lightning as a key element in observing and visualizing the effects of polar darkness from the urban point of view (Figure 3). The group described their work as follows: *“Our installation of a video, a jacket, and a light is a symbol of the circle of day and night in the north during the winter time. At the same time, it reflects the feeling and thoughts of the people regarding Polar night. The Polar night is not only a physical state but a mental state also.”* (Khomutova, Olenina, Viinikainen, Salo, Magileva, Kupa, & Popova, 2014.)

In the video installation a person who is wearing an embroidered woollen coat and holding a light, which symbolizes the circle of day and night, is walking around in the city centre of Murmansk. With the video students wanted to reflect their feelings and thoughts of how light affects our emotions, our physical and mental well-being especially during winter time. Through considering the role of daylight and artificial light, the installation moved viewers to contemplate the key issue of human needs and role of lightning in meeting these (Edwards, 2011, p. 157).

Actually, the group produced two different versions of the video installation in which the city of Murmansk became an environment or a happening. In the first video installation the cool and dark atmosphere was filled with the sounds of loud music and the closeness to hectic city life were most apparent. In the second video the mood was different. It showed a new kind of view to city where life is calm, bright and slow. For the viewer it was interesting to see two different interpretations of the same story. Working in this way, students managed to show both Finnish and Russian identities and demonstrated the dialogues they must have had between cultures during the course.

Students described their approach to the theme in their report as follows: *“Polar night is a geographical phenomenon happening in the arctic. The sun is not rising above the horizon, so there is only a slight difference between day and night. The constant dimness and darkness is lasting almost all winter time. That [video installation] is one perspective on the phenomena of how we feel and see the darkness. Darkness is effecting on people in many ways.”* (Khomutova et al., 2014.)

In this case the focus was on youth and their relationship with the ongoing urbanization. In a broader context the local talents could become an asset for northern communities. For example a company called *Flatlight Creative House* in Rovaniemi is an excellent example of what may represent a future trend of succeeding with local talents who know their surroundings and communities. This company creates stories and experiences with passion and cooperate with for example, the University of Lapland and Lapland University of Applied Sciences. (Flatlight Creative House, 2016; Hansen et al, 2012, p. 185).

Case 3: Environmental challenges: Birds and people

The *Environment group* worked with the theme of the kittiwake and how the actions of people affect these bird populations. The group was interested in a particular bird in the Murmansk region and how its population has changed over time. This social phenomenon is a macro level challenge, but the group limited their focus to a micro level which makes their approach feel very personal and close. The students ensembled different pieces for the exhibition. One of the students made an infographic of the effects of overfishing (Figure 4), while one produced a news article of the situation. The exhibition also included video material of the areas where you can see kittiwakes and a fine art piece (stitches in paper) where fish, people and kittiwake become one.

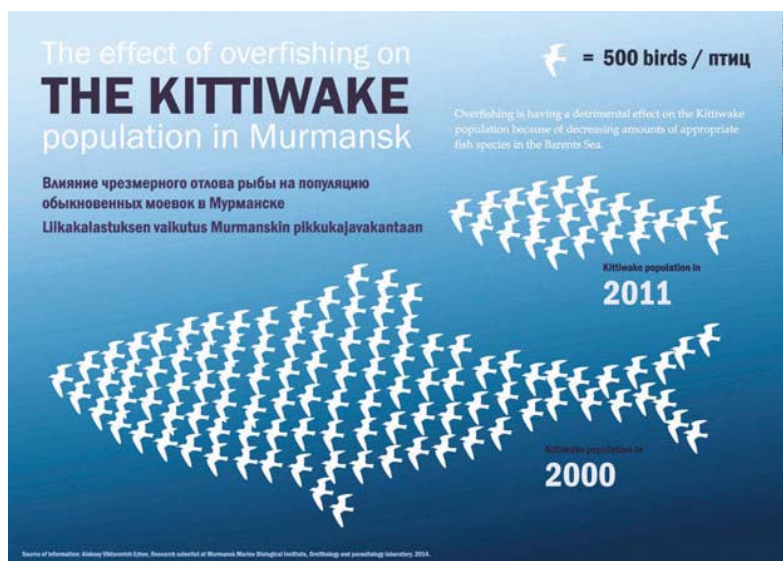


Figure 4. Illustration of the Kittiwake population. Infographic: Annika Jaakkola.

After the workshop, the students reflected on their projects and the outcomes. Annika Jaakkola (2014), a graphic design student from the University of Lapland describes her own approach as follows: “*In my work, I visualized the*

effect people have on the kittiwake population in the city of Murmansk. Overfishing causes a decrease in the bird population because there is not enough food for the kittiwakes to eat. By the means of infographic design, I am attempting to make people realize their power over nature and to consider whether their everyday actions are sustainable.”

Antonina Gorbacheva (2014), a student of Murmansk State Humanities University, describes group’s collaboration as follows: *“This project was very interesting not only in terms of meeting new acquaintances but also in terms of gaining a huge amount of knowledge. The selected theme has opened our eyes to the environmental situation in the Murmansk region. I am very pleased that we and our foreign friends are concerned with the same problems. Even the language barrier was not an obstacle to our study of the materials. The environmental theme of the North concerns everyone who lives there.”*

It was inspiring to see how large scale environmental issues and awareness of the changes that humans are doing to nature were innovatively integrated into group’s work through a concrete example of the amount of kittiwakes. Although there were challenges, especially in gathering accurate data, students did not change the topic. A diligent interview method helped them to achieve a greater awareness of living space of the northern bird species in a short amount of time. Students did individual interviews to local birdwatcher as well as to ornithologist. This broadened their range of knowledge and gave them room to work with individual strengths. Lively dialogue between qualitative research and art and design was present in this group’s project.

Iris Tuisku (2014) from the University of Lapland sums up the work of the team as follows: *“First, we searched for information on endangered birds, their natural habitats, and the changes in their behaviour. We used articles and books as our sources of information. We also interviewed a local ornithologist and a local birdwatcher. I think it was interesting that we started with scientific research and the end result was art and design.”* The group had also fourth member, Charlotte Clark, exchange student from Aalto University. She made a sound diary and video documentary of the current situation at the Murmansk port area. Through their works the group aimed at showing the cause and

effect relationship between humans and kittiwakes. In a bigger scale to maintain cultural diversity is to maintain also the diversity of the nature.

Reflections on the results

As the three group work examples reveal, students achieved a lot during five days. Most of the students did not know each other before the course start. An open minded attitude, ability to 'go with the flow' and also to make quick decisions was needed from everyone especially during the workshop. The course structure forced all the students out of their comfort zones. Although it was intensive and sometimes wearing experience, students learned new skills and new ways of looking and approaching their profession. One of the students wrote in the feedback, "*The week was really intensive but gave a lot, not so much content wise, but more as culture stuff and communicating.*" Another student wrote, "*Overall it was a good and useful course with lot of surprises.*"

During the course, cultural and educational differences were present. Teaching culture and learning perspectives differ between Finland and Russia. In Finland when working in a Master's level course, it is normal that students will work independently and instructors will operate in the background as mentors. Also, differences in process-oriented design workshop culture (Finnish) and a solution-oriented artwork style (Russian) were seen. Ultimately, this proved to be a source of strength for the workshop. For example, the *Trendy North* group's collaborative part of the design process did not include many models, sketches, or written documents. In a 'normal' thinking process sketches could have been used to analyse, to experiment and develop ideas (Brown, 2012, p. 109). Three-dimensional sketches could have suggested spatial possibilities of the final garment they made. The lack of alternative representations of materials (like fabric, print, pattern, surface ornamentations, embroidery and measurements) and conversations complicated a shared understanding of textile and clothing design intentions. The idea of a student "making" according to the instructions given by the instructor rather than designing together suggested that only the instructor had an full understanding of materials. In any case, this way of working also made it possible for

the group to move quickly towards building the video installation.

After the exhibition, a feedback session was held. Students returned to the questionnaire that they had filled out before the workshop about their feelings. In all of the seven questions the scores were improved. The biggest changes was in how important the students felt that they role was in solving the challenge. It seemed that the workshop structure gave students more confidence and opened their eyes to see that they can make a difference through art and design solutions. One student said that *“I learned many things about group work, art work, process and creating an exhibition.”* The workshop enhanced students’ feelings of making an effect in the chosen phenomena. Students also felt that their ideas and comments were heard during the course. *“It was a great team work which I enjoyed”*, one of the students said.

The students were also asked what the main things were during the workshop that effected their feelings. The answers were multiple like *“different ways of work between Finnish and Russian”*, and *“discussing the ideas and issues with other nationalities.”* The workshop provided students with some challenges and also a feeling of success when those were overcome. One student mentioned *“the hardships of accessing information”* and also *“language barrier”* in their feedback. Although the course provided students a great opportunity for cultural exchange, some felt that the ways of working did not have a big impact on their artistic practices.

A multicultural workshop model

As a result of the collaboration and the course a multicultural workshop model (MWM) was created. The model is a result of analysing the material created during the course, like instructor notes, sent e-mails, documents that were created during the collaboration (like the course invitation), student work and exhibition result as well as student feedback, student reports and project reports. The focus in analysing was in the process (what happened and in which order) but also in understanding the elements of complex multicultural collaboration.

The model aims to highlight the main phases in planning and executing such art and design workshops where multidisciplinary participants from different cultural areas meet. In recent years we have seen a rise in demand for organizing these kind of multicultural workshops for university students and during different kind of courses. A model for executing those workshops in a clever way is needed. Our workshop model is, on the one hand, based on the five day structure of the Murmansk workshop where different days were identified with tasks: planning, data, ideation, building, and presentation. On the other hand, Markus Schröppel's research was inspiring when creating the initial model after the course. He states in his dissertation thesis, that in the cognitive process 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches to information processing are often distinguished. In top-down approaches, knowledge or expectations are already given and used to guide the information process (Schröppel, 2015, p. 68). This kind of learning and teaching model has been prevailing for a long time also in art and design education. During ARTSMO course one of the main ideas was to try to break down the old "school model" in which teachers are saying what to do and how. By providing students opportunities to choose and create freely, although sometimes with confusion, it is possible to embrace the 'bottom-up' approach in teaching.

In Schröppel's (2015, pp. 76–77) opinion contemporary designers have to integrate the growing complexity of our changing social, economic, environmental and technological conditions and opportunities to their work. He also adds that collaborative design skills are not just a sort of magical, spontaneous event, they are much more the result of a close and fruitful cooperation in terms of planning, optimization and implementation. The multicultural workshop model aims to help students to learn these necessary skills in today's professional world.

The careful planning of the workshop theme, in this case social phenomenon, helped collaboration in a successful way and gave focus to collaboration. The philosophical idea of multicultural workshop model is to understand what happened in a holistic way. Not just as a one week intensive workshop, where students come to face new culture and people as art tourists but as continuum

of art and design education and communication. Also Schröppel (2015, p. 220) emphasizes the importance of defining the problem and its careful research. The problems art and design student work with should be significant and such that visual communication can contribute to propose solutions.

Schröppel gives an example to introduce the design process using the situational awareness tests. He divides the design process in four steps: 1) Definition, 2) Divergence, 3) Transformation and 4) Convergence (2015, pp. 219–222). His situational awareness test is a detailed step-by-step model and concentrates in the design and visual communication process. It begins from problem solving and finishes in tests and recommended improvements of the case. His process has some similarities with MWM. In MWM there are also four steps: 1) Definition, 2) Discussion, 3) Artwork and 4) Presentation.

Philosophically speaking, MWM aims to be a research-oriented model for the collaborative art and design working process. The model has similarities to artistic research practises (Hannula, Suoranta & Vadén, 2005, pp. 100–118), both emphasise dialog between practise and theory in the process. MWM promotes workshops as a foundation to where it is possible to anchor the process. Workshop structure works as a platform for co-design and action. From this point of view one could see similarities in MWM to action research models, where the research happens as an iterative, self-reflective cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and then, again, planning (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, pp. 184–186).

The process of the Multicultural Workshop Model (Figure 5) can be understood as a dramatic arc, in which the climax is between artwork and presentation. It is the most intensive part of MWM but without profound planning, data collecting and generating ideas, the presentation phase could be more or less a result of spontaneous artistic reflections of the new culture. In Murmansk social phenomena as a workshop theme definitely asked students and instructors to understand that art, design and communication are cohesive elements of the social, cultural and political life. During the intensive artwork phase the different approaches and styles will be discussed and debated. Skills of negotiation and compromise will be needed. Critical evalu-



Figure 5. Multicultural workshop model.
 Infographic: Annika Jaakkola.

ation and feedback of the workshop need particular effort in order to understand and reflect critically what the students and instructors have done and how to continue the multicultural dialogue between the Universities and how to adapt new ways of working in art and design education. In MWM education and communication are seen as a developing continuum.

Definition.

Definition is the first step of the model and could be also called as pre-orientation. Here it is crucial to know who the students are, what their interests are and how they see their own impact to the workshop. This phase is the first chance for student to develop his or her own concrete idea of the main theme. Because most of the students and instructors visited Murmansk for the first time, we put quite a lot of effort into information about the environment, political and cultural life of Murmansk and Kola Peninsula beforehand and of course during the workshop as well.

Discussion.

The second step includes the actions of discussing the concepts and statements with the students. We started this phase already on the bus on the way from Rovaniemi to Murmansk. Students presented their ideas to each other using a microphone. The second phase of the discussion happened at the Murmansk State University on the first morning. Russian students presented their ideas and interests before starting group work. Being in Murmansk and discussing with local people, made it much clearer to everyone what can and can not be done in a short period of time. At the end of each day we had time to discuss with every team how they were progressing and what they might need help with. During these discussions instructors pushed the students to take a strong role in the project. The bottom-up approach helped students to be responsible for the team work, although for some students this kind of working seemed to be pretty new and hard. The cultural differences and artistic opinions clashed but it is an integral and fruitful part of this kind of working process.

Artwork.

The third step as a creative process is the core element of workshop. The teams are in action. Often in workshops there is far too little time to reflect on the work students are doing. That is why a task of writing statements and concepts throughout the workshop was created. It is important to define together criteria for assessing whether the purpose was achieved and how well. As groups were forced to verbalize their work, their ideas and concepts developed much more quickly. It helped to avoid some communication breakdowns. Workshop model has to be flexible but it can help students to understand each other's doing whether they are working individually or in smaller teams. To adapt to this kind of open working culture was not easy for students and even for instructors it was a challenge.

Presentation.

Presenting is the fourth step and the final goal of the workshop. The aim of this phase is to finalise and publish the results. The whole exhibition was designed

and built by the students with a little help from the instructors. There groups presented their works and heard from the other teams, how their main statement developed during the workshop. Students, instructors, visitors and local media were invited to the exhibition. The exhibition was followed by a feedback session. Instructors also wrote feedback to each group after the workshops and sent it by e-mail to students. This is an important part of the last phase of the multicultural workshop model. Here is a great opportunity to learn from the experience and intensive days spend defining, discussing and creating. In this case also the questionnaire completed before and after the workshop enabled the collection of up-to-date, straight and anonymous feedback from the students that represented different fields and working cultures. This way it is possible to document experiences, write publications and use those in the future planning of similar activities. By seeing the workshops like an integral part and a continuum of art and design education, we can build together a working platform for cultural cooperation.

Conclusion

For an instructor, the workshop week gave a possibility to see the cultural similarities and differences of Finnish and Russian academic life but also local city life. Murmansk is a city of great contrasts. The city area includes the huge merchant and military port of the windy Arctic sea but also a mix of neoclassical and Soviet architecture and beautiful boulevards lined with trees in the city centre.

The main elements of the experience can be condensed to few sentences and a picture (Figure 6).

“On the last day of October it is raining snowflakes, which embellish everything on Lenin Prospect of Murmansk. I am surprised of the cube heads who are passing me by. Russia today is astonishing. I am forced to take a picture. I will reveal the hybrid truth. The carriers of these white exhibition stands are coming from the Finnish and

Russian art and design schools. They are on their way to erect the First Artsmo Network workshop exhibition called Murmansk – a social phenomenon.” (Vanhanen, 2014.)



Figure 6. Carrying exhibition stands at Lenin Prospect. Photo and previous text was first published at Kide Magazine 4/2014, 28–29. Photo: Hannu Vanhanen.

The presentations and exhibition phase of the workshop was crucial. It gave student groups a mutual focus point as they knew they should have something to present on fifth day of the workshop. The exhibition was organized in order to communicate, not just in order to showcase finish final works of art. The communication between participants but also towards the outside community has continued long after the intensive week. Students and instructors have continued official and unofficial communication not only through academic connections but also via social media (e.g. Facebook and LinkedIn). Russian instructors invited Finnish colleagues to write an article about the workshop experiences to MSHU’s conference publication. (Pietarinen, Vanhanen & Kuure, 2015). Finnish instructors wrote articles also in Finnish publications

(Pietarinen, 2015). Also Russian partners wrote about the collaboration for example to their University webpages (Murmansk Arctic State University, 2015). The results of *Trendy North* group were also exhibited in Rovaniemi in February 2015 during the Arctic Design Week.

The ability to run and participate in workshops seems to be important skill in today's art and design field where participatory approaches and co-design methods are popular. In this kind of intensive workshop the importance of face-to-face meetings is highlighted. This requires an ability to meet people, discuss and communicate, even compromise to and use one's own strengths in order to produce good results together. It is also practical to use mobile technology in the communication after and before the real workshop at the local environment. As the groups worked intensively with the chosen social phenomena, they also became more responsible for the result they are producing. Students reflected which kind of story or comment they want to propose and understood how art and design solutions can support the current way of doing things or propose change. The workshop model also supported different levels of communication, namely between instructors, between students and between students and instructors.

The communication can be seen as a collaborative sense-making process through action, practical and collaborative art and design work. The created model promotes a collaborative and practise-based view to communication where the learning and creative ideas happen and are developed in the relationship between the participants not only by the individual. Larsen and Friis (2005) have studied communication through theatre in an organizational context. They state that communication is no longer a tool for sending messages but the essence of becoming who we become, and creating what we create together. The MWM aims to provide building blocks for valuing interplay between people, not only the individual work, in art and design courses.

The MWM can be applied to different kind of learning situations where it is important to do multidisciplinary and multicultural art and design work in a short time period. The model is flexible and its development is an ongoing process. In future the workshop model needs to be tested in other workshops.

Overall it is important that workshop and course outcomes are presented, but also that those results are taken further, evaluated and then connected to a wider perspective.

The multicultural workshop model also provides tools to bridge the working cultures of research and design. The documentation tools are built in to the model. This way it is possible to open up and make the workshop culture more transparent. We believe that organizing such multicultural workshops offers lot of potential. MWM provides a platform for mutual learning for instructors and students, but more importantly it can change the way we see, appreciate and design the surroundings we live in.

Endnotes

¹ Mr. Pink was an independent youth house in Murmansk. It provided funding and guidance for more than 80 youth-run creative initiatives during 2012–2015. But after a long, unsuccessful struggle to gain financial and political support from the municipal government it was closed in May 2015.

² Kittiwake is a bird which nests in Murmansk region. It is a species of gull. The name is derived from its call, a shrill 'kittee-wa-aaake, kitte-wa-aaake'.

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