

# HAY BARN DIARIES AND CAPERCAILZIES' TAILS

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Figure 1. Winter landscape of Kõngäs Village on River Ounas.

Photo: Timo Jokela, 2021.

**M**y dream as leader of the Living in the Landscape (LiLa) Summer School of the Arctic Sustainable Art and Design (ASAD) network of the University of Arctic was to run the LiLa annually in such a way that participants would have opportunities to learn about the Arctic and the North, in general, by visiting authentic places, communities, and situations instead of studying in university campuses. In 2020-2021, during the Covid -19 pandemic, we were forced to remain in the locations where we are currently living in. For me, this offered the possibility to work in Kõngäs, a small village in the Finnish Lapland where I grew up.

Kõngäs was established at the banks of the Ounas River in the 17th century, when the way of life of the first Finnish settlers and the members of Kittilä Sámi village merged. I grew up in this village much later, when the main livelihoods were milk production and reindeer husbandry. Nature resources, like fishing, hunting, picking berries, etc., were important for most of the families in those days, and the landscape and the cycle of the seasons shaped the way of living in the village.

During the reading phase of LiLa Spring School, both students and staff explored different ways of thinking about landscape. Tim Ingold's anthropological and phenomenological way of looking at the landscape was one of the key inspirations for LiLa's multi-disciplinary and art-based activities. Ingold (2000, p. 155) explores the human as an organism that 'feels' its way through the world that is itself in motion. Thus, Ingold's landscape is an ever-changing 'relationship'.

In his article "The Temporality of the Landscape," Ingold (1993) noted that there has been a habit of viewing the landscape either as a passive background for human activity or as a symbolic arrangement of space. In Western art,





Figure 2. A dialog with generation starting on frozen Ounas River. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2021.





Figure 3. A cafe break at the hay barn on the river bank at the end of the 1960s. Photo: Markku Tammi.



Figure 4. A break at hay barn on the river bank in the 1920s. Photo: Brita Lahti.

landscape is traditionally understood as a wide panorama, and in Finland, the Lappish landscape is associated with an image of a pristine, static, and epic nature. In recent years, however, the landscape surrounding my home village has clearly manifested its transformation due to forest harvesting, cold mining, and urban tourism environments.

According to Ingold (1993), it is more productive to consider the landscape temporally as a process that is constantly transformed by the activities of living organisms. His concept of “taskscape” formed the basis of the LiLa course. In his article, Ingold denies the separation of humans from the landscape. His concept underscores the impossibility of the perception of the landscape out from the distance and emphasizes the role of various senses in shaping our understanding of landscape, providing a parallel to current post-humanism trends in nature-focuses contemporary art. During LiLa, Ingold’s taskscape was used as a working concept to reshape our perception and understanding of the landscape.

Later, Ingold (2020) argued: “By the way, I don’t like this word taskscape. I invented it a long time ago in order to get rid of it. I wanted to show that the taskscape and landscape are the same. If we understand that landscape is a temporal process, we don’t need that word”. He also clarifies the difference between task and act: “A task is something that falls to you to do. An act is something that you might just do, of your own initiative”. Ingold points out that a task is relational in a way that an act is not. According to him, an action is a task when it is part of a relationship within a collective; it is something that someone is required to do because of membership in a group.

Through my works of art, I explored the tasks that villagers had in Köngäs. The ties between their livelihoods, nature’s

resources, and the annual cycle of seasons determine the tasks according to which the village lived an previous generations have left their marks, especially on the agricultural landscape on the riverbanks. Ingold’s (1993) notions regarding the landscape as relationship motivated me to think about my own relations: how I perceive the landscape and interpret what I find there is a relationship to both the past and the situation where I am now. I wonder whether the elder generations of the village are still giving me a mental task to go to woods and hayfields along the river, or is the task I’m respecting coming from the world of art where I currently work?

However, something has transformed in the woods and on the hayfields. There is no haymaking on the meadows of the riverbanks anymore. since agriculture has changed. In April, the landscape was covered with snow, and I did a series of snow installations, Hay Barn Diaries, connected to the old haymaking fields. In the hunting woods, I went snowmobiling with my camera instead of a hunting gun, creating a series of In the Landscape with Capercaillies. Working in the landscape gives me both mental and physical pleasure, and I feel that I’m able to connect with the things that are important to me—past and present, knowledge and experience, research and art, landscape and myself.

## **HAY BARN DIARIES**

The fertile banks of the river Ounas were among the key reasons why Köngäs, my home village, was built at this location. Hay for cows was harvested over long distances along the river banks, and haymaking shaped both the river landscape and the villagers’ relationship to it.



Figures 5. Installation with snow and photographs inside ice blocks on Ketinsaari, River Ounas. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2021.





Figures 6 and 7. Installation with snow and photographs inside ice blocks on Ketinsaari, River Ounas. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2021.







Figure 8 and 9. In the capercaillies woods with my grandchildren  
Isla and Vili and photographs of their great-grandfathers.  
Installation with capercaillies' tails. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2021.





Figure 10 and 11. In the capercaillies woods with my grandchil-  
dren Isla and Vili and photographs of their great-grandfathers.  
Installation with capercaillies' tails. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2021.



After being cut and dried, hay had to be protected from rain and reindeer in small log-built barns. The barns and the meadows around the village formed a complex of place-related stories. Some barns, 150-180 years of age, still stand at the river banks, now shaded by willows and birches. Inside the barns, the walls are full of haymakers' writings, 'diary notes', carved with knife or marked by pencil.

During a week in late April, I made a trip by snow scooter to some of these forgotten barns each morning. I brought with me a saw and photographs of elder generations frozen inside ice blocks. I worked in front of the barns for a while. I measured the amount of hardened snow and the landscape with my saw and my own body's strength. The people who previously worked there were with me as photograph in ice blocks, and I read out their diaries from the hay barn walls.

### **IN THE LANDSCAPE WITH CAPERCAILZIES**

As part of the ecoculture of the village, I was brought up as a hunter in my youth. Hunting was a task during a short period in autumn; for the rest of the year, it was a way to follow the landscape and its inhabitants, animals and birds. In the spring, conversation with villagers easily turned to capercaillie, as it is the most valuable game bird and a symbol of wild and untouched forest—all is well in the forest if you meet capercaillies.

For a few mornings, I went to the forest looking for the capercaillies dwelling places. I had my grandchildren with me and photographs of my ancestors frozen in ice blocks. Today, many places where capercaillies used to gather in

spring for their estrus period are now silent, since heavy wood harvesting has destroyed much of the old forest.

At Rouravuoma, I listened the rumble of Europe's biggest gold mine. The noise mixed with the calls of migratory birds, cranes, and swans, and the smoke from the mine merged with the clouds. Piece by piece, the mining company occupies the landscape and hunting forest of the villagers. I made an installation with snow, old photographs, and capercaillies' tails that I had hunted in previous autumns.

### **REFERENCES**

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Figure 12. In the capercaillies woods with my grandchildren Isla and Vili and photographs of their great-grandfathers.  
Installation with capercaillies' tails. Photo: Timo Jokela, 2021.

