

## Discovering individual Stories



*Figure 1. Changing perspectives at Högklinten. Image: Elina Härkönen, 2023*

Writing has always been a safe space for me. Making writing part of my taskscape in Höga Kusten led me from visual and auditory observations to my inner feelings and thoughts. Thoughts about the incredible diversity of personal stories we have. Thoughts about how these stories are temporal, as Ingold (1993) explained in the context of landscapes. It is dependent on the observer(s), how many, which and how detailed individual stories will be understood. Changing perspective makes us learn to see, to hear, to smell, to feel and to live (Figure 1). It helps us learn to see details as well as the context in which they are placed. These thoughts made me more and more curious about the parallels of landscape and personality and I wondered if these could be represented in an artwork.

Humans leave traces everywhere (Figure 2). These traces become most obvious when they are in stark contrast to their surroundings when they stand out as something different. However, I would argue that small differences are often overlooked, both in landscape and social life. I often work with maps, which show me an abstraction of the world that is out there: a model with hard borders and defined categories. This is also what I observe in society. There are groups of people. One might belong to several of them, but there are defined limits to where one does not belong. Within these groups, peo-



*Figure 2. Human traces at Rotsidan.  
Image: Bigna Lu Abderhalden, 2023.*

ple are expected to be the same. It is not the reality I am looking at, but it is what I perceive in a hurry and what I will slowly accept as reality if I am not reminded by contrasts, irregularities, differences or by details that catch my eye when I am outside and become part of the landscape or the group in question. This is because under the surface, a forest is not simply a forest and an artist is not simply an artist. We (speaking of people and landscapes) are all individuals and as Ingold (1993) explained, a taskscape we are in is a snapshot of records of a lifetime or even longer time that is only available in the very moment. It should also not be forgotten that, without our surroundings, we would not be. A landscape has no end and no beginning and quite alike, a person

cannot decouple from the lives around. Even though one could argue that, with birth and death, our period is clearly defined, we will influence other lives beyond that time.

My approach to creating artwork was based on collecting. In addition to collecting thoughts in my notebook, I took photographs of details, patterns and colours. I would further argue that I collected emotions that motivated this project. I will explain my thoughts during the aggregation of my collection into one artwork, which I consider part of the process of exploring the parallels between landscape and personality.

Because being different is easiest to detect in visual aspects, such as clothing, it seemed natural to sew a piece that would be wearable. A jacket is something I associate with comfort but also with covering lower layers, which fits my idea of hidden details and the necessity of the surroundings to allow you to open up. Based on this thought and the time it takes until I am brave enough to show more and more of my story, I decided to make the jacket reversible. Thus, it would be possible to fit in entirely, to show a shimmer of your individual story as well as wear your individual story in full beauty. The pattern used for this jacket is called Hovea and was retrieved online (Nielsen, 2020). I decided to use organic linen fabric as a traditional fabric for clothes for a long time. By quilting the two sides of the jacket together, the bond between the inner and outer individuals is emphasised.

The pressure and norms put on by society will always impact our stories and on the other side, even if the thread is barely visible, there will always be a connection between the covered-up, generalised and simplified version of a personality or landscape and its actual individual story. The colours were based on detail-photographs in Høga Kusten, whilst the shapes were inspired by lichens on stones (Figure 3). Just as there are no borders in



*Figure 3. The outlines of lichens on stones were the source of inspiration for the shapes of the jacket. From left to right: Black-and-white photo, drawing of outlines, shapes on finalised jacket. Image and Drawing: Bigna Lu Abdehalden, 2023. Image of the jacket: Katrin H. Sten, 2023. Figure 4. Image: Bigna Lu Abdehalden, 2023.*

a landscape (Ingold, 1993), the single stories of a person combine, sometimes producing new shadings. They are further connected, as if in another layer of reality. Both in the landscape and in social life, there are often several things going on at the same time, interacting with each other. The resulting soft shapes, contrasted by the lines of the quilt, bring back the thought of a map, which is a reminder that even this artwork is a snapshot in time and just a model trying to explain reality.

The parallels between landscape and personality are numerous. Joining them in a reversible jacket that reminds us of a map of a landscape but at the same time shows the collection of individual stories, I hope to convey some of the parallels explained above. I also hope to motivate you to show your colourful side and to provide spaces for others to show their stories. We can spend our lives trying to fit in, trying to be the same. However, if our surroundings allow us, we should share our individual stories. In the end, we are all the same but different.

## References

- Ingold, T. (1993). The temporality of the landscape. *World Archaeology*, 25(2), 152–174.
- Nielsen, M. (2020). Hovea jacket & coat pattern. Megan Nielsen Patterns. <https://megannielsen.com/products/hovea-jacket-coat-pattern>

