

Mapping Applied Visual Arts

A Research Journey into the Streams of Art and Design

Masters Thesis

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Summary: The research process behind the master's degree thesis in Applied Visual Art (AVA) was divided into three main parts, due to the research questions; firstly, the thesis focused on defining the concept of Applied Visual Art (AVA), starting with on the definition given by the master's degree programme (University of Lapland) and also on the experiences in AVA. Secondly, the concept of AVA was located within the fields of contemporary art and design. The historical development of art and design and their relationship were discussed, enabling to find the location for AVA practices. Thirdly, the thesis looked into the meaning of visualization in AVA research process. The visualization is included as a part of the process by creating an artistic part for the thesis.

The main research strategy was action research, as the aim was to define AVA and the place for its practice through practical experiments. These experiments provided the possibility to observe and redevelop the concept of AVA. There were three practical experiments (action research cycles) conducted during the research journey. First two took place in Northern Finland (Inari, Rovaniemi and Ii) and the final in Scotland (Ayr), during my exchange studies.

As a result of the process, the practices of AVA were located in the fields of contemporary art and design.

Keywords: *Applied Visual Art, Art, Design, Place, Visualization, and River*

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The process of doing research in Applied Visual Arts in the north has been a growing process, both, on professional and personal level. It has given me valuable knowledge and tools for working in the field of Applied Visual Arts and it has also increased my earlier knowledge on arts and design. It could be described as a journey on the river, where stepping on the boat you can never tell where the stream will take you. Personally, it has taken me to the north and opened an incredibly fascinating world, where I wish to continue my journey in the future. It has given me the opportunity to find Applied Visual Arts, the field with many features and possibilities.

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Now one chapter is now turned as the research has reached its end.

November 24, Rovaniemi

The author

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1 INTRODUCTION

This master thesis study *Mapping Applied Visual Art – A Research Journey in the Streams of Art and Design*, was done to observe the division or the gap that has been growing between the disciplines of art and design by time. In the focus was Applied Visual Art (AVA), which was explored here as a hybrid of art and design. By exploring the possibilities of AVA, the aim was to find out if it can bring the two disciplines of art and design closer to each other's.

During studies in product design one run into the idea of the line drawn to separate arts and design. Having background in art studies (art school in Jyväskylä) and interest in both art and design, it seemed strange that these two were not more connected in the design studies, for they seemed to have strong connection due to their history and development. It felt as if something was left unsaid and there was still a gap between art and design. In discussions during lectures in the design academy it seemed that the connection between art and design was not actually present and that art does not necessarily belong to design and the other way around.

Fascinated by these observations I wanted to go deeper into the world of art and design, finding out what is the background of their relationship and what is the situation at the moment. The opportunity to do this came with the new Master's Degree program of Applied Visual Art (Soma; the abbreviation comes from the Finnish name *Soveltavan kuvataiteen maisteriohjelman*) and the study was carried out because AVA seemed to provide the platform for the possible reunion of the fields. Art and design have been strongly linked together during the Soma studies and the program has been the main motivator to carry out this master thesis study.

2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The inter-relationship of art and design and the fact that the two areas have traditionally been seen as separate, together with a focus on the environment was the main focus of the thesis. This study was done in order to explore and discuss about what place AVA in the field of contemporary art and design practice. Through the process it was hoped to find the missing links and to further develop the working methods in art and design (applied visual art).

Design and Art are increasingly thought of as separate fields, and AVA is hoped to open the reasons behind the relationship and to develop it. In this thesis, art and design were discussed together under the same chapter, in order to observe the connections between them.

An *audit trail* (Denscombe 2007:298) (showing visually the process of research) followed the process and visualised it. In order to make the research, practical experiments were done under AVA, which are presented in the thesis. The research led also to the creation process of an artistic part, in order to visualize and support the process of the written thesis. The theoretical frame of the thesis circles around three main subjects; Art – Applied Visual Art – Design (Figure1).



Figure 1. The theoretical frame of the research. Katri Konttinen 2013.

This finally led to locating AVA within the two disciplines and their contemporary practice (as it was seen as the link between the fields or the combination of them), which created the base for further discussion.

2.1 Research Questions

- 1) *What is meant by the concept of Applied Visual Art (AVA)?*
- 2) *Where is it located in relation to the fields of art and design?*
- 3) *What is the value of visualization in an applied visual art research process?*

In shortly, this thesis includes three main parts; first, the process starts by framing the AVA, giving examples from the master´s programs perspective and reflecting my own experiences. It is followed by the definition of the central terms related to the topic. All this then comes together in order to get a wider picture of AVA and to locate it in relation to art and design. The process proceeds, focusing to the idea of the value of visualization in research, especially discussed from the perspective of AVA. As mentioned, an artistic part was made to visualize the process and this can be described as applying AVA and Soma studies straight to the research by artistic means. The artistic part was done partly in Scotland (planning and material collection) and partly in Finland (material collection and construction).

Rivers were used as metaphoric elements in the thesis to describe art, design and their development. The research process can be seen as two rivers, two main streams, moving forces with a strong direction, expanding on the way, shaping by the research progress and finally flowing to the sea of knowledge (two rivers meeting) (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Two Rivers Meet, detail from the installation. Katri Kontinen 2013.

The thesis was an example, a starting point more or less, for the working and doing research in the field of AVA. It explored the possibilities AVA can offer, partly from my point of view as a student and partly as AVA was presented in the studies.

2.2 The Concept of Applied Visual Art (AVA)

Soma was created in order to reply to the changes within visual arts and cultural productions, as these elements had become an integral part of the tourism-related experience industry. This was seen as an opportunity for artists to improve new skills and also to develop new ways of creating art. The master's degree program aimed to integrate artistic skills as well as practice-based and scientific knowledge, in order to create ecologically and ethically sound environments, services, and art productions, which are based on the cultural heritage and traditions of the area and its people. (University of Lapland 2011)

Soma was a two-year project, which was organized in collaboration; by the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland and Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences as part of the Institute for Northern Culture (an educational network under the University of Lapland). There was also a thematic network Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design (ASAD), established by the Faculty of Art and Design. (More information in APPENDIX 2)

In a publication made within the Institute for Northern Culture, Soma was described as a master's program, which will produce professionals for creating art for environments, communities and companies (Huhmarniemi 2012: 28). The reasoning behind the creation of this master's program came from the changing needs in the society; project working, increasing understanding of the positive effects on community and environmental art. Also the increasing need and possibilities of artists working in tourism was guiding the process of Soma-creation.

According to the article, AVA means *contemporary art*, which is based on the needs of society or economy life and is shown as collaborate projects. In art related to environmental planning AVA means art projects where artist is working as community artist, planner or in a multi professional group (Uimonen 2010:15-20, as cited in Huhmarniemi 2012: 29). The definition enables AVA to take place outside the traditional studio-way of working, and widen the role of the artist. For example, the tourism industry was considered as one potential

employer for artists in the future, and where the role of the artist could vary by the needs of the industry. (Huhmarniemi 2012: 30)

The changing circumstances have made it possible to develop such a master's program, for the need can be justified and the place where the program is organised is the Finnish Lapland where the tourism industry is strong and where new ways to approach and create multisensory experiences is needed. The program was thought to bring something new to the artistic working, especially within the communities and companies, to widen the artistic network and to widen the working space and possibilities. It was also a way to include communities more in artistic collaboration.

Although Soma and by it AVA had certain frames, the final outcome of this kind of experimental master's programs and the forming of the new concept depends strongly on the practical execution; students in the program presented different artistic/arts and crafts/industrial art fields; traditional art, contemporary art and art education, glass design, industrial design, jewellery design, textile design, graphic design etc. The variety can be seen for example in the projects and thesis's done during the program, which showed the different possibilities of AVA in the working context. Giving few examples, AVA projects were done in themes of Lappish cultural heritage (Samiland-project, focusing on creating an exhibition about indigenous Forest Sámi-people), service design-based project (Service Design Workshops in Magenta-project) and art and design-based project (RiverSounds - JoenÄäniä).

The main discussion in this thesis focused on particular aspect of AVA: finding the *place* where it is located in relation to the fields of art and design. The study can be described as *concept mapping*, a journey through practical examples and experiences in AVA; defining the possibilities and future working.

2.3 AVA in Relation to the Working Sectors

AVA offers multiple possibilities where its methods can be applied. For example in social and welfare sector AVA can mean community art, artistic working guided by artists and the use of art in supporting remembering, discussion and rehabilitation (Huhmarniemi 2012: 29).

In collaboration projects within art and science it can mean the visualization (part of this thesis's research focus), popularizing, criticizing or neutralization of research. In artistic

research it is an important part of the research process. The collaboration between artists and researchers can also aim on increasing the awareness of the environment and on supporting sustainable development. (Huhmarniemi 2012: 29-30)

As AVA can be applied to the variety of working fields described earlier, the question rises about where it's place is in the art world. Is it part of the artistic knowledge produced by the universities or can it be applied freely in the field of art, as an independent form of making art? The knowledge of AVA can be utilised in many sectors and artistic work can be applied in planning, research or in the education, social and health sector demands the multi professional collaboration and cross-disciplinary working (Huhmarniemi 2012: 30-31) and can therefore offer new methods and possibilities for the future working.

Within AVA the artist/designer can be working simultaneously as a researcher, designer, and innovator; including the ability to analyse the place-related physical, phenomenological, narrative, and socio-cultural dimensions (Jokela 2013:14 on place-specific art as applied visual arts). This mutinous role can be seen in the working context of AVA, where the process requires multiple layers of work; background working (often place and cultural research), planning stage, leading and reflecting the working afterwards. It describes perfectly the roles we (Katri Konttinen and Sofia Waara), among other Soma students, had in our project (coming further in the chapter 5).

AVA can therefore provide an excellent platform for doing research in arts. It should also be seen as a potential form of making art, as a widening element. It has elements from both art and design and the focus has been strongly on brining artistic work to communities. AVA can be a good starting point for further research in art and design as it is in my opinion, the possible meeting point of art and design.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

This research journey was started as the interest aroused in finding out what AVA is about and if it could be the missing link between the contemporary practices of art and design. Therefore, certain concepts were chosen for observation, enabling the research to take place. Those concepts were *art, design, place/space, visualization, community art* and *environment art*. These concepts were in a central position in order to define and locate AVA through Soma actions. All the concepts are summed up in the end of this literature review.

Visualization, as the main factor in the third question, is being further discussed later, in connection to research and AVA (chapter 4.4). From the practical part(s) of the study, another concept, an element of nature, the *river* was also brought to the discussion. It was the main element used in the visualization of the thesis and also a symbolic element following the written research.

3.1 Art and Design

The two fields were, intentionally chosen observed together here under the same headline, for the thesis claims they have a strong connection, which can be seen in the concept of AVA. The history of Design, according to Fallan (2010), should not be listed under art history; when it goes beyond the spheres of artistic creation and craft production and goes to the realm of industrial manufacture. Design history as a discipline is rather new. It is not art history, though it originates from it and shares the interest towards the cultural meanings of historical artefacts. Therefore it is shared for example with the history of decorative and applied art. (Fallan 2010: 3-4)

The core in the thesis was observing the shared journey between art and design and finding out how they are connected in the practice and philosophy of AVA. Metaphorically speaking, art and design can be seen as smaller burns, running towards each other's creating the river of AVA.

Later, the discussion focuses on how art and design were presented in AVA and how the methods from both art and design have been used in the practical actions of AVA?

First of all, art and design are being defined by their historical development, finally reaching their contemporary stage where AVA is to be found, in other words, where the two rivers set to the ocean. Art and design are wide concepts and it is not possible to open all the aspects within this small-scale study, but it can be a start for further discussion.

What is it that we see and define as art or design? Is design art or can art be design? What do those two have in common and why have they been separated? Basically we can start by saying that art and design can be described as creative human actions. This does not take us far, but can be seen as the starting point, a combining element, for the research. Dewey (1958) for example, writes about the design behind an artwork, where design is part of the planning process (Dewey 1958:116). As he claims: *There is no art without the composure that corresponds to design and composition in the object* (Dewey 1958: 160). This, however, applies design as a verb into the making process. On the other hand, we could also say, *the art of designing a design*. As confusing as these may seem, they do exist in the vocabulary.

Design is said to produce Artefacts. The artefacts in other words are products; made for and by people, planned with people and used by people. Works of art have also been written about as artefacts: products of art (see Dewey 1958: 162). Both products of design and art have been sensitive to time and changing trends it brings. The common factor to both is that they are made by human or at least designed by human. Therefore a connection can be seen between applied arts and design through artefacts, even though the reasons behind them might not be the same.

Art and design have come a long way. They have been once sharing their journey, followed by the point where they have been re-defined and separated. Could it be then said that they are now once again coming closer by AVA?

The studies and practical works done within the Soma are used here as examples, for they present the actions done within AVA and have been shaping this thesis, for example by pointing out the main concepts used in it. During the research journey I have been working with the two fields (art and design), partly overlapping each other (for example RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä, in chapter 5.2).

Art and Design: The Journey in Time

The journey of Art and Design we are about to enter, starts from the Middle Ages (app. 500-1400, between the old age and the new age), when art and design did not exist as independent concepts. It was the time when artist and artisan were not seen as separate professions and when it was the skill earned with hard work that defined the skilful craftsmen and women. The era could be therefore said to present the early stage of applied visual art.

It seems more plausible to suggest that in the Middle Ages there was neither fine art nor craft in the modern sense but only arts and that people responded to function, content, and form together rather than holding one or the other in suspension. (Shiner 2001: 34)

Skilful crafts workers created products which could be called works of art as those objects were created both to be used by the customers and also to show the skills of the maker (the decoration style could be seen as signature). Artists and artisans were under the same label before the eighteenth century; the name artist could be used for painter and also for shoemaker.

There were neither artists nor artisans, in the modern meaning of those terms, but only the artisan/artists who constructed their poems and paintings, watches and boots according to a techne or ars, an art/craft. (Shiner 2001: 5)

At that particular time there were no institutions like art museums or copyrights, which today helps us to separate the works of art from other cultural artefacts (Shiner 2001: 72). The beauty of artefacts was more part of the life and working as craftsman and it was the skill and the quality of work that made the master. We can still see some fine examples of those, 14th century's treasures as beautiful carvings and stone churches that have lasted until our age, instead of artefacts or artworks kept in museums. These items are for everyone to see (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Fine example of handcrafts excellence; Notre Dame Cathedral (1163-1325), Paris. Katri Kontinen 2013.

However, the settings changed as the modern fine art institutions were established in the 18th century (exceptions the theatre and opera). These institutions embodied the new opposition between fine art and craft by providing specific places, where painting, poetry, or instrumental music could be experienced and discussed apart from their traditional social functions. (Shiner 2001: 88) This created a gap between the craftsman and the artist. By the end of eighteenth century artist and artisan were seen as opposites. The role of the artist was the creator of works of fine art and the artisan or craftsman was seen as mere maker of something useful or entertaining. (Shiner 2001: 5)

The term *fine art* was brought by the academics of art; the distinction between *fine* and *applied arts*, where the latter was describing utilitarian art; fabrics for churches, portraits of art donors and such (Read 1944: 16-18).

There was need for defining fine arts, in order to make separation to the crafts (which later became design); Larry Shiner writes about the development and points out an interesting issue by asking how and when an older system of art/craft – the integrated complex of ideals, practices, and institutions – was replaced by the system of fine art versus craft. (Shiner 2001:17) Questions can be asked also what caused the new uneven roles of the two fields.

This was the historical stage where the river of art and craft were divided into two separate streams, drifting away from each other's. The artist was now seen as free professional who created his/her visions and the craftsman was a worker who made ordered products for clients. As the ideal qualities desired in artisan/artist in the old system combined genius and rule, inspiration and facility, innovation and imitation, freedom and service, these qualities were pulled apart. All the poetic attributes, such as inspiration, imagination, and genius, were related to the artist and all the mechanical attributes, such as skill, rules, imitation, and service, went to the artisan. (Shiner 2001: 111-112) This way a gap was created between the two professions as the other (art) was lifted up on a statue of creativeness and the other (craft) was taken as working with practiced skills; the craftsman was basically following the instructions of the buying customer.

On the other hand, skills in art were carried from the masters to their apprentices during the Renaissance (1300-1600). In arts, nowadays, it is more about experiencing art than admiring the skills of the artists. (Salminen 2002: 104)

It was also the time when women were excluded from the art field as they were subordinate to men in every ways and could not possible possess the skill of creation, in other words, making art. Shiner's (2001) notion on the role of genders calls for thinking about the situation in the contemporary fields of art and design. In the modern era the gap between genders is said to be smaller and where the focus is one again on the skill, not on who is making the artefact. The topic however, would call for a separate research.

Towards the modern era; the machinery age

When coming to the 19th century and to the machinery age, the position of the artist grew stronger as the machinery brought to production was running over the small craft workshops. It has been discussed later, by the historians, that this process of replacing the craftsmen with machinery production took the whole century to complete, though this progress made many earlier handmade skills unnecessary. (Shiner 2001: 206)

Applied art was seen in the nineteenth century (1800-1900) as applying decorations, or artistic expression to manufactured, industrial products. Products appearance was important in order to sell the product and to give the public the best value money could buy (Spinning-Jenny by

Sir Robert Peel as an example of decorated manufactured product, Figure 4). Peel proposed the building of National Gallery in 1832; art was admitted for the first time into an official discussion of economic affairs; though the decoration or applied art, as it was called, was based on mixing all the art styles and periods blindly. Art was seen as something distinct from machine production process and it was to be applied to the ready-made products. (Read 1944: 14-16) This can hardly be seen as an action of AVA, it was one stage in the development of design, a small effort maybe to combine artistic work to design. Though artists were not involved in the planning process of the actual product, artefact.

The growth of the artists position culminated in 1863, as the profession of artist was officially declared in Britain. Also now, the markets became part of the art world, where the recognition of the artist was seen from the markets perspective, depending on how many artworks the artist could sell. This led to the contradictions in the appreciation of the artist profession; as the artists saw their profession being treated as trade; the role of the work of art as art was unsecured. (Shiner 2001: 200-201)

The machinery age saw the earlier established (fine art) academy as service agency for the new manufacturing industries where drawing became aligned with design skill. Art techniques could therefore be taught to anyone as life skill. Art was seen as a visual tool for reasoning (also the study of anatomy). (Sullivan 2005:7-8)

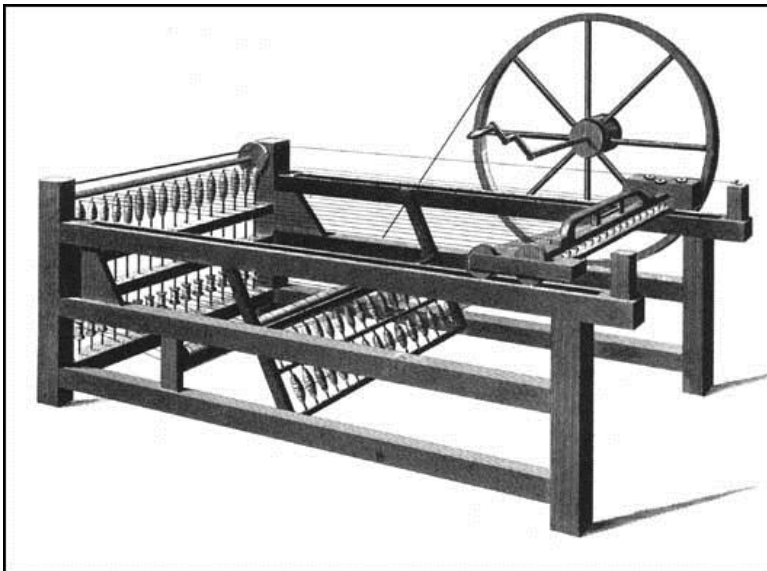


Figure 4. Spinning Jenny. Influential Agricultural Inventions from the Industrial Revolution.

As the position of the crafts was going down, the Arts and Crafts movement was established in the end of the 19th century. It's goal was to reunite fine arts and crafts and therefore to restore the dignity of the crafts worker. The movement was strongly influenced by John

Ruskin's book *The Nature of the Gothic* (1854), where Ruskin was writing about the division of labour, in other words, the *separation of the artist-designer from the artisan, often turning the craftsperson into little more than a machine operative*. He also highlighted the value of craftsperson in the industrialization era and criticized the separation of fine art and applied art. The movement saw the separation was seen as ruinous to both crafts and arts. William Morris, the leader of the Arts and Crafts movement, attacked towards the separation of fine art from craft. (Shiner 2001:234-238) However, this attempt did not achieve its goal as planned; the products created within the movement turned out to be expensive utensils for the upper class that could afford to buy them.

Later on, in the 20th century, another attempt to reunite the two disciplines was made by the Bauhaus, in the 1920s, where Walter Gropius was working on the reuniting of art and craft by using Bauhaus experiments as examples. The settings of the designer as the artist and the maker as the artisan seemed to be strongly set in stone at this stage. There were also other attempts to bring art and craft together, as the Dadaism aimed on integrating art to life and the Russian constructivism was seen as precedent for art in the public interest. (Shiner 2001: 254, Arlene Raven, as cited in Kwon 2002:106) In the visual arts since the 1960s new attempts on bringing art and life closer have been made; pop, conceptual, performance, installation, and environmental art (coming further in the chapter 3.3) have been resisting the polarities of the fine art system (Shiner 2001:294)

The separation between art and design still remains, with few exceptions. The concept of *artist-designer* as an ideal has been discussed but yet it has been little realized in practice. (Heskett 2005: 20) Due to Heskett for example Philippe Starck and Michael Graves can be mentioned as modern examples of *artist-designer* or *change-masters*. As for Starck we could say that he has taken the concept of design into a new level during the post modernism; the time encouraged for cross-disciplinary working and Starck is famous for his playful approach to design (see for example the lemon squeezer Juicy Salif from Starck). The concept realised in real-life would bring elements from both art and design together; it has been realised in the form of Soma and AVA, starting in 2011.

As mentioned in the beginning of the literature review, there are other specific concepts related to AVA. In the following chapters, the concepts of design (from the perspective of contemporary design), environmental and community art and also the concept of place and space are discussed. This leads to the idea of contemporary AVA, related to the theory.

3.2 Design Perspectives

According to John Heskett, design can be defined (stripped to its essence) as the capacity possessed by humans, to shape and make our environments in order to serve our needs and give meaning to our lives (without the precedent in nature). Development of design can be described as a process of layering as the new developments are added over time to the already existing. The layering process is a dynamic interaction in which all innovative stages changes the roles, significance, and functions of the surviving elements. This can be seen as changes in the old crafts, which have been strongly replaced from their central role in cultures and economics by industrial manufactures. However, the crafts have also found new roles, for example, in the tourism business and supporting the specific global market segment known as Arts and Crafts. (Heskett 2005: 5-7)

John Dewey has referred to the word design as having a double meaning; at the same time it signifies purpose and also arrangement, mode of composition. In this context Dewey compares a design of a house to a design of a painting as the characteristics of artistic design presents the intimacy of the relations that hold the parts together. In the house there are rooms (organized logically) but in an artwork, the relations cannot be told apart from what they relate except in later reflection. (Dewey 1958: 116-117)

Pirkko Anttila defines design as human made action, where the environment is changed by using some specific material (Anttila1996, as cited in Kettunen 2000: 11). In this context AVA could be mentioned as a similar method for changing something about the environment; that being a concrete change in the environment or a change in our perceptions towards it. This supports my vision where AVA can be seen as something that is affecting the community; something done with the community and for the community. In that sense the vision comes close to Henry Dreyfuss's, father of industrial design in the US thoughts about industrial design.

I find no basic conflict between those who appreciate the fine arts and those who respond to classic examples of the applied arts. They are stirred by the same impulse, a desire for beauty. (Dreyfuss 2003: 84)

The group of later called designers was formed to fill wider needs; industrial design was born as a profession when the utility became more than just aesthetic appearance and products needed to be designed for people to use. (Dreyfuss 2003) As the machinery age saw design in

its new role, it widened the gap between art and design; art was concentrating now more on the individual creation of an artist, whereas design was to serve the people's everyday needs.

These products have also been called as objects of industrial art (Dewey 1958); they are products adapting to their special use, also taking the aesthetical form (Dewey 1958: 116). Here he also draws a line between the art product and the work of art as the first is physical and potential (it is working); the latter being active and experienced (Dewey 1958:162).

Henry Dreyfuss defined (in 1955) well-designed, mass produced goods as the constructing elements of a new American art form and that they are also responsible for the creation of a new American culture (Dreyfuss 2003:82) Dreyfuss went further with his definition and named those artistic works of design; they are products of the applied arts. Once again the connection between art and design was made as design was seen as art. Design had become a new way of making everyday art, beautifully designed products that were easily in people's reach. Instead of museums, these pieces of 'art' could be admired at home and they became part of everyday life. This, however, sets art under design, not as an equal factor; the ideal would be that art and design would be working together towards a common goal. This would also arouse discussion and debate between the fields and could start a developing journey towards collaboration.

The world of design has come a long way from 1955 and now it is pointed out in the (product) design education that the products must be both easy to use and guiding the user and also the appearance should be pleasant. The designer is responsible also on the aesthetic appearance of the product; no artists are called to decorate them.

According to McDonald (2013) design seems to have come of age as it has come out of its *designer ghetto* and ready association with specific disciplines such as product design or graphic design. As now it embraces wider strategies including the notion of design as a driving force of user-centred innovations. The way of thinking (*design thinking*) is generally considered as an ability to combine *empathy* to the context of a problem, *creativity* in the generation of the solutions, and *rationality* to analyse and fit the made solutions to the context. (McDonald 2013: 55)

This embracement of wider strategies can be seen in the contemporary design, where participatory forms of design, such as service design and co-design, where both, the service provider and the final user are taken into the development process; by observing the stage of the services in their contemporary form, the faults and wishes can be detected and further

developed. The process is shared with the users, enabling their voices to be heard; this way the cross-disciplinary design process works as an effective tool.

Design has been applied to various contexts, such as hair design and funeral design. This, according to Heskett (2002), is partly due to the fact that design has not been cohered into a unified profession, for example architecture, where a licence or similar qualification is required in order to practice it. Instead, it has splintered into ever-greater subdivisions of practice with no overarching concept or organization, and therefore it can be appropriated by anyone. (Heskett 2002: 4)

Design, now, is an important part of the everyday life; it shares the responsibility with language of the being the defining characteristic of what it is to be a human being (Heskett 2002:6). It gives form to people's needs.

3.3 Environmental Art

Environmental Art can be seen as a method for communication through and about the environments; *In a general sense, it is art that helps improve our relationship with the natural world* (Greenmuseum: online library of Environmental Art). It makes us observe the environments in a different way and can show us new aspects of it; this way it can be part of the place making process. It is an effective way to go deepen the understanding of the environments and to get closer to the environments.

There is not any simplified formula to explain environmental art; wide range of strategies, methods and materials from the arts can be applied in the works environmental art. Usually there is a reason for the art work being in a specific place. The work is being created in the interaction between the environment and sometimes also with the viewer/person experiencing the work. Change is also often related to environmental art. The change can be slow or fast, depending on the way the work is made (for example the natural circumstances such as the wind, change of the season can affect the work). These changes often give the works a temporary nature. (Ympäristötaiteen säätiö)

Timo Jokela has connected environmental and place-specific (site-specific) art as part of AVA-working. Environmental art has taken a role as a common denominator of the multiform art phenomenon, in connection to the artist's working in the environment. In AVA working, it

is appropriate to restrict the general concept of environmental art and place-specific art provides a useful tool for this. :

Place-specific applied art has been designed for a specific location based on the identified need and terms. It communicates with place-related experiences and memories rather than with the terms of the physical space. (Jokela 2013: 14)

In many of the Soma-projects the works have been made in close collaboration with smaller Finnish communities (for example RiverSounds in the municipality of Ii). The place has been defining the materials and ways of working; it has often also been the inspiration behind the process (RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä [more about the project further in the text], which linked environmental art/design to community art). As environmental art includes many ways of doing art, site-specific art, soundscapes and mapping the environments have been in the centre of this thesis's research.

Environmental art has increased the awareness of the environments by making art; the ideas about the environments have started to change by environmental art, away from the perspective of taking from the environments. Instead, the earth is the material possessing the most potential because it is the original source of all material (sculptor Michael Heizer, as cited in Andrews 1999:202-203).

Site-specific Art: RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä

Site-specific art is often seen as bound to its environment and made under the terms of the environment. It is pointed out here as it relates to the project RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä, which was an example of site-specific environmental art and design project. Miwon Kwon writes about the possibilities to present site-specific art, where photographic documentation and other materials related to site-specific art (preliminary sketches and drawings, field notes, instructions on installations, etc.) have been standard fare in museum exhibitions and a staple of the art markets for long. (Kwon 2002:33)

In the beginning of the era of site-specific art, it was strongly against the nature of the works, that they would be transported or copied for an exhibition, but during the 1980s and 1990s old works were copied in order to bring them to exhibitions (Kwon 2002: 33). Site-specific art is connected to the place and for that reason not to be transported from the place. Moving them

takes them away from the place context they were made for and irrationalises the works (for example when taken into gallery).

As site-specific art was rising, the role of the studio-based artist was changing into a mobile artist, who was often asked to come and work to a certain place, under the framework given by the host institution for the commission. The working included visits and getting acquainted with the place, possible collaboration with the local communities in order to be able to make the work. Also the meaning of documentation came in, for it could be the key to the following commissions. (Kwon 2002: 46) This can be related to the philosophy of Awa, where the artist is working to get a sense of the place before the artistic work is started.

This way art becomes both site-specific (made to its environment = environmental art) and also community-based (made for and with the community = community art); these aspects can also be seen in many of the Soma-projects. For example in the second half of the ASAD-project, the RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä, where an important goal was to create a welcoming party for the Ii Biennale of Environmental and Sculpture Art. This project was site-specific, having in advance defined site (the new environmental art park in Ii). The local community of Ii has been actively working in the Art Biennale as many locals take part voluntary in the process as volunteers and help the arriving artists to create their works. People participate to the actual building process of art works, depending on the needs of the artists.

Usually site-specific art is understood as art made by the conditions of the site/place. [...] *site-specific art, whether interruptive or assimilative, gave itself up to its environmental context, being formally determined or directed by it (Kwon 2002:11)*. Like design, site-specific art is made by the needs and inspiration of the place and the time. Environmental design could be said to resemble place-specific art the most, though with design, the place experiences sometimes changes, which is not necessarily the case in place-specific art. In RiverSounds, the environmental art and design was shown by site-specific sound design.

Sounds in place making

As Environmental Art can be seen as communicating through and about the environments, AVA could add the process of place making to it. As Lucy Lippard writes in her book *Lure of the Local* (1997), *place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person's life*. It is defined by the people and the culture lived in that place. The place carries with it connections, information about what surrounds it, what has formed it and what has and will happen there (Lippard 1997: 7).

Time has drawn certain frames to places by the marks left by the people. People tend to have the need of leaving a mark to the place, where they visit or to take something from the place with them to keep as a memory. This often goes with the places we experience as meaningful to us and we want to memorize the place by either taking or leaving something there. The idea of leaving a symbolic mark to the environment (Figure 5) was part of the first action research cycle, the Multisensory Trail (coming further in chapter 5.1). The process was guided by the guideline of leaving no traces (Fulton 2010:41) and taking nothing from the environment, as the symbolic marks were made from ice picked from the river.



Figure 5. Leaving mark to the environment. Detail picture from the Multisensory Trail. Mirva Valkama 2012.

As part of this research journey, I have been working with sounds and soundscapes, especially in RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä and therefore the discussion about environmental art is partly focused around sounds. The process was inspired by the Multisensory Trail, through which

working with sounds and soundscapes in the environments was chosen for the theme for RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä.

Sounds are important in experiencing and sensing a place; we are constantly surrounded by sounds. While doing exchange studies in the University of the West of Scotland in Ayr (Spring 2013), I was inspired to look deeper into sounds after Graham Jeffery's lecture *Sound, Space, Place*.

The lecture was connected to the theme of planning a research project, which was part of the module studies on working with sounds. During the lecture, an interesting notion was made about soundscapes and sound design; spaces make sounds and sounds make spaces, *acoustic ecology* by R. Murray Schafer; sound cannot exist independently of the environment. (Schafer, R. M. as cited in Jeffery, G. (2013) Lecture 'Sound, space, place'). Sound making can be seen also as a process of place making and furthermore, it can be also related to AVA. The lecture was the main inspiration for the third action cycle, which took place in Scotland (Backpack Adventures [more about it further in the text, in chapter 5.3]).

Sounds can produce pictures and revive feelings and memories; the powerful element of experiencing has been in central role in the practical experiments, where a multisensory approach has taken place.

Balancing Senses

While doing research on sounds, the importance of other senses surfaced. Like said earlier in the text, environmental art (and Art too) can provide a multisensory experience, which, naturally cannot only be dominated by one sense. The dominant role of the eye-vision often rises in the literature (see for example Pink 2009). Like in the early stages of industrial design, where the artists were called to decorate the products, the focus was more on the appearance and not so much on the usability. In order to create and experience a multisensory experience, the importance of all the senses must be highlighted.

This, however, does not take place, as according to Architect Juhani Pallasmaa, the modernist design has taken the intellect and the eye under its wings and left the body and the other

senses, including also our memories, imagination and dreams, homeless. (Pallasmaa 2005: 19. On vision and visuality see also Foster 1988)

In order to see human beings as whole, it is important to take our multisensory nature into account. The separation of art and design can be seen here in comparison to the nineteenth century's so-called *Separation of the senses*. The eye-vision was seen as the dominant sense and taken a part from the other senses (Crary 1987, as cited in Foster 1988: 38).

The similar actions can be seen in the separation of art and design, with the exception of both being lifted on their own stands. Once we can see the meaning of the close-connection between art and design, the fields can be achieved in a totally new way. AVA provides a good opportunity to start lifting the veil between the two fields.

Environmental art has been mainly discussed in the form of soundscape art here, as sounds are important elements of the environment. Sounds could provide a unique way of approaching environments, for example, in exhibitions, as it would leave more space to viewer's own interpretations. Soundscape art is one aspect of environmental art, but it is also a powerful way of describing and creating places.

3.4 Community Art

Among Environmental art, Community art was one of the main art concepts of the research. It (Community art) can create dialogue and collaboration between the artist and the local community (Kwon 2002: 96), and it can also be an empowering tool for helping the local people to express their concerns on local issues. On that account, in my opinion, it can be seen as an important tool for AVA, where working is taken to the local communities.

It can also be divided, according to Lippard (1997), into *active* and *passive – as private art in public spaces or as art intended to be understood and enjoyed (or even made) by the “public.”* (Lippard 1997:272) The two share only a fragile bridge between them, as community art is often centred on the community in which it is produced and on participatory working (as important part of it), as in passive, public art is being born from the worlds of high and avant-garde art. (Lippard 1997: 273)

Important goal for our project (RiverSounds - JoenÄäniä) was to facilitate the possibility of meetings, between the designer/artist and the local environment (for example the river as a source of soundscapes and design possibilities) and between the local community and environmental art and design. (Konttinen & Waara 2012: 50)

There are also opposite views on community art and the role of the artist in the process; according to Hal Foster (1996, as cited in Kwon 2002: 138), the artist is often the outsider who is hired to collaborate with the local people and to help them to produce their (self) presentation. In ideal situation, the need for community art project could come from the community, but sometimes the (outsider) artist can help the people to observe the situation from more objective perspective. In the case of RiverSounds, the job description was partly guided by the local community of Ii.

Critic Grant Kester writes about the meaning and usefulness of art (foundational to community-based art) (Kwon 2002: 142). In what way is community-based art meaningful and is it useful? As mentioned earlier in the chapter, community-based art usually has effect on the community. It can be a combining element to the people living in the community, when everyone is welcomed to take part in the process and have a chance to tell their thoughts on the subject. It could be also said that community-based art projects, which are planned and ordered by the community might have great meaning to the community as the need comes from the community. It can also be empowering and educating the young generations about

the community and environments and how community arts can make visual difference to the environments.

As in Ii, the RiverSounds was part of the annual event; it was not executed in order to make changes in the community or the environment. As an example of project that aimed on increasing the awareness of the local environment, was a two-year community arts project by Nina Sanders, which took place in Port Glasgow, the former shipbuilding town. The town has in its recent history, unemployment, poor housing and other social difficulties. (Dawes 2008: 69) In the process, the artist was working with local youngsters from two high schools and the residents of the area. The outcome was the creation of a community garden with sculpture, Future in Hand (Inverclyde Council).

According to Roy Fitzsimmons, Principal Teacher of Art and Design in Port Glasgow High School, the project valued the involvement of young people in public project. It also attempted to cut across negative perceptions towards young people in the community. He highlighted the meaning of participating youngsters in meaningful public projects in communities and social processes, in order to prevent bad behaviour in the communities. (Based on the often stereotype of bad behaviour, connected to the area, where the sculpture was erected) (Dawes 2008: 71) The project showed how community art can make us see and find new aspects from our home surroundings, through approaching the area's history.

Community art can provide momentary changes in the community by these kinds of projects, but what happens after the project is done? It might have brought sudden changes to appearance and to attitudes, but what follows when the project ends and the process begins? The focus should be, according to Dawes (2008) more on the growth of people within a culture, instead of an item of culture constructed by people. The process of improvement should be carried out beyond the projects, where, by engaging in fully-integrated and citizen-focused approach, truly embedding the arts within different social processes, the empowerment can be ensured. This way the empowerment does not only become an indicator of short-term success, but creates the foundations for building and extending future success. (Dawes 2008: 74-76) This could be seen as a possible challenge for AVA in the future. It is important to recognise the needs in order to develop sustainable working models for AVA.

According to Julie Austin, the ability to engage and support clients in arts disciplines, in order to foster a change and achieve empowerment, is essential to community arts practice. This active participation provides the participants with opportunities to improve self-esteem and to find expression to effect personal and from there, social, cultural or even political change. The

main goal is to improve the quality of life. (Austin 2008: 176) In order to do so, the philosophy that underlines community arts practice, promotes the belief that everyone should be given a possibility to participate, to have access to art experiences. (Austin 2008: 181) When working by this guideline, most importantly, the participants and through this also the artist will get the most out of the community art practice. Through successful community art practices, the process of making change can be launched from the people living in communities.

3.5 From Space to Place

Defining what is seen as place or space is important in the process of defining and locating AVA (where it takes place in the contemporary practice of art and design). Space and place can be talked about as concrete, existing somewhere, but can be also talked as an immaterial stage (for example having space/place in one's heart or having a place in society).

Place as a concept can have two meanings; it can be both an object (a thing that geographers and others look at, research and write about) and a way of looking (Cresswell 2004: 15).

The concept of space is more abstract than place. It is often seen as something new or something we might not have a connection to. We can also explain space, for example the idea of one's own space, which can be strongly bound to the culture where we come from. In different cultures, people have different need for personal space. (See for example Tuan 2011 [1977]: 62)

Environmental and community art provide excellent tools for approaching places and spaces, in different environments. Through researching the place and collaborating with the local people (especially through community art), it is possible to get closer to the sense of the place and to see the potential and possibilities of it.

What is place and what makes place? In his book *Place – a Short Introduction*, Tim Cresswell (2004) talks about the concept of place and being in a place. He also talks about turning space into place (my place), saying that people all over the world are engaged in place-making activities. (Cresswell, 2004: 5) According to Cresswell (2004), people make places by turning spaces into a *meaningful place* (Agnes 1987, as cited in Cresswell 2004: 7). We make the meaningful places visible to others; we also visualize the meaning of the place (Figure 6).

By making the place visible, it is easier to start discussion about the place; turning it into a social place through sharing it. As Tuan noted, an unfamiliar space turns into a place when it feels thoroughly familiar to us (Tuan 2011 [1977]: 73). Could this mean that once we realize and get familiar with the contemporary art and design practice, we can find the place for Ava and locate it? The process of finding could be seen more likely as beginning of another process; once we have found the place, a base for AVA practices, it can be further developed as a field of its own.



Figure 6. Meaningful place. This particular place became meaningful for me during my research process in Ayr, Scotland. Katri Konttinen 2013.

Doreen Massey (2008) connects the thinking about the place and space in time. As Massey sees place as a cellular, ever changing network of social relations. It should be understood as part of the process, where the social action organizes itself in space and in time; place and space therefore should not be seen as stage of stagnation, for it is not it. It changes by time and by people living in the time and it is been made in interaction between people and the time. The concept consists of different people; it is not just bound to the certain people living in certain places. (Massey 2008: 9) This is supported by Henry Lefebvre's (1999) notion on social place; a (social) product, concealed by a double illusion, each side of which refers back to the other, reinforces the other, and hides behind the other. (Lefebvre 1999: 27) By making the place social, it enables discussion about the place. Through discussion, new aspects of the place can be found.

Lucy Lippard (1997) approaches place from the point of view of people and their cultures: lived experiences as the central concept. She writes about the meaning of localness and the

concept of place as inherent in the local, as seen from the inside perspective. People's perceptions towards environments (nature) are given a central role as the indigenous people and the Western culture present the opposite sides. Where the nature has been naturally formed living web of interconnected and respected parts to the indigenous people and something terrifying (Lippard refers to Western culture's estrangement from nature) to the Western culture. The place is often seen as *elusive* and *dependent upon* the cultural concepts of time. (Lippard 1997: 12-13)

The changing times have and will affect to the role of place and space. People can, for example, move easily from place to place and be connected to people on the other side of the world in reality time. This has made the world smaller and more easily accessible, enabling people to travel and experience it quite easily. It has reshaped our ideas about the world, especially through Internet, as we can see places and even "visit" them without actually being in the place. Putting it this way, the excitement of going to a completely new place might not seem to be the same as it used to be, before the time of Internet.

3.6 Sense of a Place

The concept of sense of a place and sensing a place became an important part of the process in the third action research cycle (chapter 5.3). It was also crucial in working with the artistic part (chapter 5.4). Lippard points out how the idea is often connected to small towns or nature, but connects it to urban surroundings. As people living in big cities today are confronted by a vast mirror whenever going outdoors. This mirror reflects us and those who live on this common ground. One may look and live differently, but one cannot avoid seeing others when looking into this mirror. At the point of knowing where we are, our abilities of understanding what other cultural groups are experiencing within a shared time and place develops. (Lippard 1997: 10)

Often these cities are places where many different cultures are living and confronting each other's on daily bases. Though often in the history, ethnic groups have been segregated (for example Chinatowns), reducing the possibilities for daily meetings with other cultures.

The cultural meanings of places and spaces affect the ways we see and interpret spaces and places. An example of this can be seen for example in northern Finland, among the indigenous Sámi people and in northern Scotland, where the Celtic language native Gaelic is spoken. This was pointed out in the discussion with Dr. Kathryn A. Burnett in Ayr (personal communication, May 30, 2013). It was to increase my awareness when writing about cultural meanings (here related to rivers) and how person's cultural background effects on their way to see and experience places.

Place is an important feature in our lives; lived and visited places build a map about our life; affecting on our ways to see the world. As places change, rivers must find new ways, therefore adapting the environments; also we must stay in tune with the changes in the environments.

Despite the global connections as mentioned above, the main focus in this thesis in smaller communities in the north, where the practical experiments of this research were done. On the other hand, part of the research was done in Scotland and the thesis discussed about the global phenomena's of art and design mad the bigger picture is also valid.

Massey (1991) argues that we must think through what could be the proper *sense of place*, which would fit in with the global-local times; how to hold on to those unique elements that make the place and the sense of locality. Massey suggests that instead we should perhaps

change our ways of thinking; from local to global sense of the local, in other words, to a global sense of place (Massey 1991, in Massey 1994: 152-156). In this sense, the place of AVA can be said to define a worldwide space. Starting in the northernmost Finland, it has already spread to other countries: to Norway, France, Alaska and Scotland (in forms of artistic working and exchange studies). There were also students from other countries (Sweden, Russia and Holland) in the master's program.

According to Lippard (1997) *a sense of place* has turned not only into a cliché but also a kind of intellectual property, offering a momentarily way for nonbelongers to belong to a place. On the other hand, senses of place, a continuous sensitivity to places, are crucial tools which provide the needed connections to what we refer to as nature, and sometimes even to cultures not our own. (Lippard 1997: 33) From this point of view, in order to achieve a sense of place, an extensive visual and historical research is required. This includes time spend in the field, contact with the oral traditions, and also an intensive knowledge regarding local *multiculturalism* and the wider context of *multicenteredness*. (Lippard 1997: 33) The fact that one can find the sense of place by being in the place and creating real connections to it give a certain ring to the concept. It cannot exist with light basis; it requires real commitment to the place.

When talking about a sense of a place or sensing a place, it can and often is a multisensory experience, the place can be seen, heard, smelt, felt etc. People, who live in the place, have closer contacts to it (Lippard 1997: 34); but it can also be partly experienced in a shorter time too. I would say that it relies also on our ways to sense a place, partly consciously and partly unconsciously; this meaning the things we connect to a place after being there for the first time.

We collect different data from where we are, some people might have built a map about the place, without knowing it, by certain details noted unconsciously and some people might have thought about how the place smells like or how the wind feels in the place. These notions might be said to be part of sensing a place, whether the mean is to get to know it, to belong as non-belongers, or just visit the place. In Rovaniemi, during the RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä, the place was approached through a small task, where participants collected 'pieces of the place' during a walk near by the river (Figure 7).



Figure 7. Pieces of Place in the Inspiration-journey. Tony Fredriksson 2012.

On Creation of Space and Place

Sensing a place can also be seen as creation of place; they can be created by cultural practices (Installation work in exhibition), but mostly places are products of everyday practices (being in a place). These everyday practices define the places where we are and create meaning to them; for example the walks to the river Ayr in Scotland (in chapter 5.3) made the place meaningful for me in a different sense, than merely reading about it.

Edward W. Soja (1989) has collected and created discussion on place and space and their creation, basing the discussion on postmodern geographies. He suggests that it might be more space than time; making geographies more than history and providing the most revealing tactical and theoretical world. (Soja 1989: 1 in Preface and Postscript) The focus of this study was following partly his advice, by starting to write the tales of AVA through location.

Soja writes about the importance of experiencing the spatial of spaces and interpreting the experiences and how there should be more room for the insights of our interpretations. (Soja 1989: 1-2 in Preface and Postscript)

We have the need to belong somewhere and through the final thesis the effort was made both to create a sense of place (finding the location for AVA) and also try to find the place for the working within AVA (creative practice).

Concluding the discussion on place, Cresswell (2004) summarizes the idea of place:

[...] the very fact that place is such a crucial site of contestation points towards its fundamental role in human life – the fact that we are placed beings.

(Cresswell 2004: 122)

3.7 Applied Visual Art (AVA)

Jokela (2013) states, that contemporary practices of art challenges us to think again about art education. The direction is now towards more open learning environments from the instructor and studio-based education forms. In these environments, the process overlaps with the rest of societal life at the centre of the education. This has been seen also in the development of contemporary design, where the direction is now more into user-centred design. AVA differs from the traditional so-called free art (fine art) education as it is situated in the intersection of visual arts, design, visual culture and society. AVA is based on communities and socio-cultural environments, as well as places defining the actions. (Jokela 2013: 12-13) The establishment of AVA through Soma has taken its place in a good time as the fields of art and design are in good stages for cross-disciplinary collaboration.

The role of the artist can be seen changing again, now by AVA; it is taking the artist to communities, away from the old vision, where the artist was working alone in his/her studio. To this extent AVA returns to the idea of site-specific and community art, where the place of conduct is part of the aesthetical design process. AVA can also be part of the place making process. We could also say that in education AVA can mean *unlearning* (Baldacchino 2013) from what we have learned, by reflection and it offers new ways to interpret the collaboration between art and design. Baldacchino spoke in his lecture *Art as unlearning; finding a place*, (held 2.2.2013 in the Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow) about the possibilities in art teaching, through the concept of unlearning from the history. According to John Baldacchino (2013), pedagogy can be seen as a place where we communicate and interact. In this place the interaction between art and design (AVA) was first established and can be further developed.

From the point of view of Malcolm Miles (2008 [1998]), art and design education should take a more critical approach, where design would be re-visioned as a critical practice. Generally design education encourages individuality; professional expertise through the divisive

specialism of courses, basing on the ideology of Modernism, producing and encouraging individuality. This creates a barrier between the designer and involvement of ordinary people. (The educational perspective would offer an opportunity for further research in AVA) Miles talks about the challenges in future working, as most likely characterized by responses to the problems of urban sustainability. As one aspect he mentions the multi-disciplinary approach underpinned by critical attitudes to the professional ideologies, from professionals contributing to the built environment; planners, architects, *designers* and *artists*. (Miles 2008 [1998]: 51-57)

This can be seen as the place for AVA, in the built environments, working cross-disciplinary and connecting the disciplines of art and design. It can work in between art and design, creating and encouraging the collaboration between the two. In the future the focus will most likely be more and more about sustainable ways of living in the urban, built environments. Communal approach could provide new ways to approach sustainability, from the perspective of localness.

As the literature review has opened the terms related to AVA, it is the practical working that can finally define whether the collaboration of art and design takes place in AVA and it can present the place for creating a meeting place for the fields or not.

Locating AVA in relation to Art & Design

As the historical development of art and design has taken the two disciplines away from each other's, the thesis was set to find out if AVA could provide a collaboration element for them. The practical examples related to this thesis were based within the two disciplines; methods from art and design combined under the contemporary AVA practices.

It (AVA) is not all about styling or decorating, pure design or art; applied visual arts are characterized by participation, collaboration, and inclusion where the process itself is highly important. (Waara & Konttinen 2013: 169)

As the literature on the fields in art and design has shown, AVA can be seen as a contemporary reflection of the times art and design; the need for a new concept has created a place for AVA. This is observed more through the practical working with AVA, which strengthens the research.

There can be seen a link to design in AVA methods and approach, but according to Coutts (2013), we do not speak about Applied Visual Design, for often the artist rather than the client identifies the problem; often this is done in collaboration with a community. As in design, the client often poses the problem to the designer, in other words, gives the brief. (Coutts 2013: 27) In the literature review it was showed that AVA can include methods and influences from many fields, and yet it is a field of its own in process.

As the actions are followed by an artistic part (chapter 5.4), these processes are combining theoretical and artistic/design dimensions in the study, designed to open the trajectory of the research through visual means. Visualization can be seen as the final stage of the location process, where AVA finds its place within art and design (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Art, AVA and Design. Katri Konttinen 2013.

4 METHODOLOGY

Methodology means the general, research-specific approach when studying a research topic. It establishes how one will go about studying any phenomenon. (Seale 2012: 37) The methodological approach for this study is qualitative. It relies on the variety of collected data, from the different stages of research. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000) qualitative research means a whole group of different interpretative research practices. It is not easy to define qualitative research totally as it does not have any theory of paradigms; it also lacks methods of its own. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:3, as cited in Metsämuuronen 2006: 83) It is not just one way to study the world around.

In qualitative research the unit of analysis is associated with words or images. According to Professor of Social Research Martin Denscombe; [...] *qualitative research relies on transforming information from observations, reports and recordings into data in the form of the written word* (this study combines them with artistic expression), *not numbers*.

(Denscombe 2007: 248)

The nature of this research is practice-based research, which aims on the creation of the final outcome (locating AVA) through art/design practice. It is about combining practice into research, reflecting the observations made. One way to decode and interpret practice is to define it as doing, knowing, being and becoming (Higgs & Titchen, 2001: 3).

Qualitative research focuses on the personal findings and observation and the interpretations made from them. The theory can be seen as tool and context for practice, enabling the meeting point. Qualitative research, described by Higgs & Cherry (2009), is a way of looking at the world through a variety of approaches used to produce knowledge about the surrounding world, here focusing on the concept of AVA. (Higgs & Cherry 2009: 3)

Denscombe suggests that an *audit trail* (Denscombe 2007: 298) should be constructed and made open to the readers. The trail shows as narrative form of telling the process of research. It shows all the decisions and turns done during the research. This audit trail is constructed by the descriptions of the AVA-actions (chapter 5). At the very end, when the whole audit trail has been opened and discussed, the possibilities in AVA can be more clearly seen.

4.1 Methods

Methods are specific research techniques, including all the methods used in the research (Seale 2012: 37). In this qualitative study have been forming as the process has proceeded. The main research strategy from the beginning has been action research; the AVA-actions made between 2011 and 2013 form the three action research cycles.

Within the qualitative research, action research seemed to be the most reasonable option for the research. The research strategy was chosen as it provides tools for improving practice. In this case the focus is in defining and developing a new concept of AVA; defining the possibilities through the working methods used in the practical experiments. Through action research cycles it is possible to follow the stages of development.

Also the meaning and importance of visualization in (AVA) research is included to the discussion, as it is researched through both theory and making of this study. An audit Trail was the main method for showing the visualization in research. All in all, the process involved various tools, by the needs and therefore can be called also a mixed methods research (where different research methods are applied). This could be seen as natural part of research done in the field of AVA, where the model of doing research is still finding its form.

4.2 Action Research

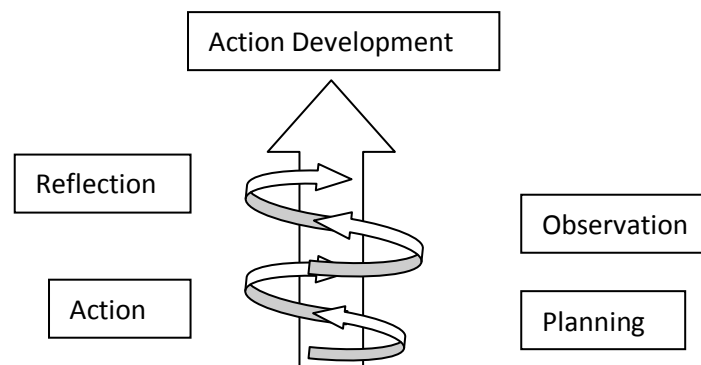
Action Research aims first of all to change; all changes are good claims Denscombe (2007: 124). According to Cohen & Manion (1981), *[...] action research is small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention (Halsey, A.H (Ed.) as cited in Cohen & Manion 1981: 174)*. It can be defined as situational (concerning a problem in a specific context), collaborative (teams are working in the projects), participatory (members of the research team take part in the implementation of the research directly or indirectly) and self-evaluative (processes are evaluated within the on-going situation) (Cohen & Manion 1981: 174 as cited in Metsämuuronen 2006: 102).

In other words, action research is research, which aims on solving different practical problems, improving social practices and also on understanding those practices in a deeper

level, for example in work community (Syrjälä 1994: 30-33). Action research aims on finding solutions to problem(s) observed in practical action or on improving an existing practice (Syrjälä 1994: 102)

The action research strategy took naturally its place in the project since our (Katri Konttinen and Sofia Waara) participation to the actions (practical experiments) was active. Action research provided an excellent opportunity to observe how the AVA workshop-models designed us, were working. After the reflection of the cycles there was a possibility to redevelop the models for the next action. After the practical experiments the stage of reflection followed and by the feedback, the developments were done for the next cycle to take place.

Figure 9. The phases of action research. (Kiviniemi 1999: 67 Adapting Carr & Kemmis 1986)



The cycle of action research (Picture 1) has been criticized for its formality (see example Hopkins 1988 and 1995); the danger in it is that the researcher concentrates more to the way he/she is doing the research methodologically right (then to what?). The result is that the research might “get stuck” and the process does not proceed. (Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999: 38)

As the model of action research (By Carr & Kemmis 1986, Figure 9) shows, the process of action research circles around the stages of planning, action, observation and reflection, in order to develop the following actions.

In this study, the model was basically followed from the beginning of the planning process of the first action cycle (Trail Tale in Inari), following the next cycle (RiverSounds - JoenÄäniä) and the last cycle (Backpack Adventures in Ayr) leading towards the final stage, the artistic part of the thesis (reflecting the rivers in Ayr and Rovaniemi). More detailed description of the actions comes further in the text (chapter 5) (Action research model, Figure 10). As all the actions done during the Soma, which was a pilot program, were done for the first time, it enabled more objective approach; as the lack of information gave more space to design the actions.

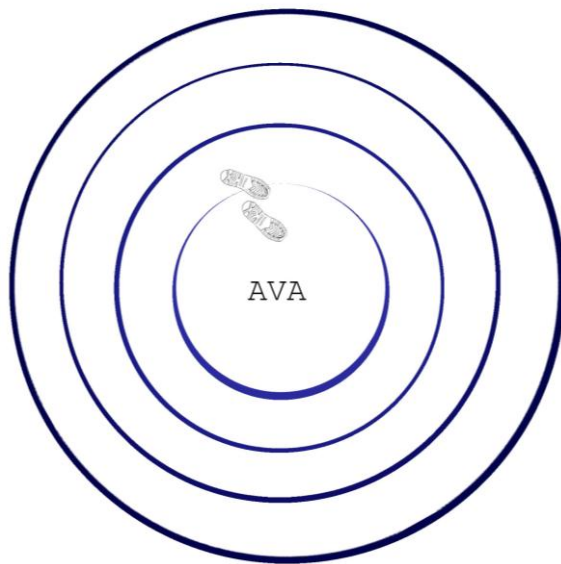


Figure 10. Action research model. Katri Konttinen 2013.

Dr. Stephen Maxwell Corey, a retired professor of education and former dean of Teachers College at Columbia University defines action research as very practical research strategy; the main aim is to understand and develop the action through research, not to create general theory. The most central aim is to develop the communication and co-operation between human beings. Action Research is defined not to be actual method but to it many research tools can be attached to it. Corey was developing action research in the 1950's in US, followed after Social Psychologist Kurt Lewin, who is described as the father of action research. (Heikkinen & Jyrkämä 1999: 26–31) It gives opportunities to approach research through various tools depending on the needs.

Pirkko Anttila continues by describing the actions of the researcher; he/she intervenes to the events of real life, and then examines the effects of this intervention. The main focus is to get exact knowledge for exact situations and purpose, not to get general information about something, in other words, hoping to lead to better practice. From the perspective of handcrafts and design, action research provides the fields with iteration strategies, in which the design process is approached alternately through planning, production and the research behind them. (Anttila 1996: 320) It can be applied both to art and design research and links the fields in research. Action research strategy therefore fits for AVA research as using it; the precise practices can be developed.

Discussion is in a central role during the research and the main attention should be in developing the process (Anttila 2007: 135-136). Here it is aiming on opening the discussion about the relationship between contemporary art and design, in other words, AVA.

Denscombe (2007) has listed three approaches to action research adapted from Zuber-Skerritt (1996): 1. Technical action research which focuses on improving the effectiveness of educational and managerial practices. **2. Practical action research which aims, along with effectiveness, at the understanding and professional development of the practitioner.** 3. *Action research*; which emancipates when the aim is not only at technical and practical improvement along with the participant's better understanding, including transformation and change within the already existing boundaries and conditions. It can also be about changing the system itself of those conditions which restrict desired improvement in the system or organization. (Zuber-Skerritt 1996: 4-5, as cited in Denscombe 2007: 127) In this study the approach will be practical action research that aims on participants understanding and professional development in AVA working. Through the participants understanding, the professional development can take place.

Sample Groups

By sample group is meant the people who are being studied. In this case, the main focus was on studying how the planned AVA-actions were working, in order to later on identify AVA. The sample groups in the actions done under the ASAD-project were basically defined by the project, as the group consisted of the people participating to the events. The selected groups represented a small sampling of people from the field of arts and design and also people from other fields and backgrounds.

In Inari the sample group was presented with the readymade *Multisensory Trail* and the reflection was based on the conversations and feedbacks during and after the event.

In the second cycle (RiverSounds workshop in the Arctic Circles Art & Design Summer School) the sample group was taken into the planning stage where the focus was to plan the artistic Soundscape works *with* the group, not for the group to realize. The group was given materials, for example themes and visual materials to inspire them in the beginning of the workshops. These materials and other grouping methods were used to create more relaxed and creative atmosphere; for example getting to know the place with a small task, which enabled everyone to point out their discoveries in a group discussion.

In the third cycle, in Scotland, there was no separate sample group; the work was based on individual interpretations and reflections. The cycle also started the planning process of the artistic part (Installation) and the process started in Scotland.

Observation

Observation is often identified as an empirical method for data collection through its dedication to fieldwork (Denscombe 2007: 207). It can occur in the real-life situations within the action research cycles. Fieldwork means by David Iredale and John Barrett (1999) getting out to the landscape and townscape and letting the place talk;

[...] it is concerned with what can be observed on the ground in a town and country with the sensitive eye, without resource to archaeology. (Iredale & Barrett 1999: 14-15)

This took place in all of the cycles, which were based on the idea of working by the terms of the environments.

When doing observation, there is according to Denscombe (2007:208) a tendency to highlight some information and reject some other. It depends on different factors such as the familiarity if the subject (we tend to see what we are used to seeing and interpret unfamiliar things through our past experiences), participants past experiences and their current state. In the research (especially in the second cycle RiverSounds - JoenÄäniä), observation, from our (Katri Konttinen and Sofia Waara) part as researchers and group leaders, was focusing on following the designed AVA-workshops in practice.

The nature of observation was naturally occurring during the process; some aspects were more intentionally observed than others. Participant's behaviour and how they reacted to the workshops was one crucial thing for the development of practical AVA working. There were various groups participating to the workshops, which enriched the process, for people from different disciplines have different ways to explore and experience things.

The process had some elements from participant observation, and according to Dr. Bill Gillham, former professor of psychology, it is important to consider the following: You need to identify yourself (researcher): who are you, where you are from, and what you are trying to

do or find out. The latterly mentioned is especially important as it, when done properly, won't give space to bias the members of the group. The researcher may only bias them if he/she tells in advance what answers or results are expected to come out from the research. (Gillham 2000: 53) This was taken under consideration in the cycles (especially cycles 1 & 2), which were important first steps on the way to find out the possibilities in Soma and finally AVA; these cycles were one of the first actions made in Soma-studies.

One option was also to use questionnaires in the cycles. This was done as there was a general questionnaire made from the Tales from the North Conference (by the organisers) and also from the Arctic Circles Art & Design Summer School. There was also a smaller, more specific questionnaire made after the Summer School, but the after reflection relied mainly on the discussions we had with participants during and after the process.

There was no exactly planned observation method for the actions, but the after-workshop-reflection and evaluation took place soon after the actions were executed. Especially after the two-week Summer School, discussions and notes on the progress and success of the workshop were often carried out. (Report *Circle of Art*, see additional CD)

4.3 Plan for Data Collection and Analysis

Research data for the study was collected throughout the process of the master's thesis. The piloting nature of the research about the phenomena of AVA has provided multiple ways for data collection by the practical experiments. As the study was divided into clear cycles by the action research strategy, the data was collected from these cycles. The data was mainly (audio) visual, and also the material produced during the process was visual (Figure 11).

From the beginning my main interest was on audio-visual material (videos, sound-recordings, and discussions), visual (photographs, drawings, maps) and written (feedbacks, plans) data collection. These materials were involved by the nature of the process. These were also potential sources, according to Denscombe (2007) for the documentary data, including also for example graffiti, advertisement, movies and objects (cultural artefacts, clothing and fashion items, built environments and places, body signs/language). (Denscombe 2007: 238-239)



Figure 11. Detail picture from Ayr, Scotland. Katri Konttinen 2013.

The first part of data collection happened during and after the first cycle, the workshop (starting also in the planning process as place research by Sofia Waara) in the *Tales from the North Conference* in Inari, (April 2012). Data collection took form of discussions on the place and questionnaires made by the organizers. There was a video made by the Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences about the process and photographic documentation by students from the University of Lapland.

The second part of data collection was carried out during the second cycle, the Arctic Art & Design Summer School (May-June 2012), including also the planning process (Place research about Ii by Katri Konttinen). There were a lot of sketches and photographic material collected. The process was also filmed and there were videos (Arctic Circles Summer School-videos on YouTube) made daily about the progress. Also sounds were recorded during the Summer School.

As the process was well documented, it created a visual journal about the process, which we could then follow (daily photographs and videos). We, workshops leaders were also writing down the main point from the days, which helped in the later evaluation process.

Discourse Analysis was chosen as the main analysing tool. It focuses on the implicit meaning of the text or image rather than its explicit content. The data are analysed by separating it to reveal how they: create meaning; contain hidden messages; reflect, generate and reinforce cultural messages and involve the reader as an active, not passive, interpreter of the message´s

content. The advantages when using qualitative analysis is that there is richness and detail to the data. There is also the prospect of alternative explanations that give variety to the research. (Denscombe 2007: 308-311)

Since a lot of the material gathered was visual, analyse relied strongly to it. The analysis can be based on images, but there are few things to take under consideration; the images can contain many meanings, like Professor of Cultural Geography Gillian Rose (2001) argues, that image does not contain *'one right meaning'*.

Image can be seen as a cultural artefact in the research, as the subject is approached through the images maker. Thinking about how and why the image was made. Another approach is to observe the image through its viewer (denotation vs. connotation). To help get to grips with the information contained in large collections of images researchers can use content analysis, and it is quite possible to produce quantitative data as part of the analysis of images (see Bell, 2000 for a detailed account of this). In practice, however, image-based research has largely favoured a qualitative approach. (Denscombe 2007: 306-308, 312) Here the data is collected to support the research, in order to find answers to the research questions; as was done for example in the third cycle, in Scotland, where the (audio) visual material presented the process instead of the written word (Figure 12).



Figure 12. Material collecting walks. Reeta Rossi and Katri Kontinen 2013.

4.4 Research and AVA

Asking what is meant by appropriate, academic knowledge, and how it can be produced can start the discussion here. The idea of defining knowledge has been inspiring this thesis as visualization is seen as valuable part of research. Through this question, the interest aroused on making research in different fields; in this case, making art and design in new ways (AVA); pilot working in the fields of art and design, trying to find new ideas for art/design collaboration.

The philosophy of knowledge in general (Epistemology) explores the possibility of knowing, the generation and evaluation of knowledge, and its validity (Seale 2012:9) It is often that science aims on explaining things, objects (Seale 2012:10) and through the research it produces new information. It is also justified to say that art and design based research can produce valuable information on cultural behaviour and on our ways to approach existential matters through creational work.

The thesis presents a feature naturally fitting to research done about AVA; it is connected to practice. It combines methods from art and design and can be seen as doing cross-disciplinary research. AVA was introduced as a tool for many fields, such as tourism, well-being and art; those aspects can be applied in the research about AVA.

Action research combines here the research to the actual process of the design and realization of the environment and community based art-works. It is practical research in AVA, which is located within the fields of art and design. In those fields, the amount of artistic and practice-connected research will, at its best, increase and strengthen the position of art and design as research subjects.

According to professor of Art History Laurie Schneider Adams; *Although something is always lost in translation, even in the same medium, still more is lost when a work from one medium is translated into another* (Adams 1996: 14 in preface). Art is not easily translated; from its being, (verbalisation) to verbal, written form. The translation might leave the most valuable feature, the experience and interpretations out. The experience itself and the feelings that can disappear if they are given ready and we are not able to experience the work based on our own ways of interpretation. The field of AVA (including art and design) is focusing on to what is going on in our creative sides. Every human has creative side, whether one develops it

or not, it exists. Though people see and value different things as beautiful and aesthetic, depending on where we are coming from.

Even In scientific research, the illustration is often needed to make the conclusions and stages more accessible; illustrations make it easier to conceptualize the results. To support this claim, the thesis refers to AVA as a framework which enables the experiencing throughout the process (with community -and environmental approach).

In design research, there is a concept of doing research through design, where artistic “product” or working is kept together with the written research (see Frayling 1993, as cited in Kettunen 2001: 111). The product is the final outcome of the research process and shows the conclusions of it.

In the study, as mentioned, the focus is on doing practice based research in *art* and *design*. In the paper *Research in Art and Design* (1993) Professor Sir Christopher Frayling is looking into the changes in research (in art and design) and opening the meaning of practice by generalizing it. Whereas action following reflection and reflection following action is often seen as proper practice, research, writing, doing science or design and making art is a practice. In other words, it is the brain controlling the hand which informs the brain of the practice. (Frayling 1993: 5)

The relationship between AVA and research can be seen through the process. Practical experiments made within the research, concretize the research. According to Frayling (1993), research creates reasons to do research; it evokes new questions. The driving force should be the need to find answers to questions.

Once we get used to the idea that we don't need to be scared of 'research' - or in some strange way protected from it – the debate can really begin. (Frayling 1993: 5)

From the point of view artist/designer doing the research in the natural settings, the importance of intuitive tacit knowledge often comes into the process. This knowledge is gathered often in practice-based methodologies, where the criteria for evaluating the research is related to the questions and context and the outcomes are interpreted as particular to the situation, in other words, negotiated outcomes (Gray & Malins 2004:72-73).

The fact that thesis's produced under the AVA are the very first ones due to the piloting nature of Soma creates the sense of possibilities and also the sense of uncertainty. The field is

new and opened for research but what is the correct way to do research in AVA and how is it related to other research.

Niedderer and Roworth-Stokes (2007) have been talking of the research in art and design, by problematizing it; the creative practice is often presented as research under the label of practice-based or practice-led research. It is that way separated from the scientific research in. It is true that research in art and design is often done in close connection to practice and creation (for example art, design and music). On the other hand, it is the practice that gives context to the research; practical working is valuable in art and design and it should not be taken as a separate element.

Even though AVA has proved to be strongly in connection to working in collaboration with communities and people, this is also a valuable interpretation of what research can be in the common field of art/design (AVA). The final artistic work, the visualisation of research is done, unlike the community/environmental art based practical parts, by the researcher alone. It is done to prove the need for artistic visualization in the AVA research.

As action research was found to be a useful strategy for the study, questions can be made about the validity of the actions executed during Soma. This will be observed through the actions later on, when discussing and analysing the process.

4.5 Previous Research in the Field of AVA

As we have noted, the nature of AVA – in Lapland was piloting; the information produced by the thesis's gave valuable first-hand information about AVA. This means that examples straight related to AVA's contemporary practice did not exist. However, as we have also come to realise, AVA is closely connected to art and design and the study is done basing on action research cycles.

As an example of artistic working that can be related to Soma, is the art project made about river; Joki – The River – Ympäristötaidetapahtuma Ounasjoen alkulähteiltä Ounasjokisuulle lokakuulta 1994 marraskuulle 1995. It was an environmental art project made by the University of Lapland and the Art Museum of Rovaniemi. The main idea was to find a base for creating an art work, orientating to its environment, through experiencing the place (the river). In order to create the work, it is needed to make thoroughly base work about the

environment. The outcome was an interactive, moving raft, inspired by the place and its history and materials. The creators of the work were also involved by launching and travelling on the draft and providing “river theatre” where people could participate if they wished to. The project focused on approaching the villages around the river, from the river and to bring out the history and meanings it has for the environments and people living there by building a raft, which would bring and take people away like it happened in the history. The river has provided people with food, routes and living (fishing, farming and timber rafting). (Jokela & Lohiniva 1996: 11-34)

This is a good example of approaching the environments and finding the visual elements from person’s own point of view; people point out different aspects of the environment and together they give wide picture of the place. The project had also a strong local approach, bringing out elements of the place for people to see and experience.

Another example of community made and place-specific action is Deveron Arts in Huntly, Scotland. It is a socially engaging and collaborative contemporary art practice located in the rural context of the North East of Scotland. The concept follows the guideline of thinking locally and acting globally, the town being the venue for practices. (Deveron Arts)

Deveron Arts is a contemporary arts organization based in Huntly, a small market town in the north east of Scotland and it is working there with the history, context and identity of the town.

Deveron Arts has an interesting approach to community art; it has no gallery. Instead, the whole town is the venue of working; it is the studio, gallery and stage for artists invited to live and work there. Places found throughout the town and the surrounding areas (supermarkets, churches etc. to mention few examples) are used.

Engaging with local people and the community through topics of both local and global concern, Deveron Arts works through a 50/50 approach. This brings together artistic and social relationships in a global network that extends throughout and beyond the geographic boundaries of Huntly. (Deveron Arts)

Deveron Arts has many interesting aspects; it is happening locally and around the area, it is involving artists and locals also providing residences for artistic working. It has also been developing its own methodology in the form of the town being the venue for arts to take place, bringing arts as part of the town’s life.

As these two examples did not present exactly AVA, they could be seen as examples of actions done in place-specific context and in the environments; these elements can be related to AVA.

4.6 Visualizing research

The third research question set for the thesis concentrated to the value of visualization in research, especially in AVA-research. The discussion was based on the question of making a contribution to knowledge through visual approach. Could this adaptation of visual research methodology have benefits and/or limitations when brought as part of research? (Gray & Malins 2004:97)

According to Gillham (2000) the visual dimension (Physical artefacts) is uniquely powerful in research as it can bring a report to life – enable people to ‘see’ in the cognitive as well as the visual sense. Using high quality photographs is the minimum, but in the field of art and design, exhibitions can be useful. (Gillham 2000: 89) Art and design based research is often very visual and therefore an exhibition can be effective way to present the results. For example, the final outcomes from the master’s program of AVA were presented in an exhibition. This proved to be a good way to collect all the practical information collected during the studies. It was also a way for students to ad artistic expression to the working and to visualize their own interpretations and results.

Sullivan (2010) writes about the possibilities of visualization in practice and research.

By visualizing ways to think, reflect, enact, and create, new possibilities for investigating questions and problems are revealed. The outcomes may apply existing knowledge in new ways, adapt past practices for alternative uses, change perspectives and positions, or create entirely new ways of seeing and understanding. (Sullivan 2010: 192)

Knowledge can be transferred also through visualizing it and that way new interpretations can be encouraged. It is different to read about the results than seeing them visualized. It is of course relying on the artist/designer, how results are visualized guided by persons interpretations; for example when compared visualized results from the same research, the visual outcomes might differ.

The research aimed to produce visual dimensional creations through the actions and those results were shown in the Kemi Art museum, where all the projects from Applied visual art master's degree program were gathered.

*We make meaning. The world is unconsumed in our acts of imagining it.
The meanings we discern give rise to new perceptions and the actions they entail.* (Hanrahan 2005: 151)

Visualization in research became part of the process after a lecture held by Diarmuid McAuliffe on Visualising research in the University of the West of Scotland (McAuliffe, D (2013) *Visualizing Research*). During the lecture it was pointed out that when working (especially) in the visual field, one should be able to tell about the research through visualization, using for example visual metaphors. This lecture was also a trigger behind the decision to use rivers as visual metaphors for finding a place.

In the research process the rivers, elements of nature and metaphors, were essential for making meaning. The Installation work gave more meaning to the research, by bringing the research out from the written, into a visual form.

It can be said that making art is the artist's way of being in the world. It is also a way for the artist to make his/her world visible to others through creating experiences. The final exhibited work, in this sense, was an extent to my personal experiences in AVA.

Here we come to the fact that natural sciences and art have their different ways of visualizing. They both visualize their findings, but the needs and ways may differ. Science aims mostly at providing reality based images (photographs, illustrations, and statistics about natural systems and maps) while art works focus more on interpretations and creativeness. Quantitative scientific knowledge is often presented in statistics, which enables showing the variety of results. In this kind of research, visualization relying on interpretations would not serve the purpose. Statistics and tables are also important part of research in art and design; for example by visualizing research stages. As a tool visualisation is very effective and can make it easier to understand even difficult things and subjects. This could be more applied to the scientific research, as the visual dimension provides another way to approach research; though the nature of the scientific research defines whether it is possible to apply methods of visual research into it.

This, however, requires visual reading skills. Photoeditor Ellen Manchester (1991) has emphasized the value of helping writers, historians and specialists from various disciplines

learn how photographs can be read. Photography's value should be considered in understanding and defining both historical and contemporary attitudes towards the land. (Manchester 1991, as cited in Lippard 1997:55) These skills are indeed crucial for how can experts be expected to read for example landscapes if they cannot read the pictures. The skill of reading pictures can open the trajectory through time behind a place. Pictures often carry narratives inside them; here meaning the illustration of the thesis conclusions. A photograph catches the moment, which cannot be relived and that way, it builds history and narrative for the specific moment. In research this can be crucial evidence and the moments should be carefully documented, as they can afterwards tell a lot about the process of doing research.

As an example of using photographs, there are few environmental artists to be mentioned here; Andy Goldsworthy and Richard Long, whose environmental works are temporary and the photographs are used to make them last. Photography was used actively throughout the process and the visual material produced came mainly from the photographs or was inspired by them (Figure 13). Photography is a useful tool for capturing the place and the moments, which can make the memories and therefore places last longer. Especially Long's work as walking artist (for example A walk across France from West to East of 473 Miles in sixteen days, Spring 2005) has been inspiring my own creational process for the artistic part. I constructed a verbal river walk while staying in Ayr, Scotland, during which I collected both photographs and verbal field notes.



Figure 13. Visuals from the photographs, Scotland. Katri Kontinen 2013.

5 DOWN BY THE RIVER: PRACTICAL EXPERIMENTS

This is the part where we enter to the source river, and start to follow it towards the sea. The process of doing research included practical experiments (action cycles), from where the data was collected. These practical experiments were executed during 2011-2013 (the Soma-program) and therefore can offer information for the location of AVA as examples of practical working in the field. First two action research cycles were done as parts of the Arctic Sustainable Art and Design project (ASAD). The project aimed on developing international workshops in sustainable arts and design.

University of Lapland organised the first two events of *Tales from the North Conference* (cycle 1) and *Arctic Circles Art & Design Summer School* (cycle 2) under the Thematic Network in 2012. Our (Katri Konttinen and Sofia Waara) job description in the project was to plan workshops for these events. The project also signalled the starting point for our master's thesis's. This thesis focused to locate AVA within the fields of contemporary art and design and by that creating communication between the fields. My colleague, Swedish art teacher and artist Sofia Waara was focusing to the educational perspective of AVA in her master's thesis. As the two thesis's had their separate focuses, the background place research was shared. There were also two articles written by us for two publications: *RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä*-article for the *Arts, Cultural Collaborations and New Networks: The Institute for Northern Culture* publication and *RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä: Creating new connections between contemporary art, design and traditional cultures*-article for the *Cool: Applied Visual Arts in the North* publication (links to articles in the reference list).

Each cycle includes also reflection section as the process follows the guidelines of action research. The final stage of analysing and discussing the process as a whole follows after the practical examples (chapter 6).

5.1 Multisensory Trail in Inari

The first action research cycle (Figure 14), the Multisensory Trail took place in April 2012, as a part of the *Tales from the North Conference*. The main themes of the conference were Arctic Cinema and Applied Arts (Soma was presented in the latter context). The conference was hosted by the Institute for Northern Culture in the newly opened Sámi Cultural Centre,

SAJOS, in Inari. The conference concentrated on learning about new ways of engaging communities through the arts and the role of cinema in the North. (Institute for Northern Culture 2010)

The focus was on exploring the main themes (cinema and applied arts) from a northern perspective. From our point of view, the task was taken as a possibility to create a multisensory experience for the delegates: to open senses and explore the ways in which people experience the surroundings. It was also our method for presenting AVA in practice.

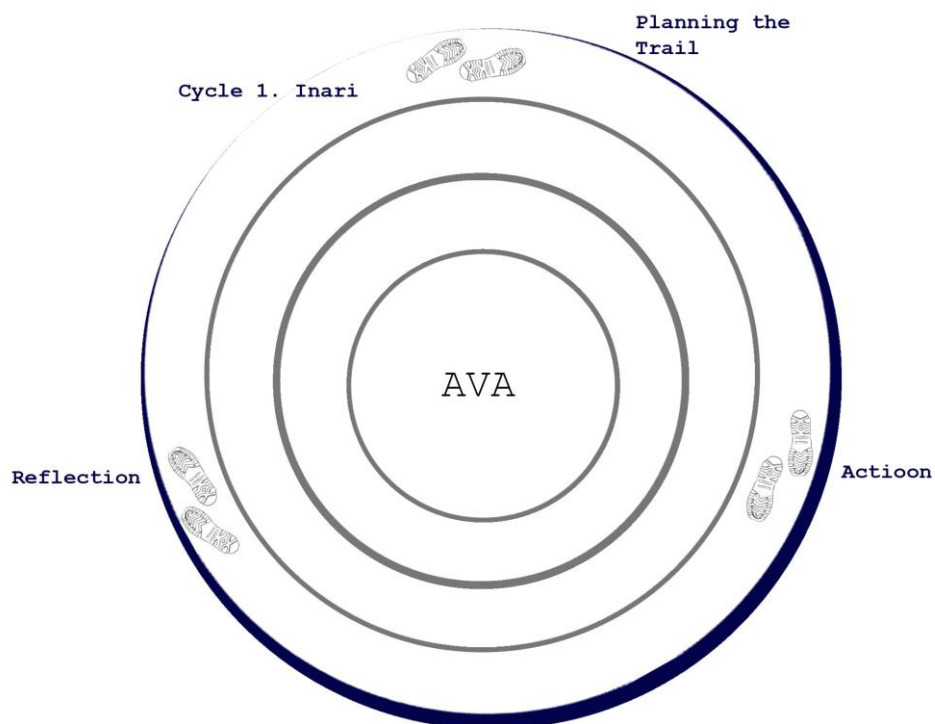


Figure 14. The first action research cycle. Katri Kontinen 2013.

Planning stage

The importance of our senses is noticed when experiencing the environment. According to Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (2011 [1977]) experience is a combination of *feeling* and *thought*; elements that are often thought as opposed (*registering subjective states vs. reporting on objective reality*), but in fact, both are ways of knowing (Tuan 2011 [1977]: 10). Senses played a crucial role in the Trail, as it was concentrating on experiencing through them.

Planning the Trail took place in autumn 2011 and partly in the spring 2012; variety of ideas and sketches went through, finally formed into the Multisensory Trail (APPENDIX 3). The planning stage was done together with my fellow colleague Sofia Waara, but she was not able to join us in Inari. Therefore I had the responsibility of the practical execution of the Trail and also the documentation for future cycles. After this first cycle we continued working together again towards the second cycle.

In the beginning of the planning process, we chose to emphasize the global thought *Think Globally, Act Locally* (see for example Schumacher 1993 [1973]). Schumacher points out the fact that we should start living a life-style designed for permanence, living in more balance with the nature instead of consuming its forces without giving anything back (Schumacher 1993 [1973]: 9). According to Schumacher, education is the most vital of all the resources we have; we often think of it as the key to all our problems. The essence of education is the transmission of values, but values are no use unless we adapt them as our own, as our *mental make-up*. (Schumacher 1993 [1973]: 60-63) In its essence, the Multisensory Trail it was about experiencing the northern environment by being there.

Realization

Multisensory Trail was held in the end of the Conference and students from Soma, who were participating the conference, were also participating and helping with the final planning and realization process. We arrived to Inari in the beginning of the two-day conference and the Trail was in the end of the conference so there was time to arrange everything before the final realization.

The practical experience of Multisensory Trail could be described as an action of *Outdoor Education*, creating opportunities for people to explore the natural environments (here being the riverbank of Juutuanjoki in Inari) by living and moving in ways that are in harmony with the nature. The approach enables closer and multisensory contact with the natural environments. It can be the action or just the time spent in natural surroundings that arouse feelings. (McWilliam 2008: 29-32) The Trail was organised in beautiful surroundings near by a small river Juutuanjoki and the environment provided good possibilities for experiencing the nature. As part of the Trail, there were also stops where different natural elements such as ice and pinecones were used in creating tactile experiences.

According to McWilliam (2008), in order to share what has been experienced in the natural surroundings the language of aesthetics, among the sensitivity to the qualities of experiences and to the emotional response of others is required. This can be challenging for people, who are usually in urban surroundings and do not spend much time in the nature. (McWilliam 2008: 32)

As experiencing the nature might feel important and interesting, it, together with the weather circumstances outside (plus degrees which made the snow soft and sinking) might have had an effect on the rather low amount of participants in the Trail. However people participating to the Trail seemed to enjoy the outdoor walk in the beautiful surroundings, judging by their happy faces and sensibly good mood after the Multisensory Trail.

Aesthetic experiences have certain characteristics; not all experiences resulting emotional response can be described as aesthetic experiences. According to Stolnitz (1960) one of the characteristics is that the experiences must be valued or responded to for their own sake and not for their potential use or satisfaction for the observer's needs. The experiences can also entail various feelings from the delight of beauty to fear and disgust. (*Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art Criticism* 1960:35, as cited in McWilliam 2008: 32-33) The Trail was chosen to execute in the natural surroundings in order to provide the 'authentic place' for people to experience; the nature divides our experiences from positive to negative and can create this kinds of aesthetic experiences.

In this context, the connection between the attitude towards nature and the cultural background should also be taken in account. The aesthetic appreciation can be learned; *as we mature, our taste in arts*. As we learn more, we can find more satisfaction in art objects as learning grows our ability to read the works; discovering the meanings and stories they hold. (McWilliam 2008: 35) What we have learned and adapted to our ways of behaviour is what we will transfer to the following generations.

Reflecting the actions

As a result from the Conferences sample group, there was a general questionnaire made for the delegates which gave us feedback from the Trail. (APPENDIX 4)

Like mentioned earlier, an ideal place for the workshop would have been in the middle of a forest, but the tight schedule forced us to change the plans. We chose to have the Trail right next to the SAJOS centre, where the river Juutuanjoki streams. The riverbank with the strong element of river created fine stage for the Trail to take place. The soundscape of the partly frozen, streaming water was strong and covered the extra sounds from the road (app. 50 meters away).

Trail was an act of AVA-practice, where the senses were in the main role and which aimed on creating multisensory experience by the terms of nature. If we say that the aesthetic experience is *a matter of pleasure derived perception involving both senses and intellect*, then we must realise that it is not merely seeing, it takes time. Time allows us to experience the place we are. It also enables reflection of the meaning and impact of what we have experienced in the place. (McWilliam 2008: 36) In the case of Multisensory Trail, the time preserved for it was short, but it made some effort, at least to the international delegates. Delegates, who were for the first time in the Finnish nature, received an interesting experience. (Figure 15)



Figure 15. The Trail after the walk. Mirva Valkama 2012.

The Multisensory Trail aroused different reactions on participants and there was good feedback. For example one participant was happy to walk the Trail, for the place stored and brought personal memories. It was a learning process from which we got new ideas to carry out the next cycle, the RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä. It showed that simple features such as being in natural surroundings can have effect on people and we wished to work more in close connection to the local environments and this was the trigger to develop the theme RiverSounds for the next cycle.

As the whole process of the Trail (starting from the final planning) was filmed in order to produce a video about AVA-action, the presence of the camera affected the process. As Pink (2007) claims, trying to video-record people or cultures undisturbed is often either impossible or inappropriate, as *people in a video are always people in a video* (Pink 2007:98). This was concretized in the planning meetings where the camera was always present. Though filming the process must have brought important material for the video, which was later made about the Trail, it affected also the mood people had in the meetings and created tension.

5.2 RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä

The next part of the project and the second cycle (Figure 16) of action research was the Arctic Circles Art & Design Summer School. It brought together international students and professionals from various fields of art and design to Rovaniemi, Finland. The task in the Summer School was to explore the intriguing challenges the arctic climate, culture and location possess on art and design. The idea was to use different methods involving the users and audience to start the processes. Main themes were Service Design, Sustainable Design and Applied Arts. (WDC2012 Helsinki-Rovaniemi) Our job description in the project was to design and develop Environmental/Communal Arts & Design Workshops and also to lead them.

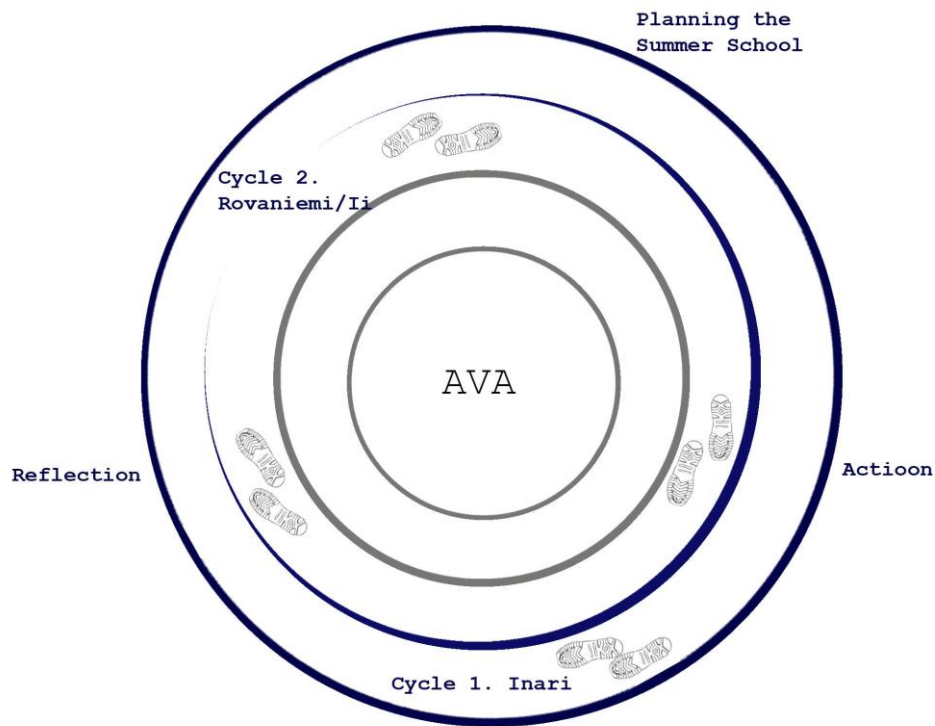


Figure 16. The second action research cycle. Katri Kontinen 2013.

Place research as a starting point

The planning stage of RiverSounds started in autumn 2011 in form of a small-scale place research about the Municipality of Ii (where the other half of the Arctic Summer School took part in). Ii is located in the North Ostrobothnia, in Finland and is a municipality of approximately 9500 inhabitants. The place research was based on collected data from books and Internet, since there was not an opportunity to visit Ii when working with the place research.

Maps were important part of the research, because maps from different eras show clearly the changes the place has been through. They tell the story of the place and its people, how the land has been habited and used and which landmarks are still on their places. Now, by using computer based ways, such as Google maps and Street View, it is possible to get closer to the place, but old concrete maps bring something more to the place research. As Lippard (1997) writes, the maps have their unintentional subjectivity and for that reason they have been important to the cultural landscape construction. Maps are composites of places and they hide

as much as they reveals, which makes them fascinating. They also reveal the changes caused by the actions of nature and humanity. (Lippard 1997: 82)

In this case when visiting the actual place was not possible, maps offered good way to visualize the place, by reading them and using some imagination. Looking into maps, it created a certain image of the place, which proved partly correct later when visiting Ii. Due to the circumstances of not being able to visit Ii, at this point the planning process was in its infancy, the contacting local people did not take place. However, as the process proceeded, there were two visits made to Ii, where meetings with local contacts took place.

First Week in Rovaniemi

The summer school was divided in two working weeks. The first week in Rovaniemi aimed on getting acquainted with the theme RiverSounds by opening eyes to environments and environmental art. The week was preparation for the second week in Ii, where the more practical work took place.

We (Katri Konttinen and Sofia Waara) started the planning process by playing with the theme; leading to small scale prototyping about what RiverSounds could be about (Figure 17). Most importantly it was about learning by doing, where the focus is in person's own active and purpose-oriented activities, for example art, which is the main tool for knowledge formation. Dewey sees the reality as a process in constant change and within it knowledge can be obtained (John Dewey 1966 [1916] as cited in Jokela 2013:18). These ideas would then be adapted to the following weeks working in Ii.



Figure 17. Participant's thought about RiverSounds. Katri Kontinen 2013.

Methods from environmental art and environmental art education among design education were used during the two-week-workshop, meaning mainly working with natural and/or site-specific materials. For example we created instruments from recycled materials and materials found in the river; this was made to work with the idea of "sound circle" (applied from äänirinki, see for example Taikametsän kylä), to find out how one can make sounds with nature's materials in order to find out the variety of sounds that can be found in the nature.

Another method, created by us, for the workshop was a task called *Piece of the place*. This task included an Inspiration Journey; a walk nearby Kemijoki with the participants. The task was to collect 'pieces' from the environments, which were thought to have connection somehow to the place or its sounds. This task aimed on observing and getting acquainted with the place. The collecting was followed by discussion about the findings and observations and it turned out to be an effective way to share the thoughts.

The first week ended with an exhibition in Sampo Keskus on Friday 1.6.2012. For the exhibition, we worked on an Installation, which included soundscapes (collected during the week in Rovaniemi) and a performance (sound circle); using the instruments build from natural, found materials during the week.

Soundscape Art in Ii

We are daily surrounded by different Soundscapes; the environments like the city, schools, home and forest etc. The way our space is organizing is depended by sight, but the sound enlarges our spatial awareness to include areas out of our sight. More importantly, it dramatizes spatial experiences (Tuan 2011 [1977]: 16). We can see things happening but the sounds concretize what we see. In other words, we observe places and situations through sounds.

As an example, the work *Forest – for a thousand years* (2012), by Janet Cardiff and George Miller could be mentioned here. The sound installation was located in a forest where wooden stumps were waiting for people to sit down and listen. The area was surrounded by hidden speakers creating a soundscape around the people sitting in the installation. The soundscape was varying; it created a sense of an approaching storm, takes the listener to a war and back to the natural surroundings. (Volk 2012) Through interpretation, different assumptions can be made.

The second week of the summer school was focused on working with the methods of art and design, resulting as Environmental artworks for the new environmental art park located in Ii. The aim was to use environmental art, applying the methods from community art in the process; finding ways of communication through making art. In environmental art, the place often determines the work.

Timo Jokela, Dean of Art in University of Lapland writes about environmental art as it is neither a winner in its environment and place nor something just passively adjusting to its site. Environmental art is good when it becomes a part of the place, born out of the environment and therefore belonging to it. The place is carefully taken into consideration in the process of environmental art as the work picks up its right to exist from the surroundings (shape, material and the way the work is made). (Jokela 1995: 92-93) This became as natural part of the process, focusing to the soundscapes in the place.

One of the main goals of working was to create communication and collaboration between local people in Ii and the participants from Rovaniemi, including many international participants. During the week, the groups created different instruments to the environments, some more abstract than others; instruments played by the wind and instruments requiring someone to play them (Figure 18). There were also instruments existing in their place just the

time of the workshop. All these instruments were used to create soundscapes that were connected to the river and to the main theme RiverSounds.



Figure 18. Building the wooden xylophone. Glen Coutts 2012

Working was planned so that participant groups would mix and therefore the knowledge could be shared - learning from each other's. Different kinds of grouping methods were used, for example dividing people by numbers into groups, creating land art with the group. We also had a short workshop with a group of people with disabilities; during the workshop we created a land art piece (more in the reflection of the actions, Figure 19).



Figure 19. Creating land art drawing with the group. Anna-Mari Nukarinen 2012.

The main idea for *the second week* was to create a welcoming party through artistic expression in Ii (for arriving artists and local people) with local groups from Ii. The week culminated to the creation of an Art Trail and performance, which were launching the welcoming party.

Reflecting the actions

As a final result of the workshop RiverSounds, we created an Art Trail. The Trail started from the Art Centre KulttuuriKauppila and led the people to the new environmental art park. The performative walk was based on a story written by one of our young local participant (12 years). The trail told a story of the spirit of log floating and the artworks that the groups had made were part of it, as the story continued with the trail.

The event and the works achieved their final forms naturally through making. Groups started planning their works to different places. In the end all the pieces found their place in the puzzle of RiverSounds and the story of log floating spirit gathered them as part of the Art Trail. As we wanted also to create collaboration between the groups (both local and the Arctic Circles Summer School participants), it seemed that the formation of groups happened quite naturally, depending on the interests of participants. Some of the local participants preferred working with their peers due to language barriers and we came to the conclusion that everyone should be able to work with whom they felt it was the best. The result of grouping ended up, luckily, with partly mixed groups, where the local participants were also working in mixed groups.

There were also more general linguistic problems among the groups on the way. Due to those problems, the position of artistic working as a language was marked. This was seen as the participants, who did not share the same spoken language, were communicating through making art. No words were needed as the working and body language seemed to form a language of their own. This process of communication by doing was fascinating to follow and this was one of the most important discoveries from the RiverSounds (Figures 20 and 21).

Another remarkable experience was the short workshop with the group of people with disabilities (figure 19), which aroused thoughts and discussion between us, planners. It was an example of a working inspired by the place and time. We dedicated the short time to listen and sensing what the group could find interesting and decided to make land art by creating a

drawing on the ground. This intensive workshop called the participants to join the shared experience of doing together. The land drawing was afterwards coloured by collected materials from the place (grass, flowers). It was wonderful to observe the joy of making the work that could be seen from the faces of the participants. It did not last for long but it was very effective and the time was just perfect for working with the group.

In it's entirety, the RiverSounds was a successful experiment of AVA working. Together the groups created an inspirational experience for the welcoming party. Even the weather turned out nice and sunny for the welcoming party. Also the discussions and feedback (APPENDIX 5) showed that the participants had enjoyed the workshop as it enabled them to do practical working in the environments and the possibility to test different materials as part of the creative process.



Figure 20. Cross-cultural working in Ii. Anna-Mari Nukarinen 2012.



Figure 21. Working hands. Anna-Mari Nukarinen 2012.

5.3 Backpack Adventures in Scotland

The third action research cycle (Figure 22) took place in Ayr, Scotland during my exchange (spring 2013) studies in the University of the West of Scotland. This third cycle started also the process of the artistic part and became part of it. The idea behind the cycle grew by the studies in research methodologies, creative skills and critical pedagogy, turning into a designed sound-mapping project, where the idea was to get a sense the place (Ayr and river Ayr) by using the sound mapping method. The method included choosing a route and planning the sound spots, from where the sounds were collected.

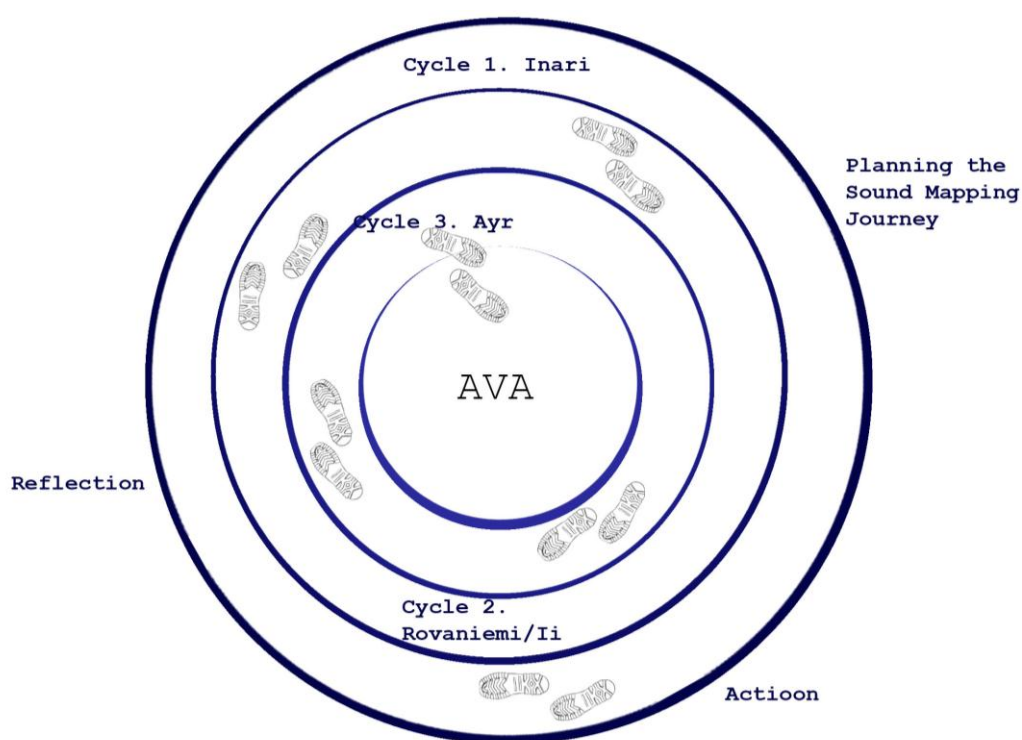


Figure 22. The third action research cycle. Katri Kontinen 2013.

There was a small-scale study made for the Module *Research; Critical Development*, co-ordinated by Dr Kathryn Burnett (a written project proposal, see the introduction in APPENDIX 7) which laid the base for the artistic part, combining into the third action research cycle. The proposal was a creative application of research methodologies and opened the learning process during the course. It was constructed around the work focusing on being in the *place* (The River Ayr) and getting a sense of it: exploring and experiencing the place by sensing it. By time the proposal came to have a bigger context; it was thought to be a first draft for the final installation work for the Soma-exhibition in Kemi, which had the working title *Sensing a Place – Interpretations Through Installation Work*.

Mapping a Place

The knowledge from a place is gathered by time and experiences of spending time in the place (Jokela 2008). During the process the idea was on mapping the place by sounds and photographs and then combining these elements into one sound map. The mapping process became a visual narrative, story from a walk along the river. This was a natural continue for the earlier working in Inari, Rovaniemi and Ii, where the multisensory aspects of the environments and the rivers were part of the process. The interest and the need to combine rivers as elements for mapping a place grew as the process proceeded.

For me the river is an element with many aspects; it is ever changing element of nature and every river is a unique one. It is also a strong source of inspiration. River provides something new to see every time and I intentionally spent time along it to see and capture some of the features that the River Ayr has. In this context the interest was in the soundscapes or *sound spots* of the River Ayr.

It became almost a daily habit for me to visit the river. My journey included a short walk along the river from a small red bridge until the sea. For me it was a process of mapping and getting a sense of the place and the river. *Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints.* (The unwritten rule of urban exploring)

Process

The process of Backpack Adventures Collected data was mainly consisting of photographs and recorded sound samples. Photography among recording and field notes turned out to be the best option for material collection. The third part of the research came close to ethnographic research by its methods (photography and field notes). According to Pink (2007) photography has long been an important part of ethnographers 'tool kit' (Pink 2007: 65).

Though the research was not done in order to do ethnographic research about the culture of people living in Ayr, it used similar methods, which enabled the small-scale action research cycle, focusing on getting acquainted with the river and its surroundings. How one has his/her own way of observing new places and places where one has spent time (Ayr-Rovaniemi).

There are differences on how one looks and what captures the attention in a new place. This process included ethnographical approach; telling story about the place (Burnett, K.A. (2013) 'Ethnography' Lecture).

The working process started with a sample collecting and documenting walk along the river 25.2.2013; at this stage of the process the final outcome was not yet decided. It was still finding its final form. This walk was the first documented walk and finally it became the narrative behind the work, telling the story of a personal sound-mapping journey, where the river was the central feature. As a result from the walk were the written field notes (APPENDIX 6) and photographs.

Photography as a method of working enables to focus the attention of the viewer to a specific subject/object. What is left outside the frames and why, is up to the viewer. It is one visual way of describing something; one can compare how a certain subject/object is being 'described' by people and what is shown and what is not. (Inspired by Jay Martin) The photographer makes the decision (in this case researcher) and therefore it presents the interpretation of the place from one point of view. However, visual images can be made meaningful also by the subjective gaze of the viewers, and that each individual viewer can produce these meanings by relating the image to his/her own *experiences, knowledge and wider cultural discourses* (Pink 2007:82). Photography enabled taking the places with me in a visual form.

Later on (14.4, 26.4 and 29.4), other sample collecting walks took place. At this stage, the final outcome had come clearer and the sample collection was focused on finding a sound spots. Therefore a 'visual map' was made in order to make the sample collecting more effective; all the chosen sound spots were marked in the map beforehand. The idea was to create a work combining sounds and visualizations, which took a form of a video (Figure 23). In the video, photographs and illustrations made took turns and the sounds changed during the sound spots. The video was also planned to show in a student exhibition in the university, but due time problems, I was able to take the video to the university's screens later.



Figure 23. Visualization from the Sound Mapping Journey-video. Katri Kontinen 2013.

Though the process was focusing on my personal interpretations, the option for making questionnaires about sounds in a place came up (for example: What are the sounds in this place?). However, the decision was made to continue as I had started; this process could be a development stage for future working, where soundscapes and doing research on people's denotations and connotations of place's sounds could be more interwoven. Instead, I had the possibility to join an art education lecture (1.5.2013), which was about introducing environmental art through practice to the students.

We worked also outdoors, where the students were provided with the possibility to do small-scale practices on environmental art. I was doing my best to tell them what I knew about the subject and introduced some ideas on tasks, such as framing the view (Figure 24). This lecture was a great opportunity to discuss about the topic with the students and I was happy to notice how the students were thinking on how they could apply these methods in education (see for example Abigail's reflective Journal and Mary's blog Visual arts 2013). Afterwards, I realised that this short lecture was also an important part of my own process and sensing a place journey nearby the river Ayr; the workshop was about finding place-specific elements and in our work, framing a view from the river.



Figure 24. Working with the students Mary and Abigail during the environmental art lecture in Ayr. Mary Cameron 2013.

Reflecting the actions

The whole process of the backpack adventures was an important stage. It enabled me to start working with the artistic part and therefore applying artistic working in doing research, through visualization. As it started the process of artistic part, it was of great importance and the material collected in Scotland guided also the material collection in Rovaniemi, as I wanted to create the two places through similar elements.

The sample collecting walks during the spring showed me the changes in the river as the spring proceeded. The similar happened also during my sample collecting in Rovaniemi, in summer-autumn, where the changes in the river surroundings could be seen.

As this cycle turned out to be part of my artistic process and therefore closing the research, it had great value in the research; this process was also focusing more on the third research question about the importance of visualization as it was in its whole a (audio) visual journey. This cycle also gave me ideas for future working in the field of AVA.

5.4 Artistic Part

As the action research cycles were opening the possibilities in practical AVA working, the artistic part (Installation, see APPENDIX 8) was done in order to open parts of the trajectory behind the research and to visualize the findings; how can art and design be seen in AVA. This way, the artistic work summed up the research; it also concretized the process on a personal level. It can be seen as part of the action cycles, as the final concluding stage. All in all, the ideas for the artistic work were gathered from the observations and actions done between 2011 and 2013, but the main focus was on the last cycle (Scotland - Finland), including documentary, place-specific photographs and drawings.

The Artistic part was a process of combining practice into research, where research and the artwork, were shown together – supporting one another. The artwork can be identified to the research as *object of thinking* (MacLeod 2000, as cited in MacLeod & Holdridge 2005: 9). This was an interesting aspect to the visualization of research as the process of artistic part supported the research by visualizing it.

In the artistic part of the thesis, design and art are connected to environments on a symbolic level; they are seen as rivers; nature's own designs that create their way through time, finally finding each other's on the way. The final thesis was looking into *applied visual art* as a possible meeting place for *art* and *design* and the installation brings the fields together as rivers.

According to Lippard (1997) *An art that is in place, or on site, can create a different (not necessarily better) relationship between the viewer and the place.* Lippard writes critically about site-specific art: as the art, which focuses on being about a place, is not often truly of place. She lays her concern above the idea of being directly tied to the place, by examining the ways art can help us on focusing existing places, reflecting to the memories of a place and certain knowledge about nature and culture in a place. (Lippard 1997:20)

The final work could be said to be site-specific in a way that it is made from certain sites/places central to the research (Ayr and Rovaniemi/Art and Design). It is not possible to bring a place from its original location, but it was possible to bring elements and still-images from the site, which describes the way the place was experienced and seen. Technically this is not taking the work away from its original place but to illustrate the place as the artist has seen it. This, however, leaves the multisensory aspect out, for the illustration (with or without

sound) is merrily a (audio) visual presentation form, which can of course awake interest in going to the place.

The work itself was a reflection of two elements (rivers/places and art/design). Through the process of artistic part, the aim was, besides bringing out the results of research by visual presentation, to focus also on my professional development within AVA. As the sound-mapping journey in Scotland was about sensing a place, it was also a personal journey, through which I hoped to start locating my own creative practice.

These three context can be put as; River Ayr –sensing/finding a place – Kemijoki; Art – applied visual art – Design; Art – My Place – Design. (Figure 24)

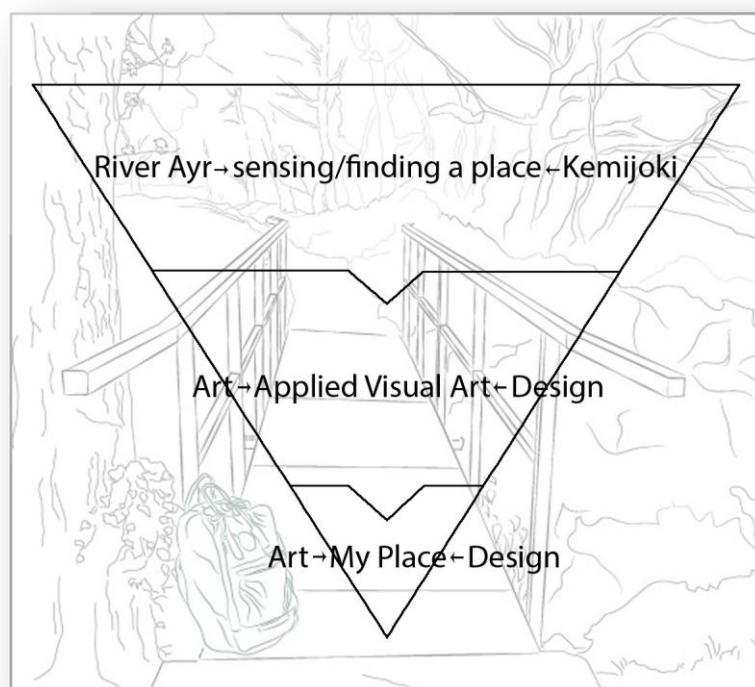


Figure 24. Three Contexts of the artistic process. Katri Kontinen 2013.

As the table above shows, the journey starts from the basic elements of rivers, running down towards AVA and its place in relation to art and design and finally ending up to the process of personal development.

The more detailed stages of the installation follow the chapters about the places of conduct, the River Ayr and Kemijoki.

Places behind the Artistic part

The first part of the Installation process took place in Ayr, Scotland and continued in Rovaniemi, Finland. The process of place selection started partly unconsciously in 2011. It was the year of the MA program of AVA and the year when I first encountered the river Kemijoki (Rovaniemi). It became clearer after working in the project of RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä (mentioned earlier) that the river would be *the visual element* for this study. After applying for exchange to the University of the West of Scotland in Ayr and finding out about the river the final decision was made. The progress of studies has been guiding the place selection.

5.4.1 Rivers; Visual Elements of the Study

River is an element with multiple characters. It has a big role in shaping Earths landscapes (geographical feature), by carving valleys and depositing plains (Middleton 2012: 2). Rivers are the examples of nature´s own design/art process of finding a way; they carve their ways even through rock by time and re-design the landscape. This is an interesting aspect for the study. Through the process, AVA has been also carving the way for its practices.

Due to the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus; *you cannot step twice into the same river* (Middleton 2012: 117). River changes all the time, offering something to find every time; new forms made by the ever-changing currents or shades on the surface of the water, or the sound of the wind.

Rivers are great metaphors for life, journeys, passion, and power. Because of this they are more locally embraced, and more graspable in their linear trajectories than the legal labyrinth of water rights and crimes. (Lippard 1997: 167) It is often seen that rivers are not cared as they should be and there are not many rivers in the world streaming freely without human interruption. Rivers have been harnessed to produce power. River is also a remarkable feature of transportation; the river transports natural materials (rocks, animals, plants) and people with its currents. The history of interaction between people and rivers is long; people have physically interacted with rivers, extracting their water and fish, modifying them to meet

the needs. Rivers have had great influence on many cultures, for myths and later on, sources of power. (Middleton 2012: xvi in Introduction) For example, in the Finnish Lapland, the rivers provided the platform for timber rafting to take place, employing the people living in the areas.

Rivers can be seen as the mirrors of cultures, reflecting the changes in people's behaviour and needs that time brings.

In literature, rivers are used as agents of transformation: [...] *through their representation of boundaries or thresholds, so that the practice of crossing a river precipitates some sort of change* (Middleton 2012: 80). In this study rivers were observed as metaphors for *finding a place*. The process was also crossing two rivers, making the journey to find what lies on the other side of the river.

Rivers also had remarkable role as sources of inspiration, as River Ayr and River Kemijoki were the central places for the artistic working. The River was seen also as a symbolic element and nature's own design/art process of finding place (River Ayr – My Place - Kemijoki) through obstacles and re-designing the landscape.

The River Ayr

The River Ayr (Figure 26) is located in the west of Scotland (in the Central lowlands), starting from Glenbuck and streaming through the city of Ayr, where it ends into the Firth of Clyde of the Atlantic Ocean. It takes on a lowland character, having low gradients and relatively stable meandering form with sand instead of gravel beds. (McKirdy, Gordon and Crofts 2007: 43)

The river is located in the hearth of Ayrshire, often associated with mining, Ayrshire-cows and farming, yet it passes some of the wildest countryside on its way. The river Ayr has deep, dark colour in it (which is said to come from the alluvial matter [material deposited by the river and carried by the river]); the colour is said also to tell about the dark history of many people dying in the river. (Love 2006: 7-10)



Figure 26. Map of Scotland. Katri Konttinen 2013.

In the wintertime, there can be large flows of ice down the river; when freezing up the still stretches of water and the ice can gain a thickness of twenty inches.

As the thaw comes the ice is broken and forced downstream, often battering and destroying anything in its path. (Love 2006: 9)

The city of Ayr has grown next to the ocean and to the place, where the river Ayr flows to the ocean. There was a fortress build next to the ocean and nowadays parts of it have still remained. There is a walking route the Lang Scots Mile, starting next to the fortress walls and continues towards the ocean, to the Esplanade of Ayr (Figure 27).



Figure 27. The Lang Scots Mile, Esplanade of Ayr. Katri Konttinen 2013.

The University of the West of Scotland's campus in Ayr is located right next to the river. The river is strongly present; when walking out from the university it streams right in front of you. The river is very calm at that place and the same calm feeling takes on, when seeing the river.

The best way to get to the river is simply to take a walk (Figure 28); the River Ayr Way (begins from Glenbuck and follows the river for 66kms to the sea at Ayr) follows the river from its start to the sea. The route offers Ayrshire's beautiful scenery, from open remote moorland to shaded river gorges (native woodlands in the West of Scotland, blanket bogs, wet and dry heaths and upland grasslands in the North Lowther Uplands). The walking path has been a source of inspiration for Scotland's national poet Robert Burns and also helped Scotland's national hero William Wallace hide from the English soldiers. The beautiful wildlife of Ayrshire is present in the walk; there are many species living close to the river and in the river. (River Ayr Way – from source to sea)

Ayr (at the mouth of River Ayr) is one of the oldest towns in Scotland. The burgh of Ayr was built in 1205 by William the Lion, King of Scots. It has been the central stage for shipbuilding and has shared the history of witch hunting and bloodshed during the wars. (Love 2000: xi-xiv in introduction)

The river Ayr is an interesting river as it streams through the city of Ayr to the, crossing by forest views; the river can be enjoyed from both urban and rural perspectives.



Figure 28. On the shores of the River Ayr. Katri Konttinen 2013.

The River Kemijoki

Kemijoki (Figure 29) is the longest and greatest river in Finland (the main 'water highway' of the Finnish Lapland). It streams through the northern Finland, starting its way from northern wilderness where its headwaters are born on the hills of fells (where birch forests grow on the fells [Kurimo 1967:37-38]), ending to the Gulf of Bothnia in the low-lying, populous lands of Kemi. In Rovaniemi Kemijoki merges with Ounasjoki and continues its way to the north, ending to the lake Ounasjärvi in Enontekiö. (Axelson 1967:5) Rovaniemi has grown to be the most important centre of the watershed; it has a strong status in the administration, business and cultural activities in the Finnish Lapland. It is the rebuilt capital of the rebuilt Finnish Lapland (rebuilt after the wars). (Kurimo 1967: 44)

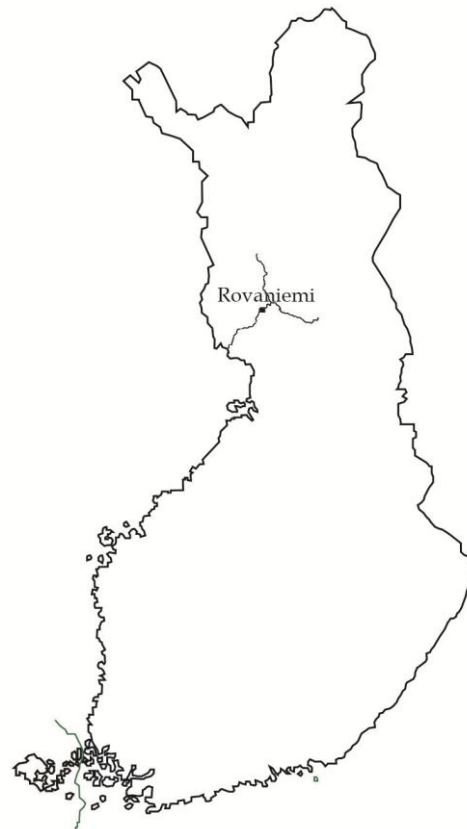


Figure 29. Map of Finland. Katri Kontinen 2013.

Kemijoki is a wide river with great history; in its history it has provided a platform for timber rafting, fishing and transportation. There are many types of scenery on the shores of the river; endless open water-logged aapa bogs, wedges, sand banks and moors, spectacular fells and prosperous lands, quiet wilderness villages and highly populated areas (Axelson 1967:5). In

the lower lands, spruce tree forests and swamps are the main elements of the landscape. Pine tree forests, which use to rule the scenery, are still part of the environment of Kemijoki. (Kurimo 1967:37-38)

The river use to run free but now the hydroelectric power plants, build after the Second World War have completely changed the river´s surroundings. Many beautiful landscapes have disappeared; villages with old rustic buildings have been demolished. The nature of the river has changed while the roaring sounds of the untamed rapids are gone. The river was also famous for its salmon, which is has also disappeared. The old pace of living is gone as the times have changed the river and its environment. (Axelson 1967: 5)

History and stories flow in the river; it carries the multiple layers of time and people who have lived their lives nearby the river can pass the knowledge for future generations (see for example Pokka 1994). Unlike river Ayr, Kemijoki cannot be experienced so well by walking in the city (Rovaniemi), but it is strongly present in the life of the city. There are few bridges crossing the river, a walking path following the river near by the city (Figure 30) and the central walking street Koskikatu ending up to the river. There are also sandy beaches, which are in the summer popular swimming places.



Figure 30. On the shores of Kemijoki. Katri Konttinen 2013

5.4.2 Rivers as Meeting Places

To sum up the discussion about rivers, especially the two centre rivers Ayr and Kemijoki, rivers can be approached as concepts of understanding a place. Rivers have brought people to live on their shores and therefore they carry the places inhabited history. This way, rivers have been meeting places for people and cultures. This enabled the cross-disciplinary collaboration between people. Rivers also present the nature of the places; showing the historical layers of time.

Metaphorically, the two rivers can be seen as symbols for the two disciplines (art and design) and when they encounter, the space for AVA is being created. This meeting was hoped to point out in the artistic part by visual means.

These two rivers are reflections of their places; as they reflect the life of the places on their surfaces. The installation was a process of personal reflections; pointing out the ways I interpreted the two rivers.

Through the installation process, the observation of my personal way of finding reflections from the rivers and their characteristics (Figure 31 and Figure 32) became part of working, in order to find how these two can create a meeting place and therefore a metaphorical place for AVA in relation to the fields of art and design.

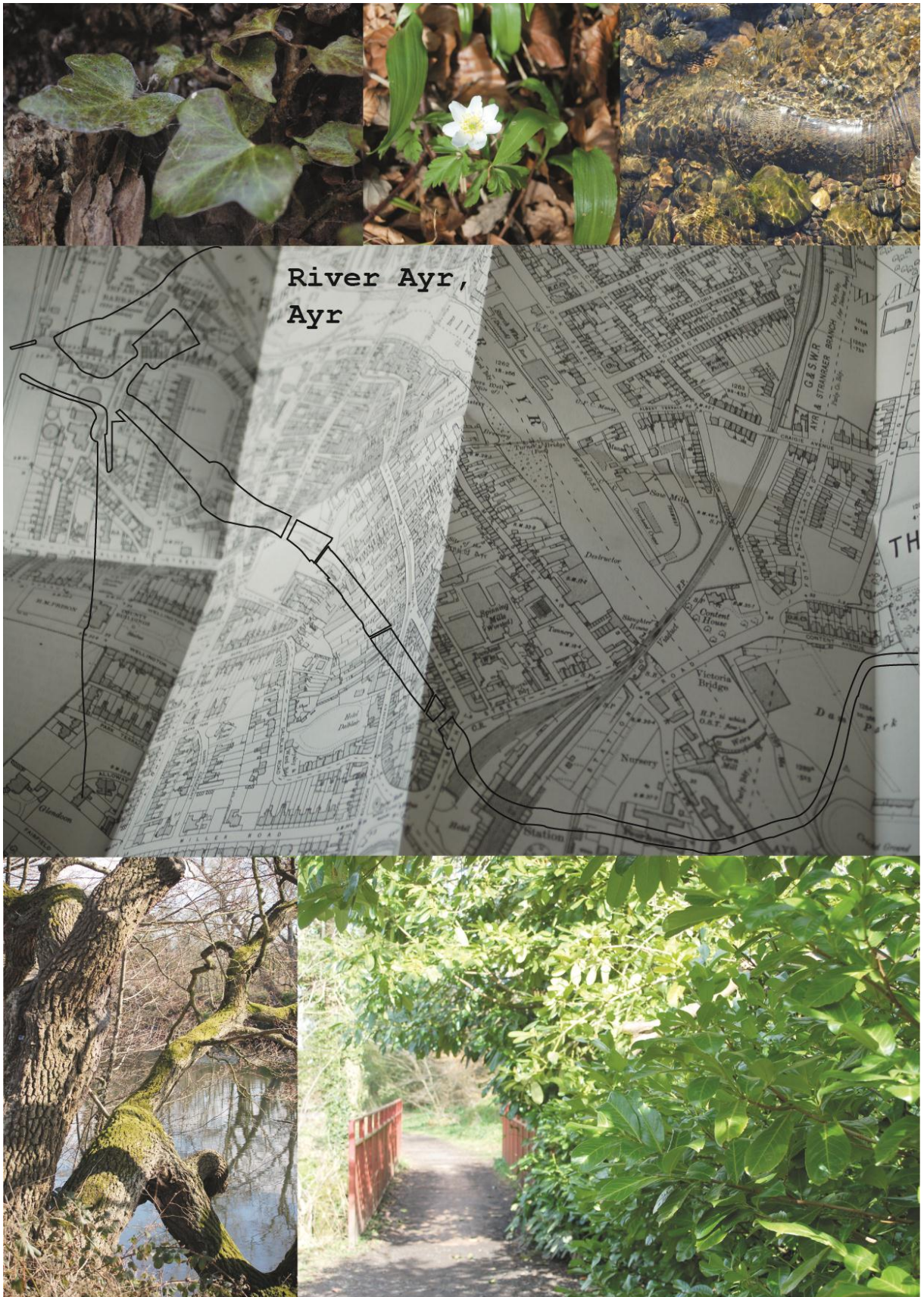


Figure 31. River Ayr Collage, Katri Kontinen 2013



Figure 32..River Kemijoki Picture collage, Katri Kontinen 2013

5.5 The Final Installation

The installation process takes back to 2011, when the master's program of AVA started. It was the time when I first encountered the river Kemijoki in Rovaniemi. It was also the first time I considered working with rivers. The final installation *Spotting AVA - Interpretations through installation work* (was constructed by the time of writing) work opened visually the trajectory of the master's thesis research done in AVA. It was a visual presentation of the research journey, an audit trail mapping the process. The installation was a visual map of AVA, visual definition of concept mapping.

Rivers can be seen as the design- and artworks of nature, making their space and place in the environments. The installation travels between Art – Applied Visual Art – Design, looking for the place for AVA.

The working process of the installation was constantly active during the research; the inspiring elements from the rivers were collected while the writing process. Both writing and planning the artistic part supported one another and enriched the process, as they developed interwoven. Making art, as part of research is a field that I wish to explore more in the future; it is a process of personal expression, reflection of research completing the process. In other words, it can give wider perspective to research.

The installation connected the two places (Ayr and Rovaniemi), through place-specific elements (photographs), bringing the two rivers visually together. The theoretical perspective (AVA – me – art/design - rivers) can be seen as the two places, different and yet similar (combined by the rivers), come together. The work explores the places by showing place-specific elements from both places and bringing them together by an interdisciplinary bridge.

As the research went on, making the installation became more and more valid. As the value of visualization in AVA research has been part of the research from the very beginning, it seemed reasonable and necessary to finish the research with the installation.

The installation work (Figure 33.) was exhibited in Kemi Art Museum, in the exhibition **Soveltavan kuvataiteen AVAUS, Applied Visual Arts and US - AVAUS** 18.10. - 1.12.2013; where the master's program of applied visual art, and its outcomes were presented.

Installation can be seen also as a spatial element of the research; as part of the artists being in the world, as an extent to my own experiences (Barfield 2005, as cited in MacLeod & Holdridge 2005).

[...] attempts to identify, address and understand the real are inextricably bound up with questions of space, place and location; the real is, to a very real extent, spatial. (Barfield 2005, as cited in MacLeod & Holdridge 2005: 108)

Hanrahan (as cited in MacLeod & Holdridge, 2005: 149) describes installation work as art form that has a double role, being a structuring device within its practices and as a metaphor for the negotiation of its meaning. In this case, the installation has a straightforward role as being the visual presentation of the research process, negotiating about the findings made. It took the shape of an opened map (Figure 33) and located the research with coordinates.



Figure 33. *Spotting AVA – Interpretations through installation work.* Katri Kontinen 2013.

6 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION FROM THE JOURNEY

As Pink (2007) suggests, *the purpose of analysis is not to translate visual evidence into verbal knowledge, but to explore the relationship between visual and other (including verbal) knowledge (2007:119)*. By this she refers to the idea that different types of visual and written presentations bear varied relations to theory. (Pink 2007: 119). Analysis as an important stage of the research where the results are viewed and compared to the research questions set in the beginning. Doing analysis is not the last phase in the research process; it can start another cycle process when the existing problems and possibilities are found. The broad aim of analysis is to look for meanings and understanding (Malins & Gray 2004:132). In action research this can be seen as a stage of finding questions for further research.

The research journey was taken in order to answer the questions; *what is meant by the concept of Applied Visual Art (AVA?); where is it located in relation to the fields of art and design? What is the value of visualization in an applied visual art research process?* The journey had three layers. The starting point was on finding out, what the concept of AVA can be and in the action research, especially the first and the second cycles provided valuable information. In the first cycle, the *Multisensory Trail*, it was about how to present AVA and its actions. As the conference *Tales from the North* presented Applied Arts as part of the program, it meant also for us (Katri Konttinen and Sofia Waara) that we should be able to present an action that presents AVA. This challenge was answered by an outdoor activity, concentrating on multisensory experiences in the north of Finland, where the cultural heritage is strong (relating to the strong nature relationship of Sámi-people). The event had elements from environmental art at it was also a process of sensing a place.

In the second cycle, *RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä-* workshop, the focus was still on senses, the sounds of river. This was also connected locally, as the river Ii has historical values for the community of Ii. As results from the first cycle, the idea of highlighting the multisensory experiences and ways to explore the surroundings remained. This cycle provided interesting results, as the groups of participants varied; people from different age groups, different countries and different backgrounds participated. As the expected results of creating the welcoming party were filled and it was also a matter of greater results. Working with the methods from art and design, and the enthusiasm of the participants resulted wordless collaboration across cultures and disciplinary borders. The latter notion was opening the question of locating AVA in relation to art and design, as the methods from both fields were

presented and together created a balance to the action. This cycle brought also the educational perspective to AVA, which sought to find its place in the fields of art and design education.

After looking into the actions, the question can be asked whether these actions were valid for defining the field and how? Based on the discovery's, it can be stated that as the given frames for AVA let a light for starting the process, these actions were giving characteristics to AVA in the north. The cultural matters, such as heritage and behaviour describing the culture have an important position for shaping the concept and as the place of conduct was in northern Finland and the program was organised by the University of Lapland, certain characteristics were found in AVA. As Timo Jokela (2013) stated, the main objective of the Soma was to educate AVA professionals for the specific needs set by the northern environments and local communities. These professionals possess the capacity to work in close collaboration with various collaboration stakeholders. (Jokela 2013:11)

The program developed to answer to the needs of Finnish Lapland's leading industries: the tourism and adventure business, working in sustainable ways as promoting the well-being of the region (Jokela 2013:11). In another context, in another place, the results would have probably been different as the focus would have been different.

The final, third action research cycle was all in all concentrating most to the third question of the value of visualization in AVA research process. As the actions executed in Scotland (and partly in Finland, focusing to the artistic part), this gave wider perspective to the whole research. It gave distance between the actions done in Finland and therefore also clarified what had been done earlier. This stage can be seen as a finishing stage of the research. It was also a personal action, where I got to focus on the idea of artistic working in research. Here, the value of visualization became clear, as the idea of doing research in AVA without visual perspective does not seem to support the research as well as with visual perspective.

This was already seen as most of the research data collected during the cycles was (audio) visual (except the collected thoughts and feedback); it seemed to be the natural way of gathering data for research. However, this way of collecting data, no statistics can be made as the nature of the research was qualitative instead of quantitative. The sample groups were rather small, though they included people from different backgrounds and cultures. This way of doing research provided the possibility to look deeper into AVA through (audio) visual means; going towards the multisensory way of creating unique experiences, which can be developed further in the future. Differences between the participants in the actions can be

counted as richness to the process as it gave a variety of reactions, basing on the backgrounds of people.

What all the cycles, made in this study, share, is their commitment to *place* and *finding a place*. It can be taken in the central in analysis and discussion, for it has been, partly unconsciously, dominating and guiding the research journey. This can be seen as the main theme of analysing data (data including both (audio) visual and verbal material). In the process, the visual and other data became interwoven (Pink 2007:120) as the three cycles produced different kind of data (for example cycle 1 questionnaires, cycle 2 (audio) visual material and cycle 3 sounds, visual and verbal material).

Cycles 1 and 2 were also filmed and though the filming was not done specifically for this study, those films can give more information when watched during and after the process. It can be stated that the analysis of research data's visual contents would not necessarily be an objective analysis presenting a truthful visual record. It can be seen, however, as an (academic) interpretation of the subjective visual narrative. (Pink 2007: 123). It was done in the academic discourse, which follows the process of doing research and practical working in AVA.

The relation to place and time of conduct (Soma-program) were essential elements in AVA-based research: *Commitment to a time and place, instead of modernism and universality, is essential for the AVA*. (Jokela 2013: 12) As Jokela has summed the idea of AVA in the Cool-publication, this was also proved in the practical AVA experiments among the research journey. Time and place provide the platform for AVA actions to take place, specifying the nature of working. These actions can be taken anywhere, where the place specifies them. Looking back to the research, the place-specific-nature of working brings elements from environmental and community art to AVA; the means and methods can provide deeper understanding of a place. The process is often enriched as the variety of methods, for example from visual arts and fields of design are used side by side in AVA working. The practical experiments done during the research have led to stage where similar actions can be developed in the future.

The evidence from the research points to the fact that AVA is in itself, a tool with multiple possibilities to create cross-disciplinary collaboration. It can bring people from different disciplines working together, combining various methods and perspectives. This, however,

requires good social skills from the facilitators; it is crucial that they possess the ability to take the participant's perspectives and feelings in consideration.

The use of metaphors in the research and in analysis proved to give valuable information about research data and the use of interpreting the data; *Metaphors can tell/illustrate the likeness (or unlikeness) of two things* (Coffey & Atkinson 1996 as cited in Gray & Malins 2004: 153). River was the main metaphor for the thesis, describing the streaming research process of AVA location. River, as noted, includes a variety of metaphors in itself and it was also a useful place-specific element for the research. This way, it connected strongly to the whole process and helped the research to find its ending location, streaming to the sea of AVA.

7 CONCLUSIONS: APPLIED VISUAL ARTS, THE MEETING PLACE OF ART AND DESIGN

In the end, it is the people in certain times making both art and design. These fields have a long history behind and it is precisely that chronological development that has led to this point. What has been and will be seen valuable in the future drifts in the river of time. The concept of AVA provided tools for deeper observation on art and design, leading to the location of AVA.

The collaborative form of doing environmental and community based art/design follows in my opinion the guidelines of AVA. It has the tendency of creating communication between people from different fields; therefore it has great potential for developing collaboration. It can also create language between people from different countries and cultures, when they do not share spoken language. In AVA, elements from different artistic fields such as visual art and design are applied: giving more flexibility to the people working in the field. AVA can be seen as boundaries-breaking-element. It can be the crucial link in the process of finding the connections between artistic and design based work; it is the meeting place of art and design. This can be seen as one of the results from the research and as part of the future development of AVA.

When working in AVA, we should keep in mind the place and the people we are working with. When working for example in a small community, the history of the place and its people should be noted and find the connections to the actions. If these small-scale actions are being done worldwide, it might help us noticing the importance of the places that are often left out of consideration. It would also widen our perceptions towards places and our home country. As I have been talking about environmental and site-specific art and design, these concepts could come together under the label of AVA, which could be used as a tool in seeing the world and its places from a different perspective.

The widely used frame 'Think Globally, Act Locally' (see for example E.F. Schumacher 1973 about the subject) – has been following the processes of the practical experiments and can be applied to the AVA-way of working. We chose to have it as a guideline for our actions (the workshops done in the ASAD-project) and by that highlighting the meaning of the local communities and environments. In educational perspectives AVA could be defined to provide platforms where space is given to explore (with critical thinking) the collaboration in arts and design, and not to categorize them.

Most importantly, it is experienced in this time and can have some effort on how the future of the interrelation of art and design looks like. Like Tuan wisely (2011 [1977]) wrote:

Why risk change? The past really existed. All that we are we owe to the past. The present also has merit; it is our experiential reality, the feeling point of existence with its inchoate mixture of joy and sorrow. The future, in contrast, is a vision. (Tuan 2011 [1977]: 197)

We cannot undo what has been done earlier, but we can always try to learn from our mistakes through reflection and then transfer the knowledge onwards to the younger generations.

The education provides students with the very first thoughts and ideas about art and/or design, and therefore critical thinking should be encouraged from the very beginning of art and design education. The education must also provide the right conditions for learning to take place (Baldacchino 2013).

The process of doing the study for the master's thesis has been largely a visual process and so participating with a work to the Soma exhibition was a natural continuing and also an end point for the process. The Installation work can be seen as a *reflection* of what has been talked here; a visual presentation of the process.

Ideas for Further Research

This study is hoped to start more discussion about the contemporary situation of the relationship between art and design. As noted here, AVA can be seen as a combination of art and design; it uses methods from both fields and aims on creating new ways to approach them. The subject is only lightly discussed here for it calls for much wider and broader approaching and provides an interesting opportunity to continue the research. The future research could focus more on how to practice AVA in the field of contemporary art and design in wider global perspective. Also the educational perspective and what this new approach (AVA) could bring to the education field (the question aroused after an environmental art workshop in Scotland). How is AVA realised in art and design education in the future?

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APPENDIX 1

Glossary

AVA Applied Visual Art

Soma The master's degree program of applied visual art (comes from the Finnish name of the program, *Soveltavan kuvataiteen maisteriohjelman*)

ASAD Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design; a network, established by the Faculty of Art and Design, University of Lapland. Our project Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design was part of the networks working.

APPENDIX 2

Description of the collaboration networks behind the Master's degree program, of Applied Visual Art.

The master's degree program of Applied Visual Art (Soma) was a two-year educational project, organized jointly by the Faculty of Art and Design (University of Lapland) and Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences. It was a part of the Thematic Network (TN) on Arctic Sustainable Art and Design (ASAD, launched by the University of Lapland) and part of the working of the Institute for Northern Culture (established in 2011).

Institute for Northern Culture

This educational network is aiming on developing vitality and well-being in Lapland through cooperation between education, research and artistic activity. Institutes core was composed by the Faculty of Art and Design (University of Lapland), the Business and Culture education (Kemi-Tornio UAS) and the Culture education (Lappia Vocational College).

Network on Arctic Sustainable Art and Design

The international network ASAD was established by the Faculty of Art and Design in 2012 and it includes no less than 26 circumpolar universities and research centres from the USA, Canada, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Scotland, Russia and Finland. Soma was part of the national and regional project complex under the network, aiming at advancing art and design (Jokela 2012: ¶ 9).

According to Timo Jokela, the Dean of the faculty of Art and Design:

Through these projects Arctic art and design are being developed from different and various perspectives, while simultaneously constructing an overall view of the importance and meaning of art and design for the Arctic region and its culture. (Jokela 2012: ¶9)

APPENDIX 2

Collaboration in studies

The collaboration was shown in studies mainly through courses taking place in Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences (Digital image, web art and media art). It was also shown in the international projects that were offered for students (for example the ASAD-project). Also few student exchanges were made during the program; to Alaska and to Scotland.

The project Arctic Sustainable Art & Design (ASAD and part of the Thematic Network), where our (Katri Konttinen and Sofia Waara) working took place, was organized under the Institute for Northern Culture. The events planned and organized during the project were the first meetings of the members of the Thematic Network (action research cycles in the thesis).

The main aims of the network (ASAD) are *to identify and share contemporary and innovative practices in teaching, learning and knowledge exchange in the fields of art, design and visual culture education* (University of the Arctic homepage). It aims on promoting cooperation and collaboration between universities, institutions and communities, focusing on Northern, Arctic issues (in the field of arts, design and visual culture).

Activities executed in 2012 under the Arctic Sustainable Art and Design were:

- *Establish an active network*
- *Host one seminar*
- *Host one conference* (Tales from the North in Inari, cycle 1)
- *Provide a two-week Summer school* (Arctic Circles Art & Design Summer School, cycle 2)
- *Publish a book on Arctic Arts and Design* (RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä article)
(University of the Arctic)

Due to these networks, Soma and AVA have wider global meaning, being examples established by the University of Lapland.

APPENDIX 3

Early sketch about the Multisensory Trail, Inari. Picture by Tony Fredriksson.



APPENDIX 4

Feedback from the Multisensory Trail, Inari

20. What did you experience during the Trail? (Amount of replies: 8)

- Wrong shoes, nice trail.
- Beauty of the nature.
- A real awakening and self-reflection where I realised that I do not like to walk in somebody else's footsteps. The focus on senses made it so tangible in that I walk after other people in a line without talking to them – and tried my best not to take the same steps as they did.
- Sorry to say, I missed it.
- I don't know, what was it all about.
- Meaning the closing day Trail????
- Home, nature, nostalgic feeling, relaxing atmosphere, sustainable art experience.
- outdoor atmosphere.

21. Which sense was the strongest? (Amount of replies: 5)

- touch and vision
- Hearing
- Being an early spring walk meant that smell was not very significant – sound became a natural focus in that there wasn't much speech – the nature took over, especially the wild melting water. Feeling the cold temperature in the air, and from the block of ice remained also strong in my mind. The final tea could have been explained a tad more so one would know what it consisted of.
- Wet conditions.
- All the senses – it was an total experience!

22. On the scale of 1 to 5 how well do you think the Trail connected to Applied visual arts? (Amount of replies: 12) 1=Not at all, 5=very much

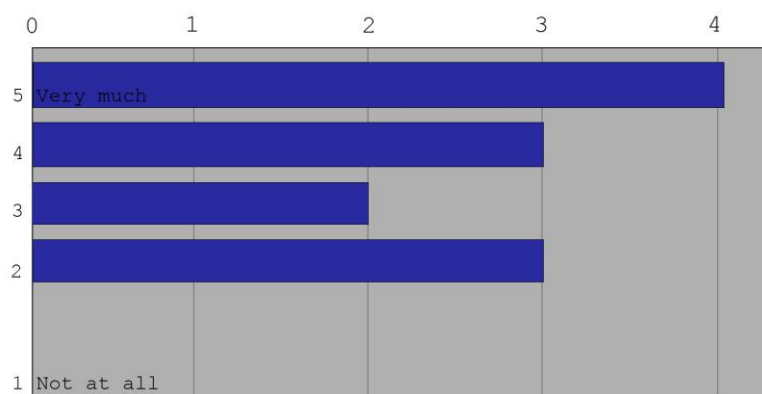


Table 1 Feedback. Katri Kontinen

2013.

APPENDIX 5

Feedback from the Arctic Circles Summer School (Circle of Art)

What was nice?

- The seminar day was good, good lectures which were not too long.
- To meet new people with fresh ideas and open mind. Engage! Seminar was also nice.
- Yes it was! I enjoyed building something together in a group and got to know Rovaniemi much quicker than I would have by myself.
- Building willow sculptures, outdoors in the center of the city, Meeting people from different countries.
- Ideas which are going in real culture park. Sustainable design -project in Inari. (Sustainable Design)

What was not so nice?

- Sampokeskus is not a good place for presentations; they could have been somewhere else.
- Dividing our workshop into two different parts (reindeer thing and Ii workshop) → HURRY!
- There could have been more information before hand like what to wear (for first day we went straight to work). Timetables could be more clear.

Ideas for the future Summer Schools?

- I think doing practical things combined with good lectures would work well.
- I really enjoyed the talk at NAPA Gallery and would have enjoyed even more of discussions like that. (There was an art discussion evening in Napa Gallery)
- Inari – Ii – Rovaniemi, Go on with arctic circles so that every year you change the theme in these locations and create an ongoing design process art, service, sustainable.

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Did Arctic Circles Summer School fulfil Your expectation?

- It's not over yet, so i can't say. – I didn't have any or yes I got to do something with my hands.
- I didn't have many expectations. I really didn't know what to expect, but I am very glad I joined.
- Yes
- Absolutely.

What did You learn?

- I learnt about environmental art and how to use a recorder among other things.
- To use the recorder, also that when every person gives ideas and works hard the summary will be a whole art piece.
- How to build a sculpture from willow :) And also about the art community in Rovaniemi. I saw different places, galleries and met really nice people.
- Willow sculpting.

Other comments?

- The spirit is good, things would still be organized more smoothly
- I had a really good time and I'm glad to have met nice people and how helpful everybody are.
- It was nice everything overall.
- It would be nice to get deeper information about the weeks schedules beforehand.
- I wish to work as an assistant in the next WDC project, if possible.

APPENDIX 6

River Walk Ayr, 25.2.2013/14.45-17.20

The River Ayr (from a small, red, iron bridge, until the sea)

Observing the surroundings; notions on the way:

Partly so calm river, floating slowly towards the sea.

Smells like home; smells of spring + smell of cows.

Seagulls flying & screaming create the feeling of being away from home. Many birds singing, sun is shining.

Sounds of cars from the road following the river. On the other side, a silent wall and the birds singing.

People taking daily strolls with their dogs. (Dogs without leash!) Barking.

Ground is soft and comfortable under my feet.

After a while, the stream gets stronger; now there are sounds of cars, birds, wind, streaming water, random people (and their dogs).

Stones in the water; water making new routes, when finding ways to get pass the stones; creating shapes, moves, sounds.

Further sounds from machines, from the other side of the river (left side). The other side continues to be rather silent.

Curious swans following.

Stream is calm again, no sound from the water. The sound of cars gets stronger. On the right hand the student residency.

Electric cables crossing the river. Still the smell of cows, though not so strong.

Small white flowers here and there. The smell of dirt. Bugs. Scooter driving by.

The cemetery on the left hand of the river.

On the right hand; a car park/lot

The second bridge.

A fence next to the campus building. Birds everywhere.

The water is almost still (small trembling on the surface). The sound of hunger.

Wells – the sound coming from underground.

People jogging. 2nd ambulance.

On the right hand; sports field & Ayr College. Cars on the left.

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Bigger houses on the left side. Smell of cow dung.

City approaching, towards the sea. Road blocks, now open.

Ahead of me; bridge, blockhouses.

The sound of streaming water starts again.

Small falls of Ayr / water level not so high now.

Walking path – asphalt road now.

Sounds from cars and the stream around me.

Under the bridge; sirens, smell of cars, cigarettes.

On the right hand; fire station (purple flowers next to the station – spring is coming)

Under the second bridge (no trains crossing the river at the moment).

Birds, people passing by, stream, cars.

Small white flowers.

Another bridge.

Rather fresh smell in the air, slightly windy. Houses on both sides of the river.

The centre leaving on the left side. On the right side; beautiful functionalism-style blockhouses. Seagulls screaming around. On the left side, the cemetery. Ravens on trees.

Small ‘park’ before a bridge. Sound of local birds (swan goose)

Driftwood (big one) on the river.

Pigeons sitting on the roofs. (On the right side)

Bridge – have to cross the road. Church on the right hand.

After the bridge, a remaining of an old bridge, no longer standing?

Old woman feeding huge seagulls from the dock.

Smell of sea, from time to time.

Almost quiet, car sounds left behind. Walk ending to the fishing harbour.

Air has turned chilly and the sun is about to set.

APPENDIX 7

Introduction Chapter (Project Proposal)

My project *Sensing a Place – Interpretation Through Installation Work*, focuses on the creational process of an Interpretive Installation, through research. The focus in the research is on sensing a place and interpreting it (Ayr and The River Ayr). The project has several contexts; it is part of my exchange studies in the University of Scotland and is started by this project proposal made for the Module *Research; Critical Development* (MEDI11005), co-ordinated by Dr Kathryn Burnett. The proposal is a creative application of research methodologies and opens the learning process during the Module.

The wider context of the project is in my studies in design and applied visual art. I have a bachelor's degree in industrial design and at the moment I am studying in the master's program of applied visual art, in the University of Lapland. The program is a piloting project and we are the first group graduating as Master of Arts, under *applied visual art*.

In the final MA dissertation I am looking into applied visual art as a meeting place of art and design and Rivers as the metaphor for it. The research is about locating the concept of applied visual art within the fields of art and design. The Installation is a visualization of the research outcomes and it answers to the research questions.

The project (Installation) started within the module of Research; Critical Development, continues later in Finland, where I will work with the river Kemijoki, in Rovaniemi. The final Installation includes both rivers (Ayr and Kemijoki); they are the central places of the research.

Finally, the work aims on my professional development. As the project is about sensing a place, it is also a personal journey, through which I am locating my own creative practice. These three context can be put as; River Ayr –sensing a place – Kemijoki; Art – applied visual art – Design; Art – My Place – Design.

The projects research done within the Module Assessment is looking into the concept of *place and* question about *sensing a place*, including a small scale place research, mainly basing on my observations and reflections (The River Ayr and Ayr). It focuses also on the question of *visualising research* (art making and visual presentations [in art and natural science]).

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The nature of the research is *practice based research*, which aims on the creation of the final outcome (the Interpretive Installation) through *art/design practice*.

It is about combining practice into research, reflecting the observations made. *One way of interpreting practice is to characterize it as doing, knowing, being and becoming* (Higgs & Titchen, 2001, p. 3)

The research is about being in the *place* (The River) and getting a sense of it; exploring and experiencing the place, by walking, listening, looking, smelling; sensing. It is qualitative, for focusing on the personal findings and observation and the interpretations made from them. Theory can be seen as tool and context for practice, enabling the meeting point them.

Qualitative research, described by Higgs & Cherry (2009, p.3) as *a way of looking at the world and a constellation of approaches used to generate knowledge about the human world*, here focusing on sensing a place.



Figure 7 Map of Ayr (1909), photograph Katri Konttinen.

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Figure 8 River Yangtze Stone Line (China 2010), by Richard Long.

Online Sources

Higgs, J. & Cherry, N. (2009) *Doing qualitative research on practice* in Joy Higgs, Debbie Horsfall and Sandra Grace (Eds.) *Writing Qualitative Research on Practice*, SENSEPUBLISHERS ROTTERDAM/BOSTON/TAIPEI [Online]
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Figures

Figure 7 Map of Ayr (1909), photograph Katri Kontinen 2013.

Figure 8 River Yangtze Stone Line by Richard Long [Image] 2010, Retrieved 6 May, 2013 from http://www.richardlong.org/Sculptures/2012/river_yangtze.html

APPENDIX 8

Artistic Part: Spotting AVA – Interpretations through installation work

The final installation Spotting AVA - Interpretations through installation (being constructed by the time of writing the thesis) work opens visually the trajectory of the master's thesis research done in Applied Visual Arts (AVA). It is a visual presentation of the research journey, an audit trail mapping the process. The work is exhibited in Kemi Art Museum, in the exhibition **Soveltavan kuvataiteen AVAUS, Applied Visual Arts and US - AVAUS** 18.10. - 1.12.2013; where the master's program of applied visual art, and its outcomes are presented.

Research

The research was set up to find out about the history and current relationship between art and design, in order to define the place AVA (applied visual art) has in relation to the two fields. These two disciplines and their relationship have long been objects of my interest; AVA provided me with the perfect opportunity to look deeper into the two fields and to find out where it can be located in relation to the fields. The thesis also focused to the value of visualization in the research process, which was shown partly in the artistic part. Main research questions were;

- 1) *What is meant by the concept of Applied Visual Art (AVA)?*
- 2) *Where is it located in relation to the fields of art and design?*
- 3) *What is the value of visualization in an applied visual art research process?*

The theoretical frame of the research can be put as; River Ayr –finding a place – Kemijoki; Art – applied visual art – Design; Art – My Place – Design. In the thesis, the element river was observed as **a place** and **a source for inspiration**; the two rivers (River Ayr – Me (researcher and artist) – Kemijoki) being in the centre. The River was seen also as a symbolic element and nature's own design/art process of finding place (River Ayr – My Place - Kemijoki) through obstacles and re-designing the landscape. In the installation work, rivers are seen as meeting places (art and design).

Three action research cycles were made, during the research process (2012-2013), in order to answer to the research questions. Cycles took place in northern Finland (Inari, Ii and Rovaniemi) and also in Scotland (Ayr). Sofia Waara was working with me in the two first

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cycles as we were working together in the project Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design. In Inari, the first cycle concentrated on creating a multisensory experience for the delegates of *Tales from the North – Conference*, in Sajos centre. It was the event where applied visual arts were presented. The outcome from our planning process was a Multisensory Trail, which was located close to the Sajos centre.

The second cycle, *RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä*, was a two-week international summer school organised partly in Rovaniemi and in Ii. Our task was to plan and lead the workshops for art, as the summer school was divided into three themes; sustainable design, service design and art. We were working with environmental and community arts with design perspective; the process was very rich and we had international participants and local participants from Ii. The final outcome of the project was an Art Trail, created for the welcoming party for the artists arriving to the Ii Biennale of environmental and sculpture art and for the local people in Ii. Inspired by the experiences from Ii, I wanted to continue with the research process and to create a third cycle, which would take part in Ayr, in Scotland as part of my exchange studies.

In Ayr, Scotland, I wrote a project proposal, which was actually a small-scale background research for the artistic part. In the proposal I discussed about the meaning of *place*, *space* and *visualization* in my work and most importantly, I discussed about rivers and how they are connected in the work. Besides the project proposal I was working with a sound spotting journey, which was focusing to the river Ayr. In shortly, I collected sounds and photographs among my field notes from the walks near by the river. As the process was done for my studies in the University of the West of Scotland, it also started the process of the artistic part, which I continued working with after my return to Rovaniemi. The project planned in Scotland was about sensing a place but it was also a personal journey, through which I was trying to locate my own creative practice.

What all cycles mentioned above share is their commitment to *place* and *finding a place*. It can be taken in the central in analysis and discussion, for it has been, partly unconsciously, dominating and shaping the research process. This can be seen as the main theme of analysing data (data including both (audio) visual and verbal material). In the process, the visual and other data became interwoven (Pink 2007:120) as the three cycles produced different kind of data (for example cycle 1 questionnaires, cycle 2 (audio) visual material and cycle 3 sounds, visual and verbal material). These findings made have also been supporting my decision to make the artistic part for the thesis, as it seemed to have potential to support the written part.

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Working Process

The process takes back to 2011, when the master's program of AVA started. It was the time when I first encountered the river Kemijoki in Rovaniemi. It was also the first time I considered working with rivers. It became clearer after the project RiverSounds – JoenÄäniä (mentioned earlier) that the river would be *the visual element* for my research. After applying for exchange to the University of the West of Scotland in Ayr and finding out about the river the final decision was made.

Rivers Ayr and Kemijoki became the central places for the research behind the artistic part. Metaphorically, the two rivers can be seen as symbols for art and design. They are also the design- and artworks of nature, making their space and place in the environments. When the rivers (art and design) encounters, the space for AVA is being created; this meeting is hoped to point out in the artistic part by visual means; the installation travels between Art – Applied Visual Art – Design; looking for the place for Applied Visual Art.

The Installation was a process of combining practice into research, where research and the artwork are shown together, supporting one another. The artwork can be therefore identified to the research as “object of thinking”. (MacLeod 2000, as cited in MacLeod & Holdridge 2005: 9) The working process has been constantly active; I have been collecting inspiring elements from the rivers while the writing process. Both writing and planning the artistic part have been supporting one another and enriched the process. Making art as part of research is a field that I wish to explore more in the future; it is a process of personal expression reflecting the research and completes the process; it can give wider perspective to research.

The installation connects the two places (Ayr and Rovaniemi), through place-specific elements (photographs) and through bringing the two rivers visually together; showing how places, different and yet similar can be brought together by the combining element, the river. The work explores the places by showing place-specific elements from both places and bringing them together by an interdisciplinary bridge. As the ready-made installation was set up in Kemi, the connections it had to the written thesis became visible; it links the process of finding a place as the two rivers come together.

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