

# 1 INTRODUCTION

As a student of the Applied Visual Arts Master Program 2012-13 (SOMA<sup>1</sup>), and with an art teacher background degree, I have dedicated my research thesis to exploring the field of Applied Visual Arts (AVA) as it might apply to education. Through cooperation with pedagogical institutions and local culture agencies I planned and executed a practical experiment using methods of Applied Visual Art, including artistic practice, place research, pedagogical documentation, site-specific art and environmental design.

This research consisted of three main stages. First, *Cycle 1, 'A Place Called Ii'*. Secondly, *RiverSounds Rovaniemi* and lastly *RiverSounds Ii*. *The first* was focused on context studies and place research in Ii, and *both latter events were launched through* The Arctic Art & Design Summer School *as practical pedagogical activities in the field of design, which formed the part of the practical experiment of this study. The main part of this research* was conducted in cooperation with Finnish designer Katri Konttinen, within the framework of the Arctic Sustainable Arts & Design- project (ASAD). The two of us participated in the planning and creating of cultural events taking place in the northern part of Finland (Lapland) during the summer of 2012. I worked together with Konttinen for the main part of developing, planning and facilitating the practical experiment. Nevertheless, Konttinen has taken a different research emphasis, aiming to investigate the connection between art and design, while my focus was on investigating the relationship between AVA and Art Education, creating multisensory experiences.

In this thesis, a connection between *environmental art & design pedagogy* is made. The connection becomes evident in the practical experiment of the Applied Visual Arts-project, which was actualized during the summer 2012(winter2013). Also, northern *Art and Design Education* served as a main field of source, when it

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<sup>1</sup> **Soveltavan Kuvataiteen Maisteriohjelman**, Finnish translation

came to gathering of data for the background research. Through the archives at University of Lapland there is constant flow of updated pedagogical documentation available from student works: site specific projects and environmental art, including process, visual documentation, of communities, with/and/or local environments, approached from just as many angles as there are works done (for example the, ACE-Project Archive, See References) In this thesis the environmental art is representing a wide field of contemporary arts is and not to be confused with specific practices like for example Land art or Street art (See Literature Review chapter *Environmental Art and Design Education*)

The main practical example for this study and research was the workshops taking place during the summer of 2012, under the name of *RiverSounds Rovaniemi* and *RiverSounds Ii*, was also the main result of my cyclical research (See methodology chapter) On the homepage of The Biennale in Ii, after the workshop the following was written about these events:

*Local environmental artworks and the banks of Iijoki river functioned as a source of inspiration for the RiverSounds art workshop organized in Ii, in cooperation with the WDC2012 Helsinki-Rovaniemi project administered by the University of Lapland and Rovaniemen Kehitys Oy in the beginning of June 2012. In addition to the students of the international Arctic Circles Art & Design summer school, the workshop of environmental and community art was participated by over ten young persons from Ii. During the four days' workshop the students and young persons prepared various environmental artworks that produced sounds at the banks of Iijoki river between Art Centre KulttuuriKauppila and the new environmental art park. The finished works were presented in a splendid pageant that welcomed the artists participating in ART Ii Biennale 2012 to Ii.*

(See References for further information on related links to videos and online documentation of projects)

## **2 AIMS AND PURPOSE**

### **2.1 Research Questions**

1. To what extent can contemporary arts educational projects merge with the local culture and context of villages in Lapland?

This research was designed to fit specific events taking place in villages across Lapland and it provides information on how community participation merges together the academic world of contemporary arts with the everyday life of local people.

2. What does creating multi-sensory art practice demand from its practitioner?

### **2.2 Aims of Research**

I have restricted my research to include only the northern perspective, more specifically Finnish Lapland, and what developed here within the last 10 years. I find it especially interesting with the kind of teaching methods that are practiced at the University of Lapland, where the contemporary arts and cognitive approach of epistemology, the university world, cooperate together with local communities in villages in Lapland, taking part of the everyday life, and is aiming towards creating a state of equilibrium and wellbeing on both sides, this relates directly to my first research question. (Re-producing sustainable relations) This research aimed to clarify how this is made possible, through investigations using practical methods found in contemporary fine arts and design. The practical (artistic) part and the research parts were interlinked and depending on each other. Furthermore, my hopes are that the knowledge gained through this research will delineate a structure for future designers, artists and companies who might become inspired to work in the field of sustainable art education in Lapland. Also, I have with my background in the field of Art & Design

pedagogy, included extracts from the study that resulted in my bachelors-thesis as a pre-study to the subject. In 2010 I wrote a bachelor-thesis in art education on environmental art & design education in Lapland, in which I focused on the outdoors learning-environment.

### **2.3 Aims of Project**

The goal for Konttinen and me was to realize a project through the integration of educational methods, practice-based skills, and scientific knowledge, rooted in the cultural heritage and traditions of a community in Lapland, emphasizing the importance of recognizing silent knowledge and multisensory research.

Creating place-specific events including community involvement, intended to encourage dialogue and work as empowerment for all parts involved in the including process, which ultimately aimed at support the local community and culture, furthermore, to improve our own practice in the field of AVA.

Embedded in the concept, lay also the element of environmental art, which aims to enhance human interaction and direct contact with the local environment. Together, enabling the creating a multisensory experience for both pedagogical reasons, as well as for bringing attention to the artist & designer's role as an activist.

The continuous relationship between place and person is what many critics declare to be lost, and needed, in contemporary society. (Kwon, 2002: 163) Moreover, it can be seen as the main cause of the socio-cultural issues human is faced with in modern society, for example, the disconnection from history, nature, spirituality, and even the estrangement from our own sense of self (Kwon, 2002: 158; Lippard, 1997: 7)

Through using the methods of AVA, we learnt new ways of involving the users and audience in cross-disciplinary projects, aiming to counter the trends of the dominant culture and encourage a particular type of relationship to places, creating values

immeasurable by material means. (Kwon, 2002: 158) Important to mention is that the AVA- approach, which in this case aims to find out ways to work together with, and from within small-scale communities in the North, is strongly acknowledging a sustainable and ecological solution of process-based design.

Contemplating the idea to design, not a beautiful artefact or product for people to use in their everyday life, but to design a beautiful everyday life: “It is not design unless it is sustainable”(Hardt, 2012: 59) meaning; returning the resources used back to the holistic ecosystem of planet earth, and thereby trying to solve also the ‘problem of production,’ which humanity still is faced with today.(See Schumacher, 1973: 8) However, there are multiple aspects of sustainability besides the clearly ecological one, that were also recognized in the project, for example the economic and socio-cultural dimensions, and more importantly for this study: educational sustainability.

Through its cooperation between various public and private instances the project aimed to make these practices more visible, thus more available and attractive in a near future to the people/artists/designers/art educators in the area, region and internationally. During The Arctic Art & Design Summer School the workshops intended to lift the subject and discussion on the role of AVA in the North

The Action Research (AR)-cycles were carried out with different partners involved, and although the cycles involved different sample groups the questions remained the same. This was possible since the method of design used and produced, aimed to delineate a frame suitable for the various situations.

### 3 THE NORTHERN PERSPECTIVE – THE CONTEXT OF STUDY

*Culture is usually to be what defines a place and its meaning to people. But place equally defines culture. In addition, our concepts of place affect how we identify the living process within them – (Lippard.1997: 11)*

Think Global- Act Local, historical and contemporary Lapland has a lot of information to be shared globally, henceforth bringing forward the northern perspectives on design and art is today an important addition to the international discussion. According to communication design Professor Michal B. Hardt, the most suitable environments to learn about sustainability by design is the Arctic. Hardt further suggests that the indigenous people can be the teachers in this quest. “The Sami shall be our teachers” quotes a handwritten note from year 1732 by Swedish Botanist Carl Von Linné, as he travelled in Lapland, this quote was also put forward in design context by Hardt (Hardt, 2012: 59).

Arctic cultures have always been depending on a sustainable relationship to the harsh climate. This, paired with its past history of colonialism has in recent history led to the current development of place specific design methods, containing sufficient alternatives to the ones offered by the contemporary dominant culture. “If the universalizing tendencies of modernism undermined the old divisions of power based on class relations fixed to geographical hierarchies of centres and margins only to aid capitalisms colonization of “peripheral” spaces, then the articulation and cultivation of diverse local particularities is a (postmodern) reaction against these effects.”(Kwon, 2002: 157)

The global rise of environmental awareness gives a good indication of it being the right time at the moment to raise environmental issues and likewise the activity of systematically put in use ecological alternatives/ processes to previous states of regional development.

Today locally, the subject of academic environmental or community art projects is not a new notion in Finnish Lapland, as it has been practiced for decades, and can therefore be investigated through close cooperation within local culture/communities. The pedagogical aspect gives the chance to research this area through methods and means leading towards shared knowledge and experience.

The University of the Arctic (UArctic) exists as a huge network of institutions around the arctic region, and forms the umbrella for participants in international workgroups. As part of the development of the UArctic education and research, thematic networks are activated. UArctic's Thematic Networks are independent and thematically focused responding to topical Arctic issues, addressing experts in specific areas of relevance to the North. (Uarctic1, 2012, ¶ 3)

A relatively new network has been established, of which this research was part of the pilot projects; the *Arctic Sustainable Arts & Design (ASAD)*. The network aims to identify and share contemporary and innovative practices in teaching, learning, research, and knowledge exchange in the fields of arts, design and visual culture education (Uarctic2. 2012, ¶.1). Furthermore, promote cooperation and collaboration between universities, institutions and communities focused on Northern, Arctic issues in the same fields. Also support the development of context-sensitive research methods and arts & design practices in the Arctic. (Uarctic2. 2012, ¶ 2) More detailed information about the UArctic and ASAD are to be found on their webpage. (See references)

The ASAD was providing the framework in which several workshops were run during 2012 in Lapland. Belonging to the international academic community of UArctic thematic network naturally, all collaboration included went via the University of Lapland, Faculty of Art Education. In 2012, ASAD undertook the following activities: Established the network, hosted one seminar and a conference, provided a two-week Summer school and published a book on Arctic Arts and Design. (Uarctic2, 2012, ¶3)

In the roles of student researchers Konttinen and I took on the responsibility to plan and execute SOMA-workshops for the Conference, and the summer school, we also concluded a short article for the publication about what had been done (Konttinen & Waara, 2012: 50). These events became the focus for our common research.

First, the International conference, *Tales from the North*, April 2012, took place in Inari, in cooperation with a local cultural agency: the Sami Cultural Centre, Sajos. Secondly, the International *Arctic Art & Design Summer School (Arctic circles/ Circle of Art)* May-June 2012, took place in Rovaniemi and partly three other locations. The part we (Konttinen & I) hosted, *RiverSounds*, took place in Rovaniemi and in the Municipality of Ii. The exact place was located in the village of Ii, in the new Environmental Art Park. Both of these events were, as mentioned before, pilot projects within the thematic UArctic network ASAD.

The AVA-workshops were specifically designed to take place in the northern parts of Finland at two separate events, and as cycles of Action Research (AR) (In the chapter on place research there are further details on these municipalities and environments) each with common and specific aims answering to the organizers wishes. At the Conference in Inari, the specific aim was to show the delegates a presentation of SOMA and design a site-specific outdoor happening, which resonated with the presentation. In Ii the aim was to through the ASAD-workshops, further develop the concept of international workshops in the field of sustainable arts and design, and to create new connections between contemporary art and traditional visual cultures of the arctic region.

ASAD-workshops always aim to provide participants with sufficient information about place specific arts, design and visual culture. The idea is to learn more about the northern culture, the natural environment and the relationship amidst and through this gain understanding of cultural sustainability, local customs and values. By finding inspiration in the arctic nature, culture and environment, the method of design here included a working tool for empowerment of the inhabitants of the Arctic, and based



on local knowledge it is possible to continue the building and re-building of sustainable relations to nature and culture in northern areas using art and design.

## 4 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 4.1 Constructing Meaning through Collaborative Inquiry

Applied Visual Arts is a cross disciplinary field, touching on and connecting to the ones of, contemporary art education, contemporary fine art, architecture and design but not belonging to any specific discipline. It is not about applying/styling/decoration “design” or “art” in general and does not refer to any specific technical skill within arts and crafts. It is process based, carefully planned, skilful artistic results carried out in the specific context, wherever it is applied.

The field can be considered a relatively new one and the roots can be traced back to the beginning of the 1960s and the *cultural turn*, which helped cultural studies to gain more respect as an academic discipline. The time referred to as the *cultural turn*, (Barker; in Martin Alcoff (1998); Baudillard (1980); Vygotsky (2003) depicts a historical shift in values and belief systems away from a positivist epistemology, and the idea that legal knowledge can only be reached through the natural sciences, suggesting that no knowledge is genuine unless it is based on generally observable facts, (Schumacher, 1973: 68-69) towards one of creating *meaning*. With the shift towards meaning, it could be argued that the importance of high arts and mass culture in cultural studies has declined. Therefor *culture* today can be defined as the social process whereby people communicate meanings, make sense of their world, construct their identities, and define their beliefs and values. With the shift, the discipline has increased its perceived importance and influence on other disciplines, resulting in the necessary birth of new fields such as AVA.

Since this shift, there have been major developments in the fields of art practice and theory. In the visual arts, at least until recently, two major orientations of how to come to know and value tradition and change have dominated—modernism and postmodernism. The field of AVA, as presented in this thesis, emerges from a postmodernist view of art and can be understood as a *place* where various disciplines

meet through using methods of fine arts and design. The debates surrounding modern and postmodernism serve as a brief introduction to those issues that have particular relevance to contemporary art education, such as the meaning of art situated in historical and social contexts.

This thesis has its focus on both the present and the future, and will not go further into historical stems, but I still think it is important to mention the strong historical connection to emancipation movements, for example feminism, as one of the influencing strains that has had an impact on the development of the field. Issues of gender, race, and class have entered the dialogue of art and consequently art education. (Hutchens and Suggs, 1997: 10, 74,132) Some art educators argue that proposing new directions for art education without understanding these contrasting ways of knowing, (modern/postmodern) about knowledge and the learning process, would be unquestionably fruitless. (Neperud, 1995, ¶ 2)

Changes that occurred in the late 1960s saw the emergence of a conceptual era of art, in which the emphasis and value within art altered; an art object's value was no longer inherent within that object. Rather value was applied through cultural context and what the artworks *means*. If culture was about *things* (a film, or a piece of art), it is now more about processes and practices of meanings. Postmodernism foretold a radical alteration of art, of its means of describing the world, its relationship to its audience, and ultimately, its social function. Ronald W. Neperud, Professor of Art sums it up in this colourful quote:

*"This postmodernist view of art means a very different approach to teaching about art than was contained in our previous misconceptions that meaning was given by the high priests—critics, aestheticians, and historians—who were the keepers of the truth or meaning. Instead, meaning is inextricably connected to the tangled and changing web of context to be constructed by the audience. This means that there is no single meaning or truth, but one that is constructed by all who seek to understand art."* (Neperud, 1995, ¶ 38.)

In art education this *change of values*, still in transition today, can be seen in the various art-teaching traditions existing side by side (modernist /post-modernist), resulting in the “fostering” of what could be called “old school vs. new school” artists/educators. The fact is that the transition is still on going, and not everyone studying or practicing art or design, knows about the contextual impacts of these two major orientations, and this challenges the framing of AVA for the outsider. Adding to this difficulty are the many various valid definitions circulating around the words “Art”, “Visual” and “Applied.”

The postmodern focus that has replaced the modernist/romantic one on individual expression can be explained through *social constructionism*. In his book "The Reality of Social Construction" British sociologist Dave Elder-Vass places the development of social constructionism as one outcome of the heritage of postmodernism. He states that social constructionism is perhaps the most influential and widespread product, produced by historical postmodernism, as it has been booming (within the field of social theory) since the 1980s (Elder-Vass, 2012: 4) Social constructionism focuses on how meaning is constantly built and/or constructed by individuals and groups, socially produced and historically conditioned, in f.eg visual culture.

Visual culture as a concept grew during the 1990s and points forward to a field of research separate from the traditional visual/art-science. In visual culture the pictures are not studied as isolated objects free from the beholder. Quite the opposite is true, as it is the visual experience in its social context, which is the field of research for the visual culture.

Therefore, in visual culture there are no static or decided relations, as images, sounds and spatial definitions creates an entire world of information. Everyday encounters with artworks, media, advertising, buildings or urban environments, create subjective response, where layers of meanings are lent, read on to, and through one another. (Mirzoeff, 1998: 15)

The socially constructed context is ever changing depending on the picture, who is watching, from which point of view it is seen and the situation in which the seeing takes place. With "picture" is meant all visual phenomena, which we choose to see, both pictures as objects and pictures as phenomenon, for example a public space. If we take for example the concept of AVA the thought of "Applied Visual Arts" can generate totally different visual experiences on the "inner visual screen" depending on who you are: a beautiful interior design fabric, an application on a clothing, a business concept or a painting. The "gaze" is about the way we go about watching. The seeing can be used for pleasure, registration, supervision, which in visual culture is a real problem like analysing, decoding. The definition of visual culture leads us to that seeing is a *place*, an action or situation where meaning is created and decided.

## 4.2 The Studies of Place

*"The seen is the scene" (Lippard.2008: 8)*



Figure 1: Aerial view over Kemi-River, Lapland. Photo: Waara.

Recognizing the studies of place was of great importance for this research, because it plays an important part of the development of context-sensitive research methods and likewise arts & design practices in the Arctic. In this chapter I will discuss what I have learnt about place.

Place can be or not be, physical or immaterial, near far and here. My place or yours, local global, private or public so on...and there is a lot of in between. Place includes landscape, vernacular and otherwise, perhaps comprehensible only if perceived as an 'organization of space.'(Lippard. 2008: 8) It is the people that makes the places, individually or together, since each places is different from another, likewise people, and depending on our past knowledge and future expectations we perceive the places differently the negotiations about value are taking place in everyday life of humans on earth as we engage in "place-making". When working with AVA it is important to understand the concept of the many layers of place, in order to fully understand what it means to work in a "place-specific" way.

Place research can begin by answering the questioning of what place is, can be and for who this is? Continuingly, who owns or uses the spaces, how were they created and how do or did they change? The discussion then divides into many branches; the differences between place, space and physical/geographical places versus theimmaterially /embodied ones. Somewhere they all meet in the same word and so *Place* is a contested concept and what it is that "place" means has been the subject for decades of debate in human geography, architecture, philosophy and a number of other disciplines.

One confusing aspect of place is that it stands for both an object of research and a way of looking "Looking at the world as a set of places in some way separate from each other is both an act of defining what exists (ontology) and a particular way of seeing and knowing the world (epistemology and metaphysics)."(Cresswell, 2004: 15) So the way we look at and research and write about a place is actually the object of

how we see, research and write, and this connects back to the thought articulated earlier in discussing visual culture, that seeing is a place. Depending on definition, the research of place is a wide field to overview.

We perceive place with our senses, we see it, we feel it, and we sense the smell of it, the sounds from it, the memory, and it brings us the taste of something. How we perceive place is depending on individual experience. “My place is nicer than your place”, a sentence giving value to a certain place above another, where once again we have to ask: according to whom? All over the world people are engaged in place making activities and the most straightforward definition of place could be “a meaningful location.”

When we live somewhere steadily we turn the physical points surrounding us into something we might call “home” this is a common example of “place making” familiar to most of us. Only by naming it, “home” we actually create a place somewhere, even if not referring to an actual physical point but rather the idea and we can share it with others through for example language. Places are therefore not always stationary, they can be imaginary, like the detailed building in a novel, still we can imagine through the describing stories for example; its architecture. One place like this can be Zonzo, which is a pure linguistic place encountered in the expression “andare a Zonzo” which means drifting without goal. (Careri, 2002: 11)

It can also help to think of place in distinction to two other concepts familiar to human geography; Space and Landscape. “Space has been seen in distinction to place as a realm without meaning –as a ‘fact of life’, which, like time, produces the basic coordinates for human life. When humans invest meaning in a portion of space (naming is one such way) it becomes a place” (Cresswell, 2004: 10)



Figure 2: Industrial Forest Landscape, Lapland. Photo: Waara.

The history of landscape leads us to the understanding that landscapes are places we look at not live in. Landscape refers to the shape- the material topography- of a piece of land. This may be natural landscape or...the obviously human, or cultural, landscape of a city (Lippard, 1997: 8- 10)

When researching landscape, except for the corporeal viewing, maps are the obvious tools that come to mind. The making of maps; cartography can be studied from various angles: there are several kinds of ways to map a place today. The mapping-techniques have developed through history, studying this also provides a lot of information about the cultural history of a place. Today we have services like for example “Google maps” and Google Earth.” Google Earth is a virtual globe, map and geographical information program that was originally called EarthViewer 3D. It maps the Earth by the superimposition of images obtained from satellite imagery, aerial photography and GIS 3D globe. Introduced in version 5.0, “Historical Imagery” feature allows users to traverse back in time and study earlier stages of any place. This



feature allows research that require analysis of past records of various places (Cresswell, 2004: 11)

Regional geography is the starting point of place research, and it was the Greek geographer Strabo (first century AD) who first described what we today call Chorology, the study of regions/ places. Regional geography was ideographic and the central word was region rather than place. A typical way for regional geographers to work was to describe a place/region in great detail, starting with the bedrock type and climate ending with 'culture'. Cultural geography geographers argued whether the environment determined society and culture or the importance of culture was transforming the natural environment (Cresswell, 2004: 17) recently geographers have explored the way regions have been deliberately produced through the activities of formal and informal politics. This thread could be studied further when researching the place making of the Barents Region, which is a very recently produced region of such kind.

When studying the culture of a place usually ethnographers and anthropologists are the professionals in charge. Throughout history the common methods in use have developed and history have experience something called the 'Sensorial turn' Scholars are creating new paths in the academic debate through the theoretical exploration of sensory experience, perception, sociality, knowledge, knowing, practice and culture. (Pink, 2008: 7) From this derives the 'Sensory ethnography', which is a critical methodology, suitable to consider when working in the North from a post-colonial contemporary perspective. It departs from the classic observational approach promoted by Aktinson, Delamont and Housely (2007) to insist that ethnography is a reflexive and experimental process through which understanding, knowing and (academic) knowledge is produced. Pink argues that her book *doing sensory ethnography* is by no means "simply a social anthropology book". It is theoretical commitments to place, memory and particular through which to situate ethnographic case studies in relation to historical and disciplinary paths.

While classical observation methods certainly produce valuable in-depth and often detailed descriptions of other people's lives, this type of fieldwork is often not viable in contemporary contexts. This development is due to the fact that there are places inappropriate or impractical for researcher to go and stay any longer time: a modern western home, or a working place with restrictions. To be able to research these places new methods have emerged. Sensory ethnography requires methods that 'are capable of grasping the most profound kind of knowledge, inaccessible to the method of data collection used in ethnographic documentation, as is not spoken of at all. Pink argues that the term 'data' used in research reduces the ways of understanding and knowing through ethnographic practice. (Pink, 2008: 8-9)

Finally, places as "things," are quite obscure and hard to grasp but place is also a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world. An example could be thinking of Baghdad, emphasizing its place specific values, rather than thinking of it as a target of bombs, *place* then becomes an aspect of how we choose to think about the world (Cresswell, 2004: 11) So "place as a way of knowing" can be studied and from an aesthetic point of view and this is where place research and the fine arts meet.

### **4.3 Environmental Art and Design Education**

*To look is one thing*

*To see what you look at is another.*

*To understand what you see is a third.*

*To learn from what you understand is still something else.*

*But to act on what you learn is*

*All that really matters –Talmud (as cited in Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000: 122)*

From a pedagogical point of view, the most suitable contemporary methods are to be found in the field of Environmental and Design education. In this chapter I will explain how come it can be that way, and give a brief historical view of the subject.

The roots of Environmental Art & Design Education can be found in branches of learning deriving from the cultural turn in the nineteen sixties and the birth of environmental art. The first one, believed to put together the words; Nature, Art, Design and Education, within the same constellation *environmental art and design education* was Neperud (T. Jokela, personal communication, September 28, 2009) The field of environmental art and design education promotes the pedagogical issues to be focused to the understanding of natural principles and how they connect with everyday life.

In order to comprehend the role of Environmental Art in this context a brief introduction to the field should here be in place. Environmental art can be explained and understood as the environmental philosophy of the visual arts (Jokela, 2008: 22) it is a widely diverse discipline encompassing small personal works, including earth/body art and performance, to permanent, large-scale works.

There is a broad range of artistic production that environmental art can cover, and the definitions can be flexible and vary, some examples are as follows: *Environmental Bio-Art*: Artworks incorporating living material, such as plants or moss, for a restorative function. *Earthworks*: Large-scale, environmental sculptures that use the natural environment both as site and as the materials for creation. *Land Art*: Term used predominantly in the 60s and 70s, referring to large-scale artworks, made outdoors on the land but not necessarily ecologically focused. *Walking Works*: Practices in which the artist uses the act of walking through an environment as an artistic expression. *Recycled Art & Site-Specific Performance Art*. In site specific context, it is common that the artworks are documented through film or photograph, since the artist connects with a particular environment through their body/senses in a manner that are not lasting in the same way like a painting for example. (Wildy, 2011: 6-8; Brady, 1998: 21-28; Reeve, 1998: 44-53)

In environmental art& design education, the works differ on a wider range, reaching from “designed art” to “artistic design” depending on process and methods involved. The artistic process and the process of design go hand in hand. Returning to the roots of aesthetics being epistemology conjoined with the problem solving process of sustainable design, the process of learning within this field can be compared to the process of design, where the subjective expression is tied together with the environment and the people who live in it, and is not standing autonomously. To give an example; the practice of place research, in the field of AVA, is done using methods and tools deriving from the process of design (mapping, mood/design-board making, systematic data collecting (customer/ consumer research/evaluation) while at the same time the observation and reflection is decoded and analysed by using visual culture methodology and through practice of fine art. The AVA-master program, (SOMA), is pioneers in this field in Lapland. (Coutts, 2012: 50)

Using progressive concepts such as *multi-centred society*, *phenomenological environments* and *sensory research* leads to a understanding of the world, meaning society and the human systems, as a result of design process. This is also the foremost aim of education according to Schumacher, who writes that no matter the subject, if the teaching is not anchored within clarification of metaphysics, meaning our fundamental convictions, it cannot educate people, and consequently is of no real value to society. (Schumacher, 1977: 72)

The Environment can be seen in many ways; depending on who is looking and from what point of view. We all see things individually and how we see it depends on the context in which we look, plus the sum of our previous experiences and our expectations of the future, most of these mental convictions are passed on subconsciously. (Jokela, 2005: 19) Schumacher refers to this as “our mental make-up” the very values by which we look at, interpret and experience the world. (Schumacher, 1977: 63) This explains why different environments are not mainly physical places but perceptual ones that we create together by sharing our opinions about the place, again based to on subjective experience. In the end it is perceptually

that we determine their identity and extent, this is what in theory is referred to as the “phenomenal environment” or together with the community “a phenomenal life-world” (Jokela, 2003: 27)

The ways we see things can sometimes become habitual and turn into limiting conventions. There is great educational significance in enriching the spectra of perspectives and traditionally art education has been the main provider of studies on ‘perception and observation’ where the visual experience creates a dialogue not based on spoken or written language. And, even as the distinctions between ‘design’ and ‘art’, likewise between ‘artist,’ ‘designer’ and ‘educator’ are blurred in this field, the working is infused with design thinking and art processes, and happens as a consequence of design, not by accident. (Coutts, 2012: 53) one thing remains, the fact that Art still creates new ways of observing.

The field of Environmental design can be defined by first distinguishing the difference between *designing* and *styling*. The professional field of design is one of constructive problem solving through processes, and should strive to make a clear separation to the one of styling (Hardt, 2012) which is not problem solving in a sense that it needs any deeper understanding of society as a “design process” in itself. This definition let on the understanding that Environmental Design is a field of “solving problems in the environment,” here the questioning of who’s problem is to be prioritized needs to be addressed. There are greater problems for designers to deal with in the environment than superficial beauty-flaws, or styling yet more everyday products for the marketplace to sell. Furthermore environmental design can be recognized as closely related to site-specific design and sustainable design. Environmental design education wishes to guide the designer /artist to be, through various “landscapes,” treating ecology, the economy, and culture as interdependent spheres which the designer should strive to understand, engage, and enhance.

On the subject of sustainable design the various stages in the process can be described and visualized. Hardt, illustrated it as a helix shaped never ending process,

or ending within itself as of a natural principle, an ecosystem. Continuingly, Hardt is lecturing upon the “responsibility of the designer” as well as the elimination of “the concept of waste” voicing a warning to the fact that many designers have so far in history, not taken the proper responsibility over their design items longevity, resulting in the pollution of natural environment, for example, the oceans. (Hardt, 2012) These are examples of un-sustainable design processes, which have gone out of control. The same issues have also been addressed by Design-guru, John Thackara in his book *In the Bubble – Designing in a complex world* from 2006. The book is considered the first strong, thoroughly documented statement on the importance of the local and the embedded in our fluid, hyper-connected world, and from which the now famous saying about in order to do things differently, we need to perceive things differently, derives. Somewhere here is where the field of community art, sustainable design and environmental education are interlaced. All means are aimed at constructing methods for the modern world to awake from the “self-absorbed collective hallucination” which defines it (Thackara, 2013.)

Today environmental art and design education is dealing with the place/site specific processes often questioning what place is, can be and how it is made and how individuals participate in the making and creating of environments. Further stating that due to lack of this understanding, the world is undergoing an environmental crisis (See for example: Van Boeckel, 2006; Tahkokallio, 2012; Thackara, 2007) proposing to be part of the solution.

#### **4.4 Community Art**

**“The road to hell is paved with good intentions”** is a proverb or an aphorism. An alternative form of the proverb is **“hell is full of good meanings, but heaven is full of good works”**

Community Art signifies a particular art making practice, emphasizing community involvement and collaboration. This is now a growing national, international, regional

and local field since community by definition is not restricted in size:

Definition of *Community* from the Latin *communitas* (cum, "with/together" and munus, "gift." The Term community has two distinct meanings:

1) A group of interacting people, living in some proximity (i.e., in space, time, or relationship). Community usually refers to the national community or international community.

2) In biology, a community is a group of interacting organisms sharing a populated environment. A community is a group or society, helping each other.

Historically the term community art refers also to field of community, neighbourhood and public art practice. Often with roots in social justice and popular, informal education methods, but also here the paradigm shift in the 1960s has brought on change, resulting in the inevitable widening of the community arts field. Today the term community art more often means *contemporary art project*. Recently the involvement of sustainability work or environmental action has begun to interface, including urban revitalization projects creating artwork at a neighbourhood level. The reason for this is connected to that another field, *public art*, has undergone profound changes since (three paradigms in public art since 60s, (Read more about these in Kwon, 2002: 60) and through this melted together with the field of community art. One example of how public art and community art has come to merge can be understood through the debate on art in public spaces.

In the text *Who's Monument Where?* The lines are clear. The writer gives a clear example: Historical war memorials in parks in America (these are to be found around the globe), questioning: who's forefathers are being portrayed? In this case, to the background of slavery, this monument, depending on placing, does not represent heroes to the community's citizens, on the contrary. The example shows that this is not public art for a multi-cultured society but instead an example of art in the service of dominance. Another example by the same author is the one of public art sculptures in the 1960s, similarly they were not concerned with the place specific values but just bought from the artist and placed in public spaces. The contemporary version would

perhaps be done more a more thoughtful and less selfish act, based on thorough place research and having in consideration the main audience; the people living every day in the community having to deal with the long term consequences of the art piece in question. Working with art that combines the communal and the environmental acts is aiming to clarifying the structure of human life-word and understanding it from the ethical, aesthetical and social standpoints, empowering the people as individuals and as a community and in the bigger perspective: humans sharing the earth.

#### 4.5 The Role of the Artist

This leads on to the question of the artist’s role here. The idea of “man over nature” has founded many believes that have led humanity into crisis. These ideals find their parallel in the art worlds late modernist and postmodernist cults of the exalted individual, in which personal vision and originality are highly valued (Lacy, 1995: 135) in the context of community art the focus lies on the common effort achieved. Usually the process of community art, and art works are closely connected to a certain community, where they take place with the community members who come together to create artwork/s with artists. The community artist can be said to be an expert of empowerment and collaborative art processes.

Below is a model visualized by artist and art educator Suzanne Lacy, (1995) as put forward by Hiltunen, (Hiltunen, 2012) showing how the role of the artist has changed from private to public:

##### *Changes in artist’s role*

Private      Public

:-----:-----:-----:

Experiencer   reporter      analyst                      activist

When the global community aims to work together on for example sustainable



development, community art comes to play an important role. As community art is most often art for social change and involves empowerment, there is now a global need for it. The model above shows how the role of the artist has changed, from being an individual experiencer to carry the responsibility of an activist. In this role it is not the artists personal vision and originality or art for art's sake, which is most important, but nevertheless important is the ability that the artist have, that through art, raise the voice and activate and make visible what is happening in the developing society (Lacy, 1995: 135) The process of community art can be seen as a way of celebrating together, making visible the strengths and rich culture of the community (Hiltunen, 2012.)

Most of community artists are found to be: art educators, students of art education, artists, researchers (sciences and humanities) and student of different disciplines in art and science. They practice community art through/at cultural institutes, tourism, local communities, schools, community activities, workshops, and public artworks in villages, art camps for youth, children's events, parties and celebrations, School and community activities. (Jokela, 2012) The representation of environmental and community art happens through art exhibits in galleries and museums, publications, photo galleries and project archives.

#### **4.6 Applied Visual Arts**

The Applied Visual Arts is by its very name a field hard to define within a narrow frame. In this chapter my attempt is to clear the path making it easier to overview.

Some conclusion made through this research, are as follows:

- The *Cultural Turn* in the 1960s created a shift within the social sciences, crucial to the development of this field, and this change is still in transition (in Lapland).
- Applied Visual Art derives mainly from three major fields combined: Environmental Art Education, Community Art and Sustainable Design.

- It is not about applying/styling/decoration “design” or “art” in general, (it is not design if it is not sustainable).
- It does not refer to any specific technical skill within arts and crafts but embraces multidisciplinary techniques and requires “soft skills” from its practitioner.

It is process based and context –sensitive, artistic results conceived through careful planning and cooperation. By using the word “applied” we can go deeper into the understanding of what kind of art-practice this is. To *apply* something can be paired with the act of *adding*, so in this case it is the *Visual Arts* that are added to...something. This *something* can be many things, may be another field or discipline, for example, we add *visual art* to the tourism-industry, the private company or the public spaces. Adding or applying Visual Arts in this way might sound like a simple process; comparable with the act of attaching a detail onto a wall, or a fabric...but perhaps not so. This is exactly where the process differs. AVA can theoretically be related to the fields of Applied Sciences, due to its element of using the design process to develop practical inventions, for example, in fields like health care and agriculture.

One way to define what AVA can be about is by sorting out what differs and what it is not. In this case simply applying paint and shape to a wall, is a matter of *decoration*, or *styling*, which indeed are other fields of creating visual culture, but not to be confused with the one of AVA. The result may look the same and the audience reactions at first sight, but it is the *process* behind which tells a totally different story, it carries important *parts* functioning for the wider society in a broader perspective.

This depicts one point of where AVA is strongly connected to the practice of community art. When working with AVA there are several things that are very different when it comes to *how*, compared with the individual art-process. First of all, the individual process, which is cherished as the modernist *originality* is not as in that case, the most prominent one. Instead in the AVA process is a collaborative activity

where credit is given to all those involved, not only to a designated artist. The process in its *whole* is the focused one, intertwined like a rope, the many individual, as well as group efforts, results in the holistic appearance of the art/design work. (Coutts, 2012: 49-53)

An important aspect of this factor is the progressive rudder steering in the direction of constantly moving forward, in questioning what art is, can be, and how it functions and work in contemporary time and place. Also the role of the artist becomes evident here; once again, it is not the “just do it” mentality that rules this kind of artistic practice, even though that element of artistic freedom is crucial too, for the process and result, but the more important skills acquired from the artist is the ability to cooperate, administrate and facilitate.

To the debate on *what art is*, AVA would like to say: it follows the culture in change. Art, can be said, is something that has been around since the dawn of culture, and throughout history it has taken on various definitions and expressions. It is important to remember when viewing a historical work of art, that it meant something very different in the historical context, and that it is not possible to grasp through imagination what it meant for people then and there.

Since we are products of our own time and visual culture, we read what we see, more or less critically, from a perspective based in our own time and place in history. Furthermore, working in a context-sensitive way in Lapland involves the natural environment the process, this inevitably touches onto the fields of the natural sciences. Only the actual outdoor experience, which it is, to be working out of the dominant architectural space with art & design, adds to the aesthetic process and plays a role in the outcome or result of the art/design work.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

### 5.1 Finding Pathways in Research Methodology

Several different models of research were considered before the study and action research was decided to be the most suitable method. As I was looking at AVA practices in Lapland, and the collaboration between university and local communities, my focus laid not entirely on certain individual's experiences of this, but also on gathering a comprehensible picture of the phenomenon.

Today we can still see traces of historical colonialism in various ways in Lapland, for example it becomes very clear in the tourism business. The projected image of Arctic Lapland is designed to sell the exotic, but how much truth lies behind the story? More important, who created this image and for whom? The cultural history of Lapland adds a lot to understanding the place specific issues that the area is concerned with. (See Tuominen, 2010; Lehtola, 1999) and when planning which research methods that were suitable, I had to consider this.

A large part of the research was conceived through the use of methods found in fine art and sensory anthropology. Art works and aesthetical processes take form while answering to a countless amount of observations, emotional reactions (multisensory experiences,) therefor a research method allowing focus to be on these, and the actual "doing" was preferred. Through the method of action research (AR) I could participate in these practices, in the role as facilitator and researcher, which brought the necessary experience about the field, which are needed in order to write about it.

This is not a case study even though this is a small-scale research. Case studies are commonly used in social research, particularly when it comes to small scale-research, as it focuses on one, or few, instances of a phenomenon and provides the chance to study in-depth that particular instance, the relationships, events and processes that occurs within. (Denscombe, 2007: 35) Instead, due to this study being

designed to fit specific events taking place in villages across Lapland, this research provides information on how community participation merge together the academic world of contemporary arts with the everyday life of local people.

Neither was this a quantitative research, where entities were measured or data gathered through surveys (even though a small questionnaire was provided the sample group, for the evaluation of the summer school workshop). The kind of research done was qualitative research, where the end result and outcome is unique, and difficult to test in a traditional manner, where the research results can be tested with the same outcome. Still, with the questions remaining the same throughout the research, some comparisons could be made, for example the way the cycles were designed equally.

The sources of data for this qualitative research derives mainly (words and visual images) from *interactions between people, events, place-data* and was conceived through *participation, observation and documentation* (Denscombe, 2007: 296)(sensory ethnography, studies of place, local visual culture and literature)

## **5.2 Action Research**

*Visual arts and cultural productions have become an integral part of the tourism-related experience industry. On the one hand, this requires new skills from the artists, and on the other, it offers an inviting setting for developing and enhancing the ways of creating art. –Taken from the SOMA homepage*

As I myself in the role of researcher, planned to participate actively in the workshops *participatory action research* was part of my method. During the practical part of the project a close cooperation took place between me, as a researcher and the research subject; the students and participators in the workshop, with the ambition that we together will learn/gain something from the process itself, this is called *action research* (AR). AR thinking is built upon the idea that through voluntary participation

in studies, new knowledge is gained, which increases the interest for the subject and stimulates the individual to learn more. In other words, the practical action is part of the research processes. (Denscombe, 2007:124)

Through the cyclical nature of AR, a dialogue is also established and kept between communities, researchers, the students and the administration of the university faculty involved. Furthermore, this thought is re-connecting to the idea found in the AR-method that *change is good* which lead to the fundamental thought of AR: that reviewing and improving practice, will enhance and bring new knowledge. Changes, occurring during process, are positively regarded as enhancer of knowledge, rather than something done after the research's results of have been found. (Denscombe, 2007: 124) This is important for the action-researcher to recognize.

Action researchers are usually anxious to assert that their work seeks to narrow the gap between theory and practice. That is to say they have no interest in theory, which is not grounded in practice, neither in practice, which is not reflected upon and theorized about. In this way theory and practice interact and a dialogue is taking place. The actual realizations of the planned environmental art works were also partly AR. Action Research is 'not carried out by the archetypal scientist in a white coat who is detached from the 'objects' (as it usually is) of study. To some extent the researcher is an insider who changes the social situation by virtue of studying it. (Schostak, 2005, ¶ 7.)

Characteristics of action research:

- o Practical. It is aimed at dealing with real-world problems and issues, typically at work and in organizational settings.
- o Change. Both as a way of dealing with practical problems and as a means of discovering more about phenomena, change are regarded as an integral part of research.
- o Cyclical process. Research involves a feedback loop in which initial

findings generate possibilities for change, which are then implemented and evaluated as prelude to further investigation.

- o Participation. Practitioners are the crucial people in the research process. Their participation is active, not passive.

(Denscombe, 2007: 123)

I found that suitable to this research is an approach to AR called 'Technical' action research, which aims to improve effectiveness of educational or managerial practice. In this approach, the practitioners depend greatly on the researcher as a facilitator, similarly to a study group. (Denscombe, 2007: 127.) This fits perfectly with this study because of its focus touching on educational practices, and my role during the practical experiment being partly researcher, partly workshop leader and partly participating artist/designer.

The problem with this way of carrying out AR lay much in the question of objectivity. When being detached from the 'object' of study and at the same time working as an insider, how can the result possibly be based on objectivity? How can the researcher balance the rationale study perspective with the one of for example, a passionate artist at work, and not get lost on the way in subjective emotions? There is a risk in being biased towards the research and its results especially in practice-led or 'insider' research and this is a fact that the researcher has to deal with. This is where AR shows both its strengths and weaknesses, I think, and in a sense where theory and practice meet.

### **5.3 How the Method Applied to This Study**

Easily explained in illustrated models as shown in Stephen Kemmis and Gerald Susman's models (see figures 5 and 6 below), the cyclical nature of the typical action research process moves through this 'tension field' over and over. Each cycle has four steps: plan, act, observe, and reflect. I will present the cycles of focus to this study, separately, in the coming chapters and tell the story of how I came to proceed

with the process of research. Figures 3 and 4 describe the course of my research. First: the pre-studies, Kirkenes 2009 and Urban Classroom, 2010. Secondly, the 3 cycles of main focus; *Place Research in Ii*, *RiverSounds*, and *RiverSounds in Ii* (2012).

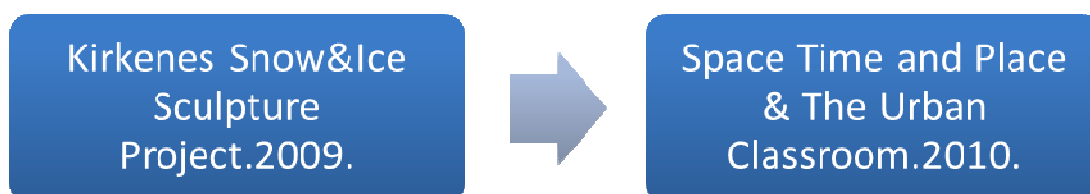


Figure 3. Pre-studies, Kirkenes 2009 and Urban Classroom, 2010

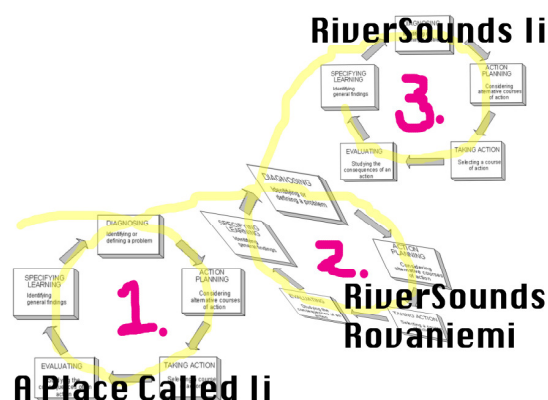


Figure 4. Main Cycles of Action Research (2012)

Combined with the method of Realistic Evaluation, a working model on how to balance the bias can be established and therefore I found that ‘realistic evaluation’ is an important part of the method in this research matter. Pawson and Tilley, developed a model of theory driven evaluation called ‘realistic evaluation’ (1997) that was centered on finding not only what outcomes were produced from interventions but also *how* and *what* is significant about the varying conditions in which the interventions take place and are produced.

Realistic evaluation is conventional in using the ‘research cycle’ of hypothesis testing and refinement. The theory or hypothesis is referred to as a “program” by the authors.



In the realist approach, 'stakeholders' or participants, are regarded as key sources for producing program theory and providing data on how the program works. But it is not assumed that they are 'all knowing', nor that they will necessarily agree on how, for whom and in what circumstances a program will work. Participants generally have experience of or, expertise in particular phases and process within an intervention. (Pawson. 2004: 10)

Pawson and Tilley write about programs that are carried out as projects with aims to change social situations. Programs are theories come to life, they explain, meaning that the program is a theory that is put into action. Realistic evaluation has a distinctive interpretation of the nature of programs and how they work, how to explain and understand them. Furthermore, which research methods that are useful in this process to reach proper products of evaluation research.

Realistic evaluations asks not, 'What works?' or, 'Does this program work?' but asks instead, 'what works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how?'(Pawson. 2004: 2) Because programs work differently in different contexts and through different change mechanisms, programs cannot simply be replicated from one context to another and automatically achieve the same outcomes. Portable, is however the good understandings about 'what works for whom, in what contexts, and how.'

Therefore, one of the tasks of evaluation is to learn more about 'what works for whom', 'in which contexts particular programs do and don't work', and 'what mechanisms are triggered by what programs in what contexts'. Certain contexts will be supportive to the program theory and some will not and this gives realistic evaluation the crucial task of sorting the one from another. This method, combined with the one of action research provided a base for this AVA-research.

A well carried out AR-project can be understood from its well-documented process. Looking at (AR) from a design perspective, the connection is clear: the repeating pattern of the AR-cycle can be closely compared to the one of a sustainable design process. Professor Michael Hardt, describes the process of sustainable design as a helix shaped never ending process, or ending within itself as of a natural principle, an ecosystem. The design process is approached alternately through planning, production and the research behind them. (Anttila, 1996: 320; Hardt, 2012)

Professor Emerita Pirkko Anttila states that the importance of discussion is essential during the research and the main attention should be on developing the process (Anttila 2007:135-136). Together with the addition of realistic evaluation and the connection to the design process, action research outlines the more suitable method for my research. Adding these theoretical perspectives on research methods together seemed to me to create a 'waterproof' strategy of how to go about the research.

These methods applies very well to the creating of artworks and design workshops where you often have to be flexible and rework the concepts many times before they are perfectly tuned to everyone's need, including the multiple contexts to be considered. The 'waterproof' strategy in that way that eventual miscalculations are taken in account already in the method, in AR the room to experience through the senses is given, which is crucial to this research. Furthermore, I think that this method is the most valid one, since it is very doubtful that measuring of immaterial values (experiencing senses) can be done using the common measurement tools of science.

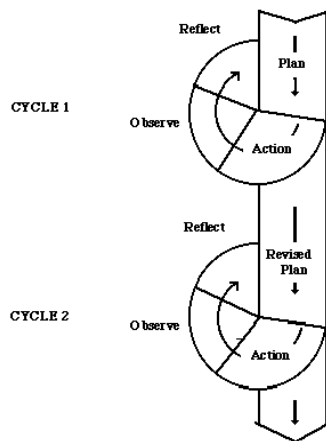


Figure 5. Model of Action Research by Stephen Kemmis

Kemmis's model shows two cycles: Plan action, revised plan: action. This is the simplest way to illustrate the process of action research: trial and error.

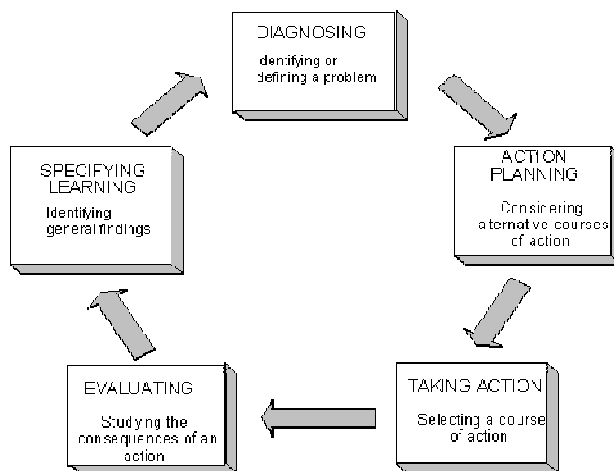


Figure 6. Model of Action Research by Gerald Susman.

Susman's model shows a more detailed illustration of the process:

Firstly, a problem is identified and data is collected for a more detailed diagnosis. Secondly, a collective hypothesis of several possible solutions is done, then a single plan of action emerges and is realized. Data on the results of the intervention are collected and analysed, and the findings are interpreted through how successful the action was. Then, the problem is again confronted by a detailed diagnosis, and

another cycle begins. This way the process continues until the problem is solved. (O'Brien, 1998, ¶ 5).

This shows how AR is more of a holistic approach to 'problem solving', rather than a single method for collecting and analysing data. It allows several different research tools to be used as the project is conducted. The various methods, common to the qualitative research paradigm includes: keeping a research journal, participant observation recordings, case studies, document collection and analysis, questionnaire surveys, structured and unstructured interviews. (O'Brien, 1998, ¶ 27).

In this specific research various kinds of data were collected, but the documentation of the practical experiment, during realization, served as main data. Also the artwork, carried out by the author or together with others, the planning process, and literature sources were included in the research data. Since the time for this research was limited so was also the research itself, it was a small-scale study and a learning process.

Following the cycle of action research as presented earlier in the chapter on AR, I could include the multisensory perspective by simply adding documented experienced straight on to the visual cycle of process (sound-recordings, field notes, sketches, found materials, photo documents.) I found it to be easy to use, for example when sorting the information: Does this piece of information go under planning or action or evaluation?

One thing that the artistic researcher has to be clear about is where the research starts and ends, as observations and artistic ideas might spring and lead to the same source of inspiration; Is this to be included in the research or is it irrelevant? In my visualization of the research process for this project I never attempted to unite the collage into one materialized, due to logistic complications. Instead, I looked at the chronological order in which things occurred, furthermore pointed out to myself the peaks and lows of these happenings. When this was done I predicted consequences

and based on these, new plans to be developed. Included in the documentation was also my own experience, which I had to stand somewhat objective towards before blending it with the rest of the documentation, in the sense that I realized the subjective matter and practiced the method of critical evaluation.

## 6 PRE-STUDIES

In this chapter I will present the *Kirkenes Snow and Ice Sculpture Project* and the *Space Time and Place and The Outdoors Urban Classroom*, as pre-studies to the main research. These were the projects that first sparked my interest in this general area.

The first time I encountered Environmental Art it was in Stockholm, Sweden, 2007 then undergoing my art & design-teacher education at Konstfack- Collage of Fine arts and crafts. Interested in the methods I made a student exchange to the University of Lapland, in spring 2009. On return to Sweden I wrote my bachelor thesis the following autumn, which contained elements of what I had come across during my exchange studies. During my studies at the University of Lapland I participated in several of the University's workshops, to gain experience and learn more about the methods in use.

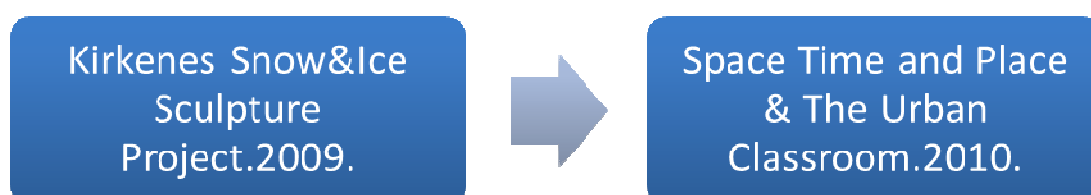


Figure 5. Pre-studies, Kirkenes 2009 and Urban Classroom, 2010

### 6.1 Kirkenes Snow and Ice Sculpture Project 2009

As a first pre-study to my research I'd like to present a group-project, made during my art-teacher education in 2009. The practical part, which consisted of the usual teacher tasks, took place around the festivities of *The Barents Spektake, in Kirkenes, Norway*. The fundamental parts that represented our subject of research was: site specific community based interdisciplinary fieldwork, based on experimental studies with natural elements like for example water, snow, ice and the use of natural forces like gravity, wind and growth in art. Also, as was connected to art-education, school classes participated in the workshops.

A cultural community event like The Barents Spektakle creates a beneficial platform for this kind of contemporary art education practice to take place. A specific place and timeframe where environmental and community art theory can be put into practice. I worked together with students Maija Rasmus, Mirva Valkama instructing the local school children's workshops with pupils age 11-16. Before these workshops we were participating as students ourselves, in the snow and ice workshop held for university groups from Finland, Norway and Russia. Below follows chosen extracts from this project.

In Kirkenes the specific place where the workshop was held turned out to be a town square. This specific square is part of the environment and even though a common sight in many towns, it has its own specific place and value. What might be a boring empty looking town-square for one person, might be a town-square filled with life and cherished memories and enlightening experiences for another, deeper experience can derive from events that happened just in that place, with the sharing of its memory with the community.

Things are not always what they seem to be. The North, previously in history referred to as a mythical place, is a real place, where everyday life take happens, people live and work in the North, today like before, and the historical landscape is unique. In the North, the cultural landscape is an important evidence of the interaction between nature and human, as history can be read as the result of a dialogue between the past and the present. Naturally, art, which is connected to the landscape, then plays an important role, and serves as a method to revitalize and renew these values" (Jokela, 2004: 8)

Through working with the place specific material (snow and ice) and the local community schools this is practiced. Art education in Lapland is trying to keep up with the changes of modern "communication society" and has developed an active contact and dialogue with people in the surrounding community. This creates a new environment also for teaching about art. "In the contemporary society people are no longer necessarily connected by a common background of experiences, religious

opinions, or shared hardships. Although the structure of society has become individualized and one's reference group can vary social community is still thought desirable.”(Jokela & Hiltunen, 2003: 27

### **The Workshops**

School groups from Pygenes School and Neiden School attended the 2-day workshop. At the town square the groups became familiar with the snow and ice sculptures made by snow and ice-artist Eric Mutel and university student groups. During the tour the groups talked about the works and children shared their feelings. We asked, for example, if a sculpture were music, what kind of music would it be? Jazz, rock'n'roll or what? And also questions about the material, how did they think the different structures and various shapes were done? There were three working stations in the area of the workshop: snow sculpting, ice sculpting and the building of snow moulds. After working for a while with one method the groups changed stations.

For ice, the given theme was RHYTHM, it was connected to the theme of the festival and very site-specific, as the opening ceremony was to be held on the town square. We tried to awake thoughts about the natural rhythm of the material, the different stages of water in order to increase the understanding of our environment. For snow the theme was “JIGSAW PUZZLE.” The snow-sculptors' goal was to create one common work of art, a wall consisting of puzzle pieces joined together. Each piece of the puzzle was to be sculpted individually, but interacted with the pieces next to it.

The purpose of this requirement was to make versatile use of the tools and to add 3-dimensionality to the artwork. Also, it was referring to nature and logical thinking both in a symbolic and philosophical yet rational and practical way through the “natural jigsaw puzzle.”

The ice-sculpting teams mostly understood the rhythm to be objects from the musical imagery and decided to design their blocks as notes, mp3-players and others whereas the jigsaw work concentrated in surface textures instead of images or other



clearly interpretive elements. In the end of the day we gathered all the participants and had short evaluation about the day's work. Our plan of working with three separate groups appeared to be good, so we kept to the plan during the workshop. We enjoyed getting more familiar with the children and their teachers and from what we heard we managed to plant a seed of inspiration for them to work more with snow and ice in future.



Figure 7. Kirkenes Youth. Photo: Waara

### **Aims and Evaluation**

The aim to experience place and space together in a new way (for all), both renewing old values and create new meanings and experiences, memories etc. for the whole community to share was fulfilled as the Barents Spektakle event passed by. Approaching the local people through the schoolwork done outside in a public place

is one way to interact cross “borders” in the community such as; age, family etc. Parents might get interested to see what their children have done, rather than visiting the classroom, the town square is a place more available for all to take part at least as viewers of the work in progress. Another aim was to inspire the local schools and teachers to work more out of the classroom and take advantage of local everyday materials available. Enabling the knowledge on how to care for the environment in a sustainable way, to be sustained, which is necessary for a possible future of the local cultures in Lapland. By the feedback we received it seemed like we planted the seed of inspiration at least.

We could see and study closer what actually happened in the process when theory became reality through the people involved. We experienced the cultural differences but had no plan for how to work practically to “see through” the encountered barriers. Language can be a barrier but this kind of workshop is the perfect opportunity to practice approval of differences: cultural, national or in whatever shape they may appear. Visual language and practical tools and techniques, enables this as focus is taken off from spoken language. Unfortunately, this was not practiced at the workshop in any other way than the “let leave alone” and at times there were comments of national competition between the sculpting groups due to their national identity.

For example the Russian students and their teacher worked separately from the Norwegian/Finnish workshop during most of the workshop, starting already at the sketching stadium, due to the language problems encountered while talking during sketching. There was also another issue, which we had to deal with, concerning the finished sculptures and the exhibition context: public places are not only platforms for exhibitions. In this case the snow-sculptures were placed in the same area where an audience was to stand, and it affected the works. It's necessary to think about possible scenarios of audience interaction and take into account these factors. Environmental art works are usually temporary; the question is how long they're desired to last. For us it felt bad that works that we had done with children were ruined the same day already in the evening.

The project left me with new practical experience on how to think when work with practice based learning and teaching environmental art workshops. Also, the experience left me with a lot of feelings and thoughts on how some things could be improved. The main thing I was thinking of was the actual discussion and communication surrounding the integration between the separate groups. It was the start of my thinking more deeply about researching AVA.

## **6.2 Space Time and Place and the Outdoor Urban Classroom**

*80% of the effect on climate is already decided in the desktop work of the designing process – (Thackara, 2006: 1)*

The second part of my pre-studies followed my interest on the outdoors methods taught at University of Lapland. In 2009, as part of my art-teacher studies I was conducting a design educational project in cooperation with the University of Lapland and Pikene pa Broen. As research for my bachelors' thesis on the topic teaching design in the Arctic, outdoor learning environment. I was also interested in observing the changes I experienced in my role of teacher, through these working methods.

The project was executed in cooperation with Ulapland, autumn 2009, in Rovaniemi where I placed the practical experiment (artistic) part of it. Within the course: Tila aika ja Paika – Place, Time and Space I seized three occasions to participate, teach and lead a smaller research project. I had named the practical experiment: *Pattern is Movement, – A workshop about designing patterns in time and space.*

Working site-specifically in the streets we used random materials, both found and some we had brought along, while experimenting with ideas of patterns and design. By working with design in various environments, such as non-constructed and urban the idea was to gain awareness and ideas about the impact of design on the constructed (socially & physically) environment. Later on in the day we shared our individual observations and experiences in a discussion. During the discussion each participant was able to formulate their thoughts on the subject and connect them to the workshop. Below are quotes from the discussion.

*Patterns of routine and safety are removed when encountered with a new place and environment, no computers to add to the process only the actual doing, moving and designing this changes the time perspective.*

*Working with no physical limits like walls surrounding has an effect on the process as well, the classroom is limited so it's limiting the object.*

*How can we bring our impression and expression for the small 'non places' in the streets to the public?*

(For more information on the pre-studies see extras 2)



Figure 8. Pattern Design in Rovaniemi. 2009. Photo: Waara

### **Short Evaluation**

The practical experiment of studying the design processes in outdoor environments led me to new realizations as well as questions. Firstly, the planning stage; learning from previous experience in Kirkenes, I realized that tension between national groups

could lead to separation and that the focus on communication was of great importance. So in the planning for *Patterns*, I made meticulous preparations, in order to make everyone feel included in the one group, and on the understanding of the topic. Naturally, when working with organic materials and immaterial social structures, it is impossible for one person to have control over every detail, but even knowing this beforehand I stressed it more than necessary, something that I've learnt a lot from.

In the role of teacher I wanted to step back at times, from the classical position of authority followed by social behavior entitled to a teacher, this in order to enable the roles within the group to change smoothly, giving a chance for expression among the participants. I found that it worked well; the group was easy going and positive. From this I learned that being laid-back and relax but still firm about possessing expertise in the field of pedagogics, works well when it comes to communicating with students, without having to reproduce examples of socially constructed power structures existing in the classroom. When the communication is based on mutual respect, is empowering and encouraging, so is the learning.

On the methods used, I thought that the environmental art exercises used made it clear that we can use playful ways "learning by doing" when researching the place, material qualities and using the same basic idea, only adding the design perspective, was done with positive results. What differed from working with environmental art workshops was clearly the spoken part, the explaining, directing of thought towards the process, which was present in the design- workshop.

The results lay in extended awareness of that the immaterial processes of designing works can materialize and fill the common space with entity, creating place. The acknowledgement of *place* as a consequence of design, processes, was connecting to the discussion of what kind of places carries what kind of meaning and for whom. For example, the group conversation showed that most participants feel good in nature this is also something various studies of *well-being* is willing to show, we then related this to the field of design in discussion.

By walking through the city streets with a new focus of perception, searching the spaces in hope to find creative inspiration, the city itself changed into rooms and places of various content, each time and place containing its own patterns and possibilities. Through our individual interpretations we constructed a common understanding, perhaps a deeper understanding, for what influence the design process has on the perception and construction (socially and physically) of environment, and in turn, what this environment has on the individual designer. The dialogue became very important and the study encouraged me to continue finding out more about this kind of teaching practice, where I could sense strongly the bridging of the gap between design education and art practice. As a result of both of these experiences, I was more and more interested in AVA and had many questions.

## 7 FOCUS OF RESEARCH

*“To do things differently, we need to perceive things differently”*  
(Thackara, 2006: 6)

In the autumn of 2011 I, as part of my master research studies, chose to be part of the ASAD-thematic networks project, and in cooperation with Katri Konttinen presented the ASAD-leaders with a plan for an Applied Visual Art project. The cooperation with ASAD provided us (Konttinen & I) with several case studies and we processed many various ideas during the planning stages (See extras 1.)

In my research I have studied the practice of AVA education in Lapland more closely, the community art workshops practiced through the University of Lapland and how multi-sensory place specific art projects are carried out together with communities. In this research (including pre-studies) I have focused on studying closer: five cycles of AR; four places, five workshops and three local community events.

Reconnecting to the desire on perceptual change in the way we view our world, proposed by several writers in various disciplines (See Thackara, (2005) industrial design; Van Boeckel, (2006) art education) The economist, journalist, and first 'holistic thinker' in the 1970s Green Movement, E.F Schumacher stated in 1973 in his book addressing global economic problems, that *education* is the greatest resource for mankind, (*if it produces wisdom*), and advocates education's first and most important task to be the transmission of values. (Schumacher.1973: 62-63)

In Lapland, the university faculty of art education have for the last decade been providing courses and workshops on practical “know-how” in creating foundation for these experiences (designing place-specific multi-sensory experiences) to take place and action, mainly for teachers to be. The AVA master degree (SOMA) is a pilot study on how these methods could be taught cross-disciplinary. The courses are organized in cooperation with local communities; villages and local businesses, where encounters often take place in the public space, between the university world and

local everyday life of villages. See ASAD-project list (Uarctic2, 2012)

Due to its context sensitive properties, the whole process including multiple projects is on-going and producing corporeal experiences and dialogues on several levels of communication wavelengths, for example: researching values and relationships between human and nature, historical and contemporary culture. The nature of this phenomenon is site-specific, and linked closely to Lapland and so cannot simply be replicated from one context to another and automatically achieve the same outcomes. Good understandings about 'what works for whom, in what contexts, and how' are, however, portable.

I have found out through research, that the required "*soft or people skills*" are partly received through open-minded participation and active observation. In the transmission of values attempted in the pedagogical practices done throughout this research, I have found the multi-sensory experience to be the most efficient and evolving one when it comes to studies of perceptual change.

My research included several workshops, put together and designed as a small-scale action research project. Main focus was on 3-cycles: 1. *A place called li*, 2. *RiverSounds Rovaniemi*, 3. *RiverSounds li*. (3-cycles, 2 Places) where I together with the sample groups participated actively in the practical part, making of sound installations and art works along the li-River. As a group we investigated li and the river, as a place and cultural source for inspiration.

After the third cycle (last one on which this thesis focuses), followed 3 more which I won't go further into, but still have participated, observed and drawn experience from: First: *Rovaniemi Design Week, Snow Ice and Media Course/Workshop*. Secondly: *Snow sculpting at Snow Star the Snowmobile Event* and thirdly, an *Environmental Art Playground* project conducted during summer of 2013. Due to the size of this thesis I narrowed the focus down to only include the actions that took place in cooperation with the ASAD-network and Konttinen. I will now present these studies as action



research cycles 1, 2 and 3.

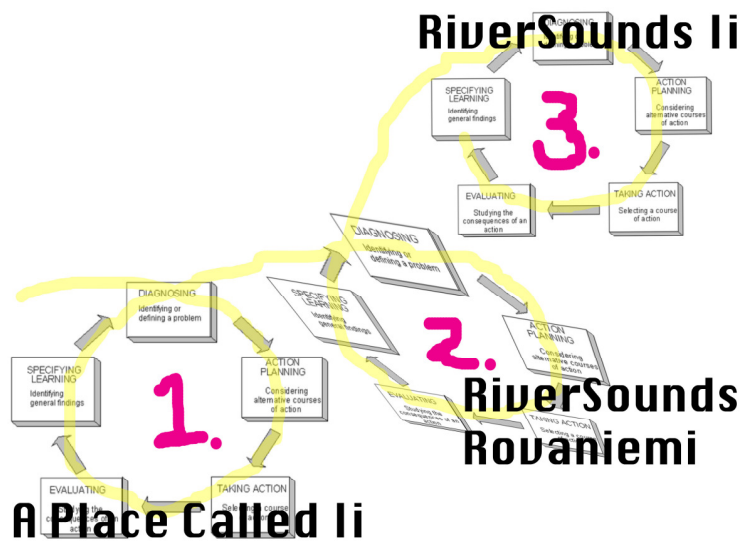


Figure 6. Above: Main Cycles of Action Research (2012) Sofia Waara



Figure 9. Spring flood in Tornio-River 2013. Photo: Waara

## 8 CYCLE 1: A PLACE CALLED II

My action research began with the investigation I did together with Konttinen on the place specific properties, place research was also done in Inari for our common research, but in this thesis I will only focus on the studies of li.

### 8.1 The Planning Phase

Aiming at gathering as much information about the place as possible we started the research in spring 2012. Investigating historical and contemporary documents, we found out what others had written, photographed and mapped about the local history and culture, this gave us an insight in the architectural development of the place, site-specific occurrences and history on name giving of sites. Visiting the place, *being* in

the place, was the other part of our place research. By meeting the people there, walking around and taking photos at the same time perceiving the place through our senses, we were observing the happenings and structures of it. For me, during this cycle, I encountered difficulties when it came to language, and afterwards in conclusion I think that my research would have prospered by having included controlled individual meetings and qualitative interviews with local historians, artists or habitants. I will now present selected parts from our place research.

## **8.2 Realization and Analysis**

Upon arrival, the common scenery of two big gas stations greeted us, as for first time visitors, Statoil and Shell, proves to be the visual centre of li. Still, the visual sense was not dominating our research, as we kept the multisensory approach and partly focused on the soundscapes.

Our planned meeting took place at one of the gas stations, since this was the common lunch place offered in town. After the meeting we walked as a group through town, viewed and documented the possible sites where we planned for *RiverSounds li* to take place. At the time of our visit the municipality was still in process of constructing the environmental art-park, now situated nearby the highway bridge.

During the visit we had a learning situation occur, which gave us the chance to exercise and practice our people skills, we were encountered with criticism After presenting our ideas on “creating meetings between local and global, artist/designer” a discussion started with a local who participated in the meeting. Our attempt to cooperate, and empower was answered with scepticism and many questions about which pedagogical exercises we were to use (which we had not planned in detail by then,)and it all created a side-track conversation, which held our focus for a long time. Actually, it took so long, that the time we had intended for sensory place research and “historical tour” was too short, and our planned visit to the cultural buildings of li, (where we had intended some kind of peaceful tuning-in on the natural and cultural

environmental soundscapes in li) had to be cancelled.

Nevertheless, the situation served the research as a good example of the social aspects on working with AVA; the people-focus. It added to our perception of li, on a deeply subjective level and as Pink describes, our interactions with others can be understood as multisensorial encounters, which calls for a reflexive awareness of the sensory intersubjectivity that characterises them.(Pink.2008: 19) However, the conversation that had surfaced coloured our visit and left us feeling a bit discouraged, but during the visit we also met a local artist working at the cultural centre, who warmly welcomed us to use their facilities and cheered us up. To our relief, when later returning to li with the sample group, the negative atmosphere was nowhere to be found and we were left to run our project as we had planned, with space for flexibility.

From the dialogical anthropology (See for example: Clifford and Marcus 1986;James et al.1997.) emerged the 'reflexive turn', which highlighted among other things how most ethnographic texts were constructed, emphasizing the *importance of attending to the process by which ethnographic knowledge is produced* and the need to bring local voices into academic representations. These practices demand a form of reflexivity that goes beyond the mere questioning of how culture is 'written' to examine the sites of embodied knowing (Pink, 2008: 14-15)

At this stage our research on li, mainly consisted of physical/geographical studies of place conceived through literature and photo documentation. For our place research we had wanted to get in direct contact with the environment (embodiment of place), and also spend more time investigating the shorelines and the area surrounding, not mainly walk on the paved pathways viewing the landscape. Also, the contact with the community at large was brief. This left us thinking that our impressions of li were not profound enough and that we therefore we experienced the place like a small town similar many others, with its 'built in stereotypes,' stories of teenagers lacking motivation in school, the soulless Shell station being the main hangout, sleepy

neighbourhoods of villas built in the 80s and some few passionate local artists. Knowing that there was more to the place, we aimed at the second visit, for a deeper experience, with broader variation of local representation.

Planning to work with sounds, we noticed the car bridges near the art park and the fact that we could not foresee how the river would be looking or sounding at the time we were to be there working.

### **8.3 Short Evaluation**

Having previously argued that *seeing is a place*, it became clear that during this cycle of research we only managed to scratch the surface of the place called li. This being a small-scale research not enabling any deeper studies, we had to work with the information that we had. Still, there is much more to discover and experience in li for the interested. In the first cycle of action research, which was Place research in li, I found out the following basics:

- The “problem” with doing place research can be found in the researcher’s lack of attaining to the wider concept of *place* as a notion. There are many aspects to place research and the field of contemporary anthropology provides developed methods for how place can be researched, ethically.
- *Being* in the researched place, sensing it subjectively through the senses is one stage of the research which leads on to the next: analysing the experience using critical evaluation as a tool for objectively progress.
- While in place, the multi-sensory experience of place, it can be a meeting with a person in the place, which for example, shapes the frame of time spent in a certain place: a state of mind where the focus is moved consciously or unconsciously. Still, the geographical place stays the same, but also here there are many layers, to the soil for example, and from history we can learn more about what this means.

After evaluation the decision was made to direct the focus of our following research more generally on the river and more specifically at the historical practice of log floating in li. Something we could grasp and imagine through the information we had detained; which is in line with the AR-thinking.

This was a consequence of not having much time spent in *being* in the actual place, which we felt led to that li, as a place, was perceived more through its historical existence, for example through imagining the former practice of log-floating and trade (See appendix A). While the contemporary li had to wait until the practical experiment week (Cycle 3.RiverSounds li) before it could penetrate and blend with the conceived historical studies.

In sensory ethnography theory a useful notion was found for future cycles to be considered as a tool for ethnographers; the idea of establishing sets of frames, regarding shared culturally-specific knowledge about sensory categories. The categories can then be defined like a model of culture, as constantly being produced and in change. (Pink, 2008: 15) Later on in this research, these frame-sets were provided by the sample groups together with the context: place, time and space.

From this cycle I learnt that *being* in place is important for multisensory place-research, as it is the experiences that occur in these places that change our perception of it. With hindsight, for this particular study, being around more, in the actual place before hand, would have provided me with a deeper emotional connection. Assuming that the emotional experience is based in sensoriality, it could have been more deeply rooted in the place than what was achieved. What this could have meant for the study I couldn't say but in the following cycles of research, the bond grew stronger. Also, the choice to focus on the historical aspects of place inspired us, as we had to use our imagination to envision the historical setting.

## 9 CYCLE 2: RIVERSOUNDS ROVANIEMI



Figure 9. Kemi-River Central Rovaniemi. Photo: Waara

The second cycle of action research was created and developed from the information received through evaluation of the place research. It was actualized together with Katri Konttinen and under the supervision and participation of professor Glen Coutts.

### 9.1 The Planning Phase

The ASAD-cooperation *Circle of Art; RiverSounds*, (which included both the 2nd, *RiverSounds Rovaniemi*, and 3rd, *RiverSounds Ii*, cycle of research) came to be the project in which I improved my skills on how to work as more of a facilitator, administrator and artist, then the traditional art-teacher usually would. The Arctic Circle Summer School (ASAD+ Ulapland) hosted the course/workshop together with similarly named workshops (See references for link to homepage: Arctic Summer school.)

About sample group 1, we knew very little information apart from names and nationalities, therefore our plans followed accordingly: becoming familiar with the group and explaining what we were about to do. I could draw wisdom from the pre-study experiences and felt comfortable with the administrative and teaching parts. This allowed me to focus on what was new to me, the role as a facilitator, and finding time to focus on working practically with the group: doing artistic participatory action research. The course/workshop planning was divided into two parts according to a timetable of two weeks (See Table 1 below). I will present and analyse the actions as they occurred chronologically during the time.

**WEEK 1 (Second cycle with Sample group 1. The 'RiverSounds Rovaniemi')**

<b>Monday</b> 9.30-16.00 <b>Engage!</b> Seminar User Experience and Sustainability in Art & Design  <b>18-20.00</b> Welcoming Party! <u>Place:</u> Pilke	<b>Tuesday</b> <b>9.00/9.15 Meeting in front of City Hall!</b>  <b>Inspiration Day</b>  <u>Afternoon:</u> Taking part in the Santa's Reindeers-workshop	<b>Wednesday</b> 9.00-16.30 Working in Circles RiverSounds  <u>Place:</u> <b>Rotko 4043</b>  <u>Afternoon:</u> Taking part in the Santa's Reindeers-workshop	<b>Thursday</b> 9.00-16.30 Working in Circles Riversounds  <u>Place:</u> <b>Rotko 4092 MEDIA!</b>  <u>Afternoon:</u> Taking part in the Santa's Reindeers-workshop	<b>Friday</b> 9.00-16.30 Presentation Day!  <b>10-14.00 Presentations in Sampo Keskus</b>  <u>Place:</u> (shopping center)	<b>S A T U R D A Y  F R E E</b>	<b>Sunday</b> 3.6.2012 Design on Wheels.  <b>9.00. Bus departure</b> from Rotko to Ii.  <u>Afternoon:</u> Accommodation (Ii-sillat)+evening activities.
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Lunch every day at 12.00

**WEEK 2 (Third cycle with Sample group 2. 'Riversounds Ii')**

<b>Monday</b> 4.6.  10.00 Starting the workshop.  <u>Place:</u> Ii Environmental Art Park	<b>Tuesday</b> 5.6.  9.00-16.30 Workshopping all day!	<b>Wednesday</b> 6.6.  9.00-16.30 Workshopping all day  <b>18.00 Party by the Ii-River!</b>	<b>Thursday</b> 7.6.  Final day  <b>9.00. Bus departure</b> back to Rovaniemi.  13.00 Final Words Presentation (15 min each group) 16.00 End of School		
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Table 1: Workshop planning in Cycle 2 and 3



## 9.2 Realization and Analysis

*To trace the history of a river, or a raindrop, (...) is also to trace the history of the soul, the history of the mind descending and arising in the body. In both, we constantly seek and stumble on divinity, which, like the cornice feeding the lake and the spring becoming a waterfall, feeds, spills, falls, and feeds itself over and over again. -Gretel Ehrlich (as cited in Lippard. 1997:14)*

In this chapter I will review how the action research was done, the practical actions, their results and my conclusions. In short, Cycle 2, *RiverSounds Rovaniemi*, the methods used were found in art and design education, combined with practice based learning and multi-sensory place research, perceiving also the river as a place. The four-day workshop-course ended with a public installation and presentation of its results.

### **RiverSounds Rovaniemi**

During the second cycle 'RiverSounds Rovaniemi', the focus was on defining AVA in Lapland as a field, both in theory and practice. We held theoretical introductions to fields such as environmental art, community art and sustainable design as well as practical exercises aimed at opening up the participant's senses to environments and the concept of environmental art and design. The summer school participated in an exhibition and presentation, held in the city centre (Sampokeskus)

During the afternoons Sample group 1 participated in the *Santa's Summer Reindeers Workshop*, a willow-sculpturing workshop. The willow constructing exemplified in a practical way, how direct contacts with the material, and environment, plays an important role when it comes to working site specifically with community art and environmental design. Brainstorming ideas on the theme of 'river sounds', the group worked together creating installations and performances for the first week's exhibition. Sketches and ideas for the second week's cooperation project in Ii also took form.

### **The Inspiration Journey and *A Piece of Place***

Starting and ending in front of the City Hall of Rovaniemi, the participants were taken for a staged *Inspiration Journey*. This method was inspired by environmental art and design education strategies. We decided to walk the streets of the city with the underlying purpose that this would answer to the aims set by the ASAD, which were to *provide (the participants) with visual information of place, design, visual culture, the natural environment and the relationship amidst and through this gain understanding of cultural sustainability and the local customs and values to learn more about the northern culture.* (ASAD-project)

On the journey stops were planned, which included a visit to the city's botanical garden patch near the church to view examples on local flora, and to the traditional wind shelter nearby on the riverside, a common local design. At the shelter the group was gathered and small-size glass jars were handed out, with the instruction to "fill them with a *piece of place*" later to be shared with the group. The participants went on their own missions along the riverside in doing this quest.

This gave the participants a small example on "multi-sensory place research" and a chance to experience the riverside and its place specific properties. As Professor Timo Jokela, dean of faculty of Art, University of Lapland, stated, we also experienced the environmental art assignment to be remarkably suitable for research practiced in the environment. All the basic matters of art education were involved, including methods of increasing one's sensitivity towards the environment, as well as models of analysing it, learning about the place, environmental education, at the same time. (Jokela 1995: 25) Sketching and sound- recording took place during the walk, but due to bad weather and some participant's lack of suitable clothing, the journey was shortened. It resulted in less time for sensory experience at the riverside, but more time for discussion and conversation with the group.

Moreover, the importance of recognizing silent knowledge and multi-sensory research when considering northern aspects such as cultural relationships to the river, was

emphasized as the participants through their senses could experience its timeless characteristics, for example; the smell of river water, the consistency of the sand along the shore and the local flora and fauna. Perhaps the poetical quote by Gretel Ehrisch, at the beginning of this chapter captures the transcending element encountered in artistic research.

### Results and Conclusions of “A Piece of Place”

*“In my jar there is a piece of fish-skin and bones, this I connect with the river, since I made my own kayak and I use it when I go fishing.” Nikolai, Siberia*



Figure 10. “A Piece of Place”. Photo: Waara

Most of the glass jars contained findings from the surroundings, some materials from nature, leaves, pinecones, stones, sand, and some indefinable materials. Each glass jar presented (the content was passed around and examined by everyone) followed by an interesting conversation about how each one of us had approached the place through the theme River-Sound. In total 13 Jars were made, by the group.

Some comments from the presentation:

*“I filled my jar with earth, soil from the ground. I have noticed when I travelled that every place has its own nuance of soil-colour.” –Nuno, Portugal*

*“I filled my jar with air, because the river is like a fan, with its constant flow it cleans the air of the city” –Tony, Sweden*

*“I found this piece of seaweed, very unfamiliar to me actually (strange since I*

grew up by the river) and I became curious about its shape and colour, it inspired me very much” *Anu, ceramic designer, Finland*

From the answers given could be stated, that most of the participants had already experienced the river as a phenomenon, and were eager to add their piece to the description and make it a full picture. The common understanding of the river allowed the conversation to flow, and in a traditional storytelling style the group gave attention and admiration to the small “stories” that came from the glass jars.

The emotional bond that we shared with the river became clear and for my research, this practical experiment provided a clear example on how using methods of design can work as a tool for empowerment of the inhabitants of the Arctic. The inspiration came from the local culture and environment, which asserted the possible continuation of building sustainable relations to nature in northern areas using art and design. This adds to fact that across the northern hemisphere exist still shared knowledge and usage of rivers.

Hiltunen writes about the historical interactions between cultures in Finnish Lapland, how they were spit up by the national borders drawn in the nineteenth century, but how the river (Teno) still today unite the people as a resource and travel route. (Hiltunen, 2005: 165) In her art and science project called “The Fire Fox” she explored ways in which art education in northern border areas and remote rural districts empowers action.

Hiltunen notes that when including educational objectives into the creative process, naturally, the results have to answer to a much more complex agenda; locating, articulating and addressing the absolute values of northern regions. In other words, art education only have to answer to the idea that everyday life in the north has a unique character, a source of cultural vitality.(Hiltunen, 2005: 165-174) In a way, our learning implications reinforced the very same ideal.

Also, this exercise was a good introduction to place and multi-sensory place

research, seeing also the river as a place. We were happy with the engaging results, where participants shared their knowledge and made connections within the group. Already a fruitful meeting across national borders, age and language and cultures had taken place. After lunch the group continued with the willow-sculpting workshop.

### **The Design Process**

After the group had become acquainted with each other, we started our second day in the Atelier. There materials were prepared, mostly natural and recycled, deriving from the riverside. These were shown as examples and possible resources for working with, consisting of: small parts of fleet wood, rocks, sticks, plastic bottles and pieces of glass, hemp-string and metal-wire.

At this point, the practices were strongly related to the design perspective included in the study, partly because of the recycle aspects answering to theories on sustainable design, but mainly because of the connections to processes. During the entire project we were constantly carrying with us, and using, the design process as a practical tool for visualizing the research. Traditionally the design process has been mainly used as such a tool, within the field of marketing and economics. It can be argued, that the entirely marketing oriented design process limits the designer, defining design in a particular way, which steals from the designer, ability to think and act visionary along ethical system of values. (Hardt. (2012)

Combined with project based research, the design-process-tool, proved to be very useful and successful as it enabled us to visualize, overview, administrate, and facilitate the many levels on which the actions took place during the whole project. Furthermore, design as specialized profession is very young and one could even suggest that it is still in *statu nascendi*. (Hardt, 2012) and connections between empowerment and the development of sustainable design as a field, are very important aspects when it comes to develop the profession of future designers.

Inspired by design methodology we led the group through a collective brainstorming of ideas, this is referred to as “mood board or design board” (can also be done independently but we did a collective one,) it proved a good way to include everyone. Participants first wrote down their thoughts and expectations (about the river, or the theme, or art, thoughts about the whole workshop in general) on post-it tags. The tags were gathered and read out loud and stuck onto a big board. Afterwards, the group was divided into smaller units. Given some amount of time to brainstorm around the theme *River Sounds*, each group gave a short presentation of their ideas. Sketches presented were added to the mood board, and afterwards copied and shared. (See extras 3) Willow sculptures were continued in the afternoon.

### **Presenting Theory**

The morning started with a presentation. Because of last minutes changes in time schedule, we had to compress the presentations we had planned to hold during the week, into one. Background information on li, working with community and environmental art, place research and river-facts, plus the basic science of sound and ‘sound making’ was presented.

The information provided played an important part in the preparations for the upcoming activities, as we did not know beforehand the group’s level of knowledge on f.eg community art’s methods. Attempting to reach all participants we had made thorough plans, and during the presentation we showed projected slides, practically demonstrated materials and sounds, sent pictures around the audience and listened to a musical recording. Art education is still in transition with the technical era where the use of electronic media is overall accepted. (Neperud, 1995 ¶. 8)

Theoretically, contemporary teaching methods recognize the social differences within any study group as something to be considered as valuable and we prepared the presentation bearing this in mind. Within most student groups there are social and gender differences that need to be considered. Even subtle class distinctions based on economic factors affect how students are regarded by others. Therefore no group should be treated like a “homogeneous group,” and the cultural differences among

dominant and minority student groups, need to be recognized. (Neperud, 1995, ¶. 26.)

Furthermore, we emphasized the distinct qualities and features of community art practice: Community arts works facilitate and coordinate activities found appropriate in a particular community. They do not impose individual artistic ambitions on to others, instead they encourage collective participation and involvement (Coutts, 2013: 53) In addition to the presentation, a heap of books on the subjects were placed on a table in the working space, for inspiration. It resulted in a quite informative morning. Upon leaving the classroom the group already had ideas for what to do and started working to realize these right away.

At this stage we (Konttinen & I) were focused on facilitating and maintaining the positive atmosphere by listening, interpreting, encouraging and administrating the work. The group had been eager to start and managed to try out most of the materials provided. When working with recycled and organic materials, we found the *learning by doing* approach the most natural. I noticed how naturally the work flowed, and that not any detailed sketches were done beforehand.

In fact, there was only one sketch made, it was done using computer, for a willow sculpture. I explained that when encountering a new organic material, especially shapes like willow, such a detailed sketch might be hard to follow, but the participant insisted and it resulted in a long struggle, but a fun process. I tell of this example since it is a good one to point out the different layers encountered while working with AVA. First of all, the soft skills, allowing the person to be in focus, and freely express ideas; as the balance here can be found through dialogue. Secondly, the silent knowledge inherently to the material (in this case willow) which is received through the process of making, a sculpture, and lastly: by working together, without sketching, the shaping of a temporary sculpture, also becomes the shaping of a shared experience, which is at its best empowering to the participators (or like in this case fun, nevertheless a positive experience.) In a short timescale, a workshop like this

one, focusing too much on detailed sketching can take time away from the physical experience of the site-specific material and environment, which is where the multi-sensory communication is actively approached.

### **Exhibition at Sampokeskus**

Friday, the summer school's exhibition opened at Sampokeskus where we, together with sample group 1 set up the installation (see appendix B) The installation presented theory involved in our project; site/place specific multisensory research, and used a community art approach as it was presented publicly in the shopping center. In addition, a short sound-performance was held during the presentation, which enforced the artistic element. Materials used included recycled items, collage and sound; in conclusion we were incredibly content with the presentation, which both from an objective research, and subjective point of view, was a good experience.

Having picked up on some comments from other student groups saying "Oh, well that's nice that some design is happening at that individual tinkering level, in our group we have battered more serious issues" I felt that I had to shortly mention the importance of direct contact with the environment for comprehending the sustainable design process, and on behalf of wellbeing of humanity, stating that what we were doing indeed had serious undertones reaching further than our own fingertips enjoyment.

These comments detected the remaining weakness to be lack of acceptance from the audience side (mostly university students), towards reading the local visual culture, the mental conviction of inherited perceptions and concepts connected to values, more clearly: the materials and methods we used became object for the modernist form of discussion, dividing "high art from low art," which in turn pushed us towards a usage of the dominant visual culture's contexts, rather than environmentally site specific/ local ones.



After the presentations, there were questions about the materials and methods used and again, how it connected to design, which led to interesting conversations on the value of Environmental Art and Design Education. Finally, there was time for feedback and conversations at Muotelihuone, a design center in town.

### **9.3 Short Evaluation**

In the second cycle of action research, *RiverSounds Rovaniemi*, I found out the following basics

- The sample group responded well to the planned exercises and an emotional bond that most of us shared to the river, as a phenomenon became clear during dialogue. The river was an important element in life for the sample group 1 (with few exceptions).
- The inspiration used to design this cycle came from local culture and environment. Together with the methods used it proved to be working well as a tool for empowerment of the inhabitants of the Arctic (us).
- Working with The Design Process as a tool, combined with project based research, proved to be very successful as it enabled us to visualize overview, administrate, and facilitate the many levels on which the actions occurred.
- Too much focus on detailed sketching takes time away from the corporeal experience of the material and environment, which is where the multi-sensory communication is actively approached. Sketching can be used effectively used for teambuilding.

## 10 CYCLE 3: RIVERSOUNDS II

The third cycle of research, *RiverSounds li*, took place during the second week of summer school, and was situated in li. *RiverSounds li*, was designed to include local participants and different to the previous part it would appear in public space within a small community. As we knew more about sample group 1, we felt able to rely on these participant's abilities to act independently, using the background knowledge from *RiverSounds Rovaniemi*, according to our common goals. The time in between cycle 2 and 3, was short, but evaluation was done every day in order to keep up with eventual changes in the original plan.

### 10.1 The Planning Phase

Since working with AVA is about being context sensitive, (Coutts, 2013) *RiverSounds li* directed us to work more using community art methods

Besides us, and the local organizers, the practical experiment included participants from Siberia, li, University of Lapland, plus three local groups from li; one group of challenged people, a medium size group of 8-10 youngsters, and a small group of 4 minors. We were contented to be working with more participants from li than at first expected and the workshop went in its entirety as planned. The weather was cold during the week but turned out perfect for the final show and welcoming party.

In li, the deal with our project partner was to create a 'welcoming party performance' for the "kick-off" of the Art Biennale, held in li 2012. This would happen at the end of our workshop week, the weekend when the guesting artists were arriving. During the *RiverSounds li* various ideas were formed, which unified in one: the creating of an Art Trail and an interactive art-walk: "The Parade." The work continued on the same theme; River sounds, and as the name reveals the workshop included sound installations and occurred near the river.

Among the aims set through the ASAD-project and of interest for this research, was the concept of working together cross disciplinary within the community, sharing knowledge and the experience, through using methods of art and design; qualities embedded within the methods of community art. A new group of participants was formed in li, as sample group 1, merged together with the local groups in li, as planned.

Aiming to reach the goals set out for the project, we had designed a system (see extras 4) on how the groups were to be divided during the process. This in turn aimed at creating meeting spaces for all involved groups. The importance of this system design was to benefit the integration process between: the local cultural heritage and traditions of a community in Lapland; practice-based and scientific knowledge; and academic worlds of educational methods and artistic skills. Integration in a sense meaning *encountering unknown sensory experience*, made us aware of the small element of 'fear' involved in the meeting with the new, and for this reason we were prepared in our roles as facilitators, to supervise, consult and administrate the groups to guide these meetings along, and for extra support we had our mentor Glen present to assist us.

## **10.2 Realization and Analysis**

### **A Learning Situation**

To start with, we began forming the smaller groups, enabling meetings across borders of culture and age. Immediately we encountered problems that we had to adjust to, in this particular AR-cycle it became a learning situation for us that we reflected on.

The local youth group had arrived together with leaders, or "coaches" as they preferred to be called and being protective of the youngsters and their fear to meet with others, these coaches stepped in and acted as authorities, furthermore insisted on them being one separate group, like they usually were. This made the mixing in the whole group a bit difficult, and disappointing to the participators from the

*RiverSounds Rovaniemi*, that had prepared and looked forward to this cooperation. In this case, as we (Konttinen & I) had not been informed beforehand about these coaches joining to the group, and with fast decisions made while speaking only Finnish, I felt there was not much to do about it then, and hoped instead that the groups could be mixed later on.

The situation could have been prevented if meetings with the coaches would have taken place beforehand, and they would have been informed more thoroughly about the ideas and reasons for mixing participants in smaller groups, the empowering aspects of it and we could have planned the actions together with them. The decision to leave me (and Glen) out from the information this time, with the explanation that it was easier to only speak Finnish, led it to become a habit during the day that followed resulting in Konttinen taking on most of the responsibility of facilitating the group. After the evening meeting, to resolve this situation Glen engaged with the group the next day, which ended the isolation.

The idea to mix the participants to enable meetings, overall worked well with compromising; the local youngsters were successfully separated into two mixed groups and we managed to blend all participants together at least a few times during the days: for the starting up, lunch break and ending. This way, everyday time was shared being all in one group. Together we kept meetings and short presentations, which involved everyone in getting the holistic overview of the situation. This resulted in meetings where everyone had an important role, as participant and co-creator of the event.

### **Multisensory Perception**

As previously explained in the field of visual culture, and experienced through the first cycle of place research: seeing becomes a place: from where we look at the world. This *place* from where we see things, in turn connects back to the skill of observation. If in this case Li was the place from which our vision derived, and the language we expressed through art and design made there, the results can be read as the

materialization of a multisensory experience. In applied science, vision is commented on in sensory anthropology, where for example Pink refers to Grasseni's argument that 'vision is not necessarily identifiable with "detached observation" and should not be opposed by definition to the immediacy of strong smells, fleeting sounds, confused emotions, and the time passing constantly. Rather, Pink proposes the idea of skilled visions embedded in multi-sensory practices, where the look is coordinated with skilled movement, with rapidly changing perspectives, or with other senses, for example, touch (Pink, 2008: 13)

The experience of working with design and art in li was shared by the involved participants, the results were, some of them prototypes of more advanced, time craving installations, presented for the first (perhaps last) time. It urged us to pose the question of to what extent we are able to observe the variety of places surrounding us, can we just "put on those glasses" of an alternated perception? or rapidly changing points of view? Did we find them in li, when working with RiverSounds? This research does not hold the answers to individual's observational skills development, but argues that by active participation in multisensory activities of this kind, progress must have prevailed.

When doing sensory research, communication goes both ways, as individuals serves as equally as both "sender and receiver" in the constant flow of communication that surrounds life. We (Konttinen & I) could not escape the gaze projected back at us: as new elements in an already existing phenomenal life world. We recognized that our efforts depended greatly in the end on the people involved, the extent of their willingness to meet us, or the rather maybe their "perceived image/ idea" of us.

The status of vision and its relationship to the other senses becomes a relevant discussion, as the dominant culture is influencing us through visual media, where a common visual language deriving from marketing has spread globally. Experiencing the direct meeting with the pre-imagined 'local' or 'designer' functioned as a learning situation where an important empowering insight was taught: multisensorial

encounters carries a direct communication, it undermines the dominant culture's projection, which is based on class relations fixed to geographical hierarchies of centres and margins. (Jokela (2009), Pink (2008), Kwon (2002), Lippard (1995)

Direct meetings enhance the experience of 'sensoreality' where all senses equally, adds value to the experience. On the importance of observation studies, Jokela writes, explaining that 'perceptually the visual development of images in society is only the history of gradual change and various system of observation.' (Jokela, 1995: 19) The multisensory approach allow us focus on exploring the world in new ways.



Figure 11. Working with RiverSounds Installations. Photo: Ann-Mari Nukarinen

Our working spaces stretched alongside the li-river.

At first, the plan was to concentrate the working space to the environmental art park, where everyone would be working within the same area, which would contribute to the shared experience. As we received scepticism about being in the exhibiting-space, (even though we had the curators' permission) we compromised with the wishes and spread our groups (Sample group 2) out in the community, stretching along the 2km route to the culture house.

With yet another change of plans we were beginning to recognise the need to be flexible and adaptable to constant changes in the AVA-process.

Due to the physical distances in the workspace we encountered miscalculations and administrative challenges through the process. It resulted in a lot of walking for us, which was time consuming and caused stress. Another consequence turned out to be: the impact that the distances would have on observing and participating in the artistic research process.

Being in the role as a facilitator at the same time as researcher, can be quite demanding, it requires putting a lot of effort into maintaining positive group dynamics and facilitating the practical needs to make work flow smoothly, and constantly working towards assuring an empowering experience for everyone involved as well as doing the research. Having too often to be on the run in between groups, not being able to supervise and observe the action caused strain on us in our roles of facilitators.

However, part of this problem was solved beforehand as we had introduced sample group 1 about community art methods, and as some of the participants already had studied these methods (within SOMA) they attended to facilitate the workshop too, by including and empower each other and the new participants. This took pressure off from us. The handling of tools between the groups and distances also in a sense worked as a good medium for meetings to happen, and conversations to take place along the walking way. For future knowledge, the distances between the working places should be considered more carefully because 2km is a pretty long way to walk to get a hammer, and it could have created distances also between the groups.

The main gathering point was the local culture house, that's where sketching prototyping, tools, sharing ideas, coffee, and lunch occurred. (See detail in figure 12) During the week, the groups were encouraged to visit the cultural buildings in li but the distances in working spaces were a bit time consuming too for the participants who mainly worked at the sites of installations.

When working with language barriers, problems occurred when not everyone attained the scheduled meetings. In this case it resulted in a delayed bus schedule, empty

morning planning meetings and lost information. From this we learnt that responsibility has to be clearly divided, and the importance of clarity and simplicity, but also making sure that information given has been understood correctly. Naturally, there has to be space also for the unknown and unplanned time, since this is a factor to take in account at any time.

However, the communication between participants was managed through their willingness to meet and cooperate. They illustrated meanings for each other, using body language and materials to sketch with. For example the group constructing a boat-sculpture worked a lot in site with this kind of communication. Being somehow involved with visual expression, as a student or professional, possibly eased this communication.

Together with the local group of challenged people (30 persons) we held a short interactive presentation of what environmental art can be. Because of the time limit we made a quick example, which we all could learn from. I used my art-teacher background and led the group exercise, and Konttinen translated my words to Finnish, this way we were both leading the workshop together.

First stating that one way of doing environmental art was to be site-specific and use what the place offered in materials, we looked around and decided immediately to make a drawing to the yard where we were standing. Getting in direct contact with the place we drew the circle together to the ground using hands and feet. We filled in the lines, "coloured" the image with grass etc. (See Figure 12 middle detail.) This was a small practical example of how a group together can make a site-specific environmental artwork, using only minimum of time and equipment. Combined with a presentation following, by Coutts on environmental and site-specific art in Scotland, we found the afternoon to be most successful. Positive feedback came straight away from the group, which was great to work with and had a lot of fun engaging in the process.





Figure 12 RiverSounds Workshop. Photo: Nukarinen

### **Installations and Artworks - The Design Process in Short.**

All of the groups except for one (the one with coaches) worked mainly with natural, site-specific materials. The reason for this I do not know since I noticed only after and was not part of facilitating the specific group. Most of the sketches done in advance contained the element of interaction, either with nature/river or with humans.

Many instrument design ideas were created and during the stage of sketching (see extras 3) and prototyping some sounds were tested and recorded.

The exercises where we gathered words or described sounds associated with the river became handy in the process for the sample groups designing their works, as these were often referred back to. To combine the desired sound with the material receiving a harmonizing visual result was a challenge for the groups, which they embraced with positive energy. The ideas were many, and had to be narrowed down to entail one main idea per group, for further materialization.

The works varied greatly and in order to bind them all together one of the groups made up an imaginative story, which was told to the audience during the parade/walk. At the start, the story was read out loud for the audience, in both Finnish and English. In accordance with the story the walk begun, the idea was that each group would present their work at the site of installation, and demonstrate if necessary, how to interact with it.



Figure 13. The Parade. Photo: Nukarinen

One work (no title) served as the main stem of the storytelling along the route. Its core was the stem of a birch-tree found from the river, from which small rocks pleated into willow-bark string, were hanging, hitting each other. This riversound-design was carried on the shoulders of two people and constantly created sounds during the walk. (See figure 13 above) The willow-bark pleating technique was shared by one of the participator´s from Siberia and created a visual result that was altogether practical, distinct in shape and culturally informative all at the same time. This provided the group as a whole with a good example of *material knowledge*, which can be valued and shared, in this case on *willow* a common wood species in the North.

Some of the works were silent but gave a visual idea of sound, to these belonged the abstract performance where a red balloon-shaped object filled with green grass, hovered over the water from the car-bridge, in its movements letting down small grass heaps into the water, creating rings on the water, like musical notes, drowned by the sound of running water and car-noise. This sculpture was included in a temporary performance, where a dancer and an actor on each side of the river made connected movements.



Figure 14. Performance by li-River. Photo: Coutts

The Parade, could be explained as an interactive presentation of the workshop. Enthralled by the story of the “Tukinuiton Henki” (Spirit of Log floating), (See appendix C) the audience was guided along the river and together viewed in all five sites of installations. Works included sculptures, sound installations, and theatrical performance. The welcoming party continued in the old area of li during the evening.



Figure 15. Reflection by li-River. Photo: Coutts

### 10.3 Short Evaluation

In the third cycle of action research, which was *RiverSounds II*, I found out the following basics

- Flexibility when it comes to working with AVA is everything, focusing on strict grouping formulas can be a waste of time if they can't fit the social situation. Though, having thought about these things beforehand aids the decision making in real time. Therefore, mixing the participants succeeded in the end.
- The Multisensory experience provided new ways of perceiving the place, through embodiment of place. This knowledge can lead to the individual's development of the observational skills, to include the ability to rapidly change points of view, furthermore connect it to other senses, for example: sensing time.
- Direct meetings enhance the experience of 'sensoreality' all senses equally adds value to the experience. This leads to the dissolving of the mental images or 'prejudgments' carried, on for example cultural heritage, gender and age. The global media market often inspires such mental landscapes.
- Practical administration is not to look down upon and a structure for the organization of working space is desirable beforehand for best result. With this set, focus can be intensified in the artistic process.
- The use of the written words describing river sounds, as inspiration, was common among the groups; written language provides key-words bridging the gap between design, art and science.
- The final works varied in material forms, from site-specific, natural to performance and painted paper (one video was done by a participant, which was shown afterwards on in Rovaniemi.)

## 11 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is divided into three sections devoted to discussion and analysis of first, the Practical Experiment, second the AR-cycles (together with the problems encountered) and finally the results of the research.

### 11.1 The Practical Experiment

*“There is no communion, there is no common being, but there is being in common.” -Jean-luc Nancy (as cited in Kwon.2002: 153)*

The village of li, provided geographical mapping and historical background for the research’s main practical (artistic part) experiment, but the sample groups in this research consisted of people of mixed ages, gender, nationalities, levels of education and were most of them not permanently living in the community, or had any further connection to it. However, collaboration was made stemming from the community of li, which we all actively became part of for a moment.

One important insight to have as a researcher in this field considering communities, worth repeating during the process, is that “togetherness” of communities often are projected and need to be reconceptualised since it implies that total consolidation, wholeness and unity – in a collective social body like the “community” is realistic, which is actually an impossibility. The mirage of this coherence is consumed as authenticity, and enhanced by the fact that the representation of the community is continuously produced with or by the same (Kwon.2002: 154) Not saying that the community does not exist as an entity in itself, it does, but Kwon suggests that there is a need to redefine community-based art as collective artistic praxis, so to get rid of old stigmas.

AVA practices here open up this very possibility, as it is interconnected with

sustainable design and environmental art education. During the conduct of this research the aims were set for the project together with cooperating partners during its planning stage, at the same time as it was part of art and design studies. This brought the element of educational objectives concerning community empowerment to merge with the partner's wishes about the artistic product. It challenged our flexibility in art and design practice, as well as it challenged other participators and partners involved with *RiverSounds Rovaniemi* and *RiverSounds li's*, perhaps also in ways unknown to this study.

Critics argue that as the actions take place within frames and parameters, "laid out and tailored by networks and organizations operating outside of the community," this leaves little or none autonomous action left and not much dialogue can take place (Kwon, 2002:152.) Through my research I have found this not necessary to be true, depending on *what kind of dialogue* is of interest/focus. Of course, dialogue cannot take place at the same time, on every level of community equally forceful, and the planning process directed us towards prioritizing certain parts of the community, or members. The question is whether a critical awareness and reflection is following on why these focuses are prioritized. One focus could be for example: The dialogue taking place between place and designer, or between a local school girl and a foreign film-maker.

In both *RiverSounds Rovaniemi* and *RiverSounds li*, we enabled these meetings to happen but did not point out any specific hierarchical order of value, leaving room for exploration. In li we had several local participants and we made our working processes visible for the community by spreading out along the route with the installations.

Kwon quotes the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy's effort to reconceptualise the "community," which I think illustrates our temporary experience in li, in a understandable way (See quote pg. 83.) Lastly, about community involvement taking place on multiple levels (for example in place and time) is the way *information travels*

in a community through these levels, considering this viewpoint further; perhaps the whole community can be said to be involved at some level, since community art events happens on multiple levels leaving us to define community as a complex phenomenon.

On the topic of how to evaluate community-based art education Hiltunen states that evaluating community-based art education is not a simple task. To receive valid results, a multifaceted way of evaluation must be undertaken.. The question of whose values are to be prioritized comes first. To see and evaluate the education and aesthetic goals as well as the social impact, process and final product, several people are needed. (Hiltunen, 2005:169) In retrospect, I have gained a deeper understand of the questioning of 'who's values are to be prioritized' and starting from a grey zone, thinking "no one's" I have realized that pinpointing this down makes the process easier.

To the question about who's values were prioritized in this research, the answer would be: li's place-specific values, the sample groups, the participants, the locals that happened to become part of our doings while just stopping to look and ask questions, in other words: your values, my values and the values of others.

Also, in the role of facilitator I found less pressure than in the role of art-teacher. This allowed me to engage myself more emotionally with the artistic process. I connect this with the statement that we are not in a modernist art world anymore, where art is made for art's sake or for the small group of 'insiders.' Contemporary artists have new areas to work within rather than being stuck with the questioning of "what is beautiful, and real art and what is not" Research helps to develop the ways art can be made and the role of the art & design teacher transform to include the artist and facilitator. Through this research I have had the chance to learn new methods and skills, while working cross-disciplinary in the workshops.

- The complex phenomenon of community is important to recognize when

working with AVA. Projecting certain shared values onto, and attempts to reproduce these within a community runs the risk of limiting the dialogue and the autonomous action within

- Applied visual art-productions are to be evaluated by using a structure, allowing an overview of both process and product.
- In the field, knowledge and experience was gained about practical working, as we become more acquainted with methods of involving users and delegates in art and design projects.
- This research helped me to develop and transform my own art-teacher's role to include the artist and facilitator.

## 11.2 The Action Research Cycles

With hindsight, I conclude that awareness of the nature of context sensitive art and design practices, is necessary when it comes to understanding the *data* conceived through action-research. Within the cycles, different change mechanisms occur, (as in time, place and space, specific details on how to go about process and results) therefore one research cycles *data* cannot simply be replicated from one context to another and automatically achieve the same outcomes. This can be explained by the aesthetic process, which is involved. The AR-thought aspire to inspire the individual to learn more about something, improve their practice of perception and observation for example, but at the same time the cycles can be seen as works of art themselves. The artist and researcher is the same person and the process is interlinked.

Action Research is closely connected to the aesthetical process, in its cycles it allows the space for an intense experience-directed creative process and tacit knowledge to take place. Also, it is connected to the process of sustainable design. In the cyclical process there is time given for evaluation and re-consideration, these are moments where learning takes place and therefore this research method is proving to be very suitable for cooperation with a people's-focus.



Still there are critics who say that the method is not 'scientific' enough and that it is more open to research bias than other research paradigms. I have found out that the gain of this kind of research lay in the experiences lived through and perceived through sense, in turn, 'sensoriality is fundamental to how we learn about, understand and represent other people's lives is increasingly central to academic and applied practice in the social sciences and humanities. This appreciation, which David Howes has referred to as a 'sensorial turn' has been couched in terms of several academic fields (see list. Pink. 2008: 7.)

Furthermore, in order to avoid bias in this specific research, a focus directed more towards the facilitating task and the developing process was repeatedly processed through critical evaluation within the co-operations. Art and research are two separate things, which have nothing to do with each other some might say, from this research I have found out otherwise, even the exact opposite: art is research.

The close cooperation with colleague Konttinen provided us both a broad research-documentation and more important; a direct course in "people skills." In retrospect the cooperation between us, is touching the essence of what I have learnt through this research: Working with AVA acquires that the practice/ artist is involved in many dimensions, and unlike the studio-artist/designer she has to take in account the encountering of people throughout the whole aesthetical process. Working with a people focus, demands a constant practice in communication skills, in order not to cause misunderstandings or hurt the involved parts, rather to lift and empower. Sometimes the task to fit all the demands and wishes from the cooperating partners together with our (Konttinen& I) own, common and separate, interests of research was difficult.

We learnt and experienced through our research and practical experiment, that most decisions that matters pedagogically are altered/changed according to the actual situation (space, time, place), depending on many interfering factors. It's a challenge for the researcher, who has to be very flexible and self-critical and bring forward the

“soft skills” needed when working with people. Afterward evaluation and reflection is very important. Confidence in this field, we believe, comes with practical experience. By the way the project developed we could state that our practice of so-called “soft skills” was developing and functioning well. To sum up observations on the research cycles:

- Action Research cycles can be seen as works of art in themselves. The artist and researcher is the same person and the process is interlinked.
- The main thread through this research, which developed through its cycles, was the focusing on the task of facilitating actions as well as participating actively in the artistic practices.
- The visual cycle of process can be done as a collage of experiences and information found in the research.
- The practical process is constantly changing, bringing challenges for the facilitator, who then need to bring forward her “soft skills,” in order to truly succeed with the empowering process.

### **11.3 Practical Problems Encountered in AR-cycles**

In order to be constructive in evaluation I choose to not only see the very positive and well-functioning aspects of the work-process, even though these are easier to memorize.

Setting aside the processes of material results of art/design works, (except for recognizing that everyone in the sample groups participated practically in the process of design to at least one of the art works). I’d like to point out the more general practical puzzles encountered, to which we (Konttinen & I) concentrated at finding probable solutions for during the stages of our common work with *RiverSounds* (both *Rovaniemi & Ii*). Below in short are the main points that we sought to be solved when we planned and prepared the *RiverSounds*, all the time aiming at improving our

practice

- In the pre study *Snow and Ice in Kirkenes 2009* there was communication problems which caused groups to work separately, mainly depending on language differences. This led us for future planning, consider using art pedagogical methods to further promote meetings and create dialogue across all borders. Also, there was a problem with the staging of audience, where snow sculptures were broken. From this we learned to be clearer with these issues (life time of art works / audience staging)
- During the other pre-study *Pattern is Movement, Rovaniemi 2010*, I had made thorough plans on how to provide a platform for debate, but then instead experienced that a lack of theoretical background, on the subject of art-history, within the student group. It complicated the quest of making possible a wholesome effort of discussion (for example. the discussion on transitions in art education existed or not/ postmodern perspective, came to dominate).

Below the 3 AR-cycles of focus now: 1. *A Place Called li* 2. *RiverSounds Rovaniemi* 3. *RiverSounds li*.

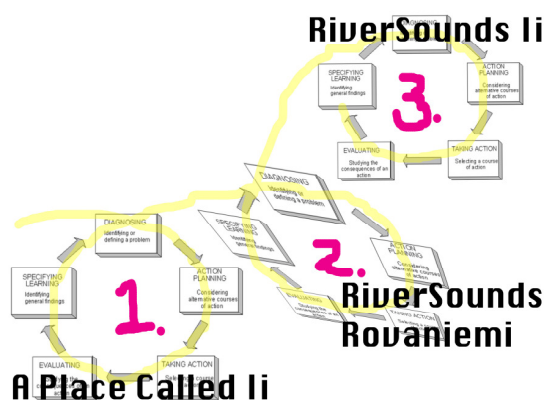


Figure 16. My Action Research Cycles. Picture: Waara

The practical experiment provided us with plenty of material for future research the documentation was vast and included the place research. All in all the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cycles of research, in practice consisted of 2 whole weeks of participatory action

research. After every day passing we (Konttinen & I) made sure to synchronize and check up on the happenings that passed and what was to happen next. This way we were able to work effectively with minor decision making and changes to the main schedule. Afterwards, we received good feedback in general and also positive constructive criticism from some participants. There was not much collected feedback from the audience. Mainly it was reactions and comments that we received straight away. It was rewarding to receive the good feedback and also to see the result in smiling participants enjoying the final results of their work.

In the first evaluation done after the finished project we detected some fails. A backup plan for schedule failures was lacking in the plan, and more face-to-face meetings with the partners would have sufficed the decisions made during the workshop. If the leaders of the local groups for example, knew beforehand more about the ideas of enabling meetings through mixing participants, they would perhaps have dealt with it differently than what happened. If realizing the possibility of having to work so spread out over the area during the entire workshop, perhaps that would have changed our decision, also the communication during the workshop could have been managed in some smarter way, more efficiently, if knowing this information beforehand.

The groups had ideas and worked on them separately, through us facilitating the communication, the ideas were mediated and woven into each other but the final result could have been more sharp edge if everyone would have kept the time schedule during the whole workshop (I mean 15 minutes late is no problem, but skipping many hour gaps does lead to a bit of time wasting trying to catch up with what's going on)

One example on how the communication was unreliable appeared in the case with the group of challenged people from Ii, which ended up being with us only for one day, since we had not been given more information than "there might show up some people for the workshop" we were quite unprepared when a group of 30 people were happily anticipating and waiting for action to begin. Fortunately, the mentor, Artu

Murtavaara, afterwards confirmed us that it had been a great experience and asked to be informed again if we were to do something similar again.

The group of local youngsters were accompanied by their “coaches,” which worked as their group leaders, none of whom we had known before about, also some of these coaches did not participate the whole workshop, but only one day, and new ones arrived. If we, the workshop leaders, had been able to plan together with them a little bit before the workshop, perhaps they would not have insisted on being one isolated group.

During the process several presentations were made containing many photos and illustrations, which were used also during the practical experiment when we aimed to provide background to the workshop. All in all, the practical experiment/workshop was well-planned, but unexpected desires from the partners, through middle-hand communication, led to hasty decisions taken about the working spaces, which in turn affected the workshop. Also, the outdoor weather was cold and rainy for the first week and people were trying to avoid getting cold. Still, these were details that perhaps went unnoticed by most of the audience and collaborative partners involved, as it mainly affected us who were practically working during the workshop. To summarise:

- A backup plan for schedule failures was lacking in the plan. The most profound change of plans was the time schedule during the Summer School Workshop in Rovaniemi: instead of having whole days, we ended up working exclusively with the group only mornings. This of course created a challenge for us, but we managed pretty well to re organize the time, and due to the group’s cooperation things worked out for the best.
- Face-to-face meetings with the participating local groups would have sufficed the decisions made during the workshop.
- The groups had ideas and worked on them separately, through us facilitating the communication, the ideas were mediated and woven into each other but the final result could have been more sharp edge if everyone would have kept

the time schedule during the whole workshop

#### **11.4 The Research's Results**

The pre-studies *Snow and Ice in Kirkenes 2009* and *Pattern is Movement, Rovaniemi 2010*, left me with many new and positive experiences on the subject of environmental perception and ideas on how to proceed with working as a teacher with contemporary art and design. Through the process, a certain direction was staked out which pointed the research towards the question of finding a proper framework, from within which, Environmental Art combined with Design theory could be taught as one.

Through the SOMA-studies I designed and executed a small-scale (3-cycles) AR-project. The ASAD-thematic network enabled the practical experiment to take place, which led to that the RiverSounds-project was developed and conducted as a research/pilot project for the development and further definition of the field (Applied Visual Art in the North). Therefore SOMA was the framework found, from within which Environmental Art combined with Design theory could be studied and taught (practical experiment) locally.

Moreover, I have learnt which elements of pedagogical and artistic methods that together form and outline this specific practice. The planning process was long as it was part of our master studies and backed up with courses along the various stages, for example, how to write a project plan. Already early in the process of planning it became very evident that being flexible was a very important skill to manage when doing this kind of work. As we become more acquainted with methods of involving users and delegates in art and design projects, we had to change our ideas many times.

We (Konttinen & I) learnt to recognize the complex phenomenon of community when working with AVA. Projecting certain shared values onto, and attempting to reproduce

these within a community runs the risk of limiting the dialogue and the autonomous action within, but is something that is easily done. The reason for this can be found in the psychological need of humans to belong somewhere, we want to “group” ourselves into (for us) comprehensible organisms.

Geographical components pin down each of us, causing us to belong somewhere, at least our psychological need (Lippard.1997: 7)and the meeting points of nature, culture, history and ideology form the ground, which we stand on, our place the so called *local*. The need to belong, is continuously stimulated by marketing forces resulting from a more globalized world connected to the one of consumer culture. According to Lippard, with the growth and transformation of capitalism, local identity is deteriorating as the particularity of places continues to be homogenized and commoditized. The idea is that these processes, leads to the uprooting of our lives from specific local cultures and intensifies contemporary life’s sense of placelessness. (Kwon. 2002: 158-159)

This idea promotes the need to keep the vision alive and not become ignorant to the surroundings in one’s local environment and community and their various systems. Furthermore, to keep up the dialogue about what is actually happening “in our own backyard” so to say, and how it is affecting us, is a matter of survival instinct at risk of being lost. The risk of lost vision, or ability to see, is depending on what we experience, for example, when entering a new space, community or environment.

The critique against contemporary community artists saying that the artist claims the authority to speak for the community in order to empower himself morally, politically, or professionally (Kwon.2002: 139) was consciously avoided by us while working. Our focus in the project was mainly projected to the developing of ASAD-Workshops; empowering the local community and producing a collaborative art experience.

Through active participation I have gained sensory experience on what it means to facilitate and involve in the environmental art and design pedagogics in the North.

Through holding the embodied experience of working in the northern climate and environment, this is something that I now can relate to with my senses as well as theoretically.

The method of AR, when applied to community art, proved to be suitable for the research. Through working with this method I have found challenges for the facilitator, due to that the process is involving people and is actively part of artistic expression and therefor constantly changing. This challenge calls for the facilitator's ability to bring forward so called "soft skills," in order to truly succeed with the empowering process.

Face-to-face meetings with the participating local groups would have sufficed the decisions made during the practical experiment. Also, a backup plan for schedule failures was lacking in the plan.

I encountered difficulties when it came to language, and afterwards in conclusion I think that my research would have prospered by having included controlled individual meetings and qualitative interviews with local historians, artists or habitants. This research helped me to develop and transform, my role as a teacher of fine art and design, to also include the artist, facilitator and artistic researcher. The main thread through this research, which developed through its cycles, was the focusing on the task of facilitating actions as well as participating actively in the artistic practices. AR-cycles can be seen as works of art in themselves. The artist and researcher is the same person and the process is interlinked.

The groups had ideas and worked on them separately, through us facilitating the communication, the ideas were mediated and woven into each other but the final result could have been more sharp edge if everyone would have kept the time schedule during the whole workshop.

Visually, the final result was anyway a beautiful experience for all of the participants, it was a sunny evening and the light on the art works/ designs and installations shine a light on our efforts made as one group, I think the rest of the audience could feel our



happiness and excitement about seeing the trail in its whole. After we questioned if there were a few too many cameras around disturbing the scenery, but at the same time the action of the many people taking photos added to the feeling of shared experience, emphasizing the importance of the works and the art-walk by documenting it all along. We managed in our roles of facilitators to provide a platform for meetings to take place. Space was given to explore and learn about local history, the meaning of place and common ground. In summary:



Figure 17. Problems encountered. Picture: Waara

## 11.5 Bridging the Gap between Art and Education

*“Education can help us only if it produces ‘whole men’. The truly educated man is not a man who knows a bit of everything, not even the man who knows all the details of all subjects (...) He may not be able to explain these matters in words but the conduct of his life will show a certain sureness of touch which stems from his inner clarity.” (Schumacher.1973: 74)*

Working with creating multisensory experiences in Lapland allows its practitioner to encompass the local multiculturalism and experience the northern environment. At times when working with people, viewing the differences it can make you question: How can we humans unite and overcome these ravines of our differences? Or contemplating Schumacher words: ‘lead him (human) out of the darkness of his metaphysical confusion.’(Scumenacher.1973: 75) Artistic practice holds part of the

answer as the roots of aesthetics is epistemology, ascribing it to be a way to reach for understanding and knowing, the world as well as the self. Lippard sees the popularity of "place" in academia as an indication of the multicentred population's longing to belong. (Lippard.1997: 292) The international writings connects back to the local, practices exemplified in this thesis, where the view of knowledge, art and design, was brought into practical research and studied using contemporary innovative teaching methods, for example, by providing alternative learning environments (li-river banks) and focusing on sensory perception (Inspiration journey, Rovaniemi). Place-specific multisensory experiences are crucial elements needed in the dialogue creating *meaning*.

To one of my main questions on to what extent AVA projects in Lapland link up with cultural context of local villages, I found the answer to be depending on the active participation in the environmental art/ snow sculpture workshops offered by the university, where my role varied with the occasions: as a student and researcher, facilitator and teacher. Besides reading studies of cultural history and place research, the practical (artistic part) took place, in time and space at the cycles, and this part was equally important for the research, and it would have made no sense to proceed without it.

Through the workshops a multisensory dialogue took place, between the participants and place, where bodily experiences were shared, examples varied from, measuring the water depth with a stick, or showing each other how to construct a boat-shape from willow, where to hold, lift and pull to the daily short meetings with the local workers in the communities. Through the practical work participants could for shorter amounts of times shoulder the role of the person/s carrying knowledge on local materials, and likewise: the role of the designer could be tried on by a local student participant.

Locally, AVA are the contemporary arts that creates ways for contemporary people to participate and receive a deeper understanding of visual culture, fine arts and even human nature. Becoming 'whole men' as clarified by Schumacher's quote above.

To my second research question, I was more concretely asking: What does creating multi-sensory art practice demand from its practitioner? From my concluded research's results I have found out the following answer: ability to plan and overview actions (schedule) and group dynamics (work including, keep positive), good self-reflection in evaluation, ability to think practically and exercise the soft-skills needed when working with people. To have critical understanding of the historical development of centres and peripheries as well as a global perspective of culture, as derived from the cultural turn in the 60's. Furthermore, being able to conduct proper place research using this knowledge. These are the basic skills needed, which are to be focused during practice, the practical experience embodied is something gained through corporeal experience.

If I was to describe my own experiences of participating AVA, I have sensed a very good empowering feeling that can be described as silent trust on freedom of expression, which could be perceived like a gift given by the opportunity to exercise it. Learning from a place, like Ii, history comes alive through re-produced embodiment (for example, by walking along the riverside). Other times, I have experienced a sharp division between involved parts showing difficulties, refusal or fear of communicating with the unknown 'other' (human relations) this gulf kept my interest and puzzled me. I interpret it as the 'streaming of life' and assign artistic research using aesthetic processes, the motive of getting deeper into the 'abyss of existence', recognizing the creative human and keeping it important.

Altogether, this research exemplifies ways, in which the contemporary arts & design and the cognitive approach of epistemology, the university world, merge together with the everyday life of local communities in Lapland. The original sender, (university of Lapland) depends on the receiver (villages/local communities) to give necessary feedback for the action research to apply, this cyclical mechanism creates the dialogue which is essential to the research practice and which has come to develop the practices site-specifically in Lapland.

Only the imagination sets the limit for what applied arts and design education can work together with locally, and what new ways can be found to communicate the place specific values. The University of Lapland at the Faculty of Art Education has offered courses and workshops (for example, place specific art, environmental art) for many years already and there are several case studies on various levels to the field (mostly written in Finnish language). Furthermore, new ways of working with artistic expression in the northern region offers possibilities for artists and designers to become activists, engage in practical working with aesthetics at home.

The thematic network, from within which the ASAD-project was launched is a network that 'recognizes the multiple aspects of sustainability, such as ecological, economic and socio-cultural dimensions, in relation to arts and design in the Arctic.' (University of Lapland, 2012, ¶3). No economic system is sustainable unless it accommodates the ecosystems on which it depends. Our current dominant system – is based on the notion of perpetual economic expansion on a finite planet – is seriously flawed.

'While developing context-sensitive arts, design and research practice, the TN also explores how the skills and knowledge emerging from arts and design in the challenging and fragile Arctic are applicable in other contexts. (Ulapland, 2012, ¶3.) Other places can learn from the multisensory art experiences created through the use of AVA in Lapland.

## 12 CONCLUSIONS

Most people might not be able to fully relate to global issues but local, but acting local matters!

This research has encircled a phenomenon site-specific to the north of Finland, Lapland. The possibility to reproduce these circumstances the same way in some other place in the world, is probably not possible. Nevertheless good understandings about 'what works for whom, in what contexts, and how', are however independent of geographical place, and can be turned into portable knowledge.

Upon his visit to Rovaniemi Design Week, John Thackara criticizes universities, for not starting micro-revolutions globally, helping the local communities (and poor people) to survive with agriculture, by becoming self-sustainable (Thackara, 2013)

Little did he know then about the nature of the matters taught at university of Lapland! Perhaps the reason why this site-specific phenomenon is not recognized globally is just the result of the old dichotomy of centre and periphery hierarchy. There are many reasons to show interest in the area, the Arctic, holds a great value in the global world when it comes to questions on behalf of the future of humankind. Not only assuming value to be bound in capital, and so far unexploited natural resources, but also cultural capital for the global community, and valuable knowledge on how to survive in a harsh climate, maintaining sustainable relationships to nature and people.

In this sense, the unusual discoveries in this research might be locally, the usual ones. For example: the outdoor climate's demands and specific qualities, posed on the participants during the practical experiment, cause cooperation to take place differently than in the indoors environment. The outdoors is less predictable due to its weather changes; wind, temperature, light, so on and people come to depend more on each other in situations of need. These are good, practical examples for the global community to draw wisdom from, as human perception is in transition and the environmental systems are changing.

After the final evaluation of the action research cycles, I found the issues crucial to

the next cycle of research, in order to move forward in this study to be addressing the communication problems that occurred, with new methods (new to me, and the specific process that is)

First starting by making a network of actual people across the research area, it would include people across the region, who's skills or knowledge might become handy at some point, and also the ones with interest in the project. This could create a feeling of security, and work as a bank, where to questions or thoughts could be addressed, or help asked (for example with practicalities.) Also, I would have attempted to advertise the research better, by keeping an updated version available through social media (a blog or homepage)

Importantly, I would aim to organize at least one direct meeting with the "coaches" (in li) of the local participating groups before starting the practical work, so that all facilitators, teachers, leaders so on, could feel good about the work strategies and work these out in agreement. As the practicality of the AVA enables methods of working including, the theoretical framework can be said to 'aid' the unethical consequences, which are automatized, and regenerated by the social norms following the dominant culture (take for example, the re-production of exoticised images of the North). One can argue that the developed methods in this field (AVA)are suitable to apply when working practically with art and design within today's multicultural society, as they aim to include everyone involved, meaning also traditionally excluded groups, on equal terms in the process. With excluded groups I mean the dividing of people by grouping them by class, culture, ethnicity, gender, physical challenge, or other. A more ethical way is embedded in the process, along with the high awareness of previous historical detachment and connections in communication, due to schemes and cross-disciplinary power structures.

These ideas could be presented (for example by using PowerPoint slides) and then discussed at the meetings with the involved partners.

Also the idea of the working space needs to be clear during the next cycle, one solution to this could look like this: The groups create the works to one place (visible to the community), and then removes them and places them along the riverside along a certain stretch. Or, the groups work site-specifically, but in “stations” with the possibility to work in all spaces throughout the practical process. Somehow avoiding too much separation between the working groups.

More use of activities or services offered in the community, by the groups, (perhaps not only consuming, but coffee is generally a good idea.) Adding to the chance for the community to recognize and gain interest in the processes, at the same time causing them to be more transparent.

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## TABLES AND FIGURES

### TABLES

Table 1: Workshop planning in Cycle 2 and 3

## Appendix A

### li Place Research: Log Floating on li River

Having a very short name in itself: li, as a municipality has a long and much documented history. Located next to the Bay of Bothnia, li has historically been an important place because of the good water routes connecting the east with the west. From the sea arrived people from the west, and by the rivers the people from east, making li the rendezvous of cultures. During the middle ages li was a large rural municipality and a very important trade point in the north, at one point it included the main area of what is today the region called North Ostrobothnia. There are place names remaining in the area mainly because of the trade connections. Worth mentioning is also that Finland's third established glass factory was in li. Nowadays li is a Municipality with population of 9 302 inhabitants and the number is growing steadily to 10 000. Various cultural arrangements and events are taking place yearly in li.

The river provided livelihood in different ways, for example fishing (salmon), trading (the harbour) among those there was also the practice of log floating. Log floating or timber rafting was practiced for a long time in li, as recently as in 1982 approximately 450,000 cubic meters of wood was transported on the river. The earliest information about log floating on li River dates back to the 1700's. In the early period of log floating the river was also used by the fishing industry in a different way than what we see today. Every year the building of Salmon weirs took place and fishermen were using small wooden riverboats to catch fish from. Because of this, floating big timbers down the stream could only be done a limited time of the year. This time occurred as soon as the ice had melted on the river and lasted then at first only for 11 days. In the first official log floating regulations from 1877 the time was extended to 20 days. However, in 1919 this regulation was abolished, which allowed timber rafting from the melting of the ice until the end of September.

In the years 1953-1963 altogether 41 floating dams made of concrete were built in li river, 1,000,000 cubic meters of soil was moved from the river bed to its shores or deltas. These procedures had a remarkable negative impact on the fishing industry,

since the dams prevented the movement of fish in the river, especially the smaller river branches suffered. Practically all rivers of Ostrobothnia have been used for log floating. The clearest damages for the fishing industry were caused by the clearing of the river bed and the building of the floating dams made in the 1950's and 1960's in the rivers of Ii, Kiiminki and Oulu. In Ii-river *Loose floating* was done, meaning that the transportation was based on the force of the river stream, and the logs were moving with the river flow. In the surrounding rivers, loose floating finished mostly in the 1960's and in many cases the cleared floating ways were used only a few times. The job of floaters was to prevent the logs from getting stuck in smaller river branches or shores, pull them out of places where there was no stream, as well as to sort out the logs to their owners after the floating. 1988 was the year when log floating ended completely in Ii-River. This meant a loss of significant livelihood for the entire population around the river. In 2003, a log floating monument was erected on the shore by the town hall. The log floating monument was erected in order to honour the floating of Ii river and the hard work of the people throughout its history. An old photograph presenting three log floaters from Ii served as the inspiration for the statue, which was created by a local artist. The log floating statue is made of bronze and the pedestal of the statue is a natural rock weighing 13 tons, which was brought to the location from a nearby location. Since 2003, there has been an annual Log Floating Contest of Ii organized every summer, where the phenomena can be studied further. The Ii-River streams through the North Ostrobothnia starting from the region of Kuusamo (Lake Iijärvi ) going through Taivalkoski, Pudasjärvi and Yli-Ii and ends up in Ii where it flows into the Bay of Bothnia, by the village of Ii. (Iin Hamina/harbour). This powerful waterway became our guiding star throughout the projects' design-process.

## **Appendix B**

### **Installation Process and Presentation**

The basic idea, to continue with the glass jars used in the *piece of place* exercise was given by us (Konttinen & I) and we had gathered several more jars for that reason. Building upon this idea, a concept for the presentation developed. We managed to use almost all materials in the workshop, weaving them together unto one place specific installation. The post-it tags (with written various sounds relating to the river onto), recycled scrap materials and an idea for a sound-performance formed the groundwork for the piece. The empty glass jars were filled with materials of various kinds, all representing/illustrating different sounds from the river soundscape. Then, the already filled jars were added to the collection and the sounds illustrated inside were represented with written words in many languages. The words f.eg Roaring, were written on small paper signs, glued on sticks and stuck through the lids of the jars. Covers for the jars were being handmade from recycled textiles; this resembled the tradition of preserving jam. Besides the Jar-collection being prepared, parallel work was done in the atelier. For example finding and recording sounds associated with river, by letting small pieces of glass hit a metal surface, which resonated the sound of water drops. Also, building of instruments from place specific materials, for example a *rain stick*, using cardboard tube + sand + glass, the instruments were meant to be played on at the presentation of the installation. Furthermore, there was a big poster was taking form, containing a collage illustrating the workshop: drawings, sketches and material samples.

The fountain was situated under the escalator and contained several rocks, two major one, which were used in the installation, underneath the escalators were mirrors which added to the waters reflection. Between the two rocks, hanging across from side to side, an illustrative instrument made from Fleetwood was placed (resembling a wind-bell). On the smaller rocks in the water the Jars were placed out, with their small signs turned for passers-by to read. From underneath a table the sound compilation of recorded river sounds were played. The big poster collage was put up and finalized. Finally the fountain was framed by small notes with words and natural



materials stuck to them, such as pieces of wood, or bark.

Our presentation of the RiverSounds Workshop started out with a short musical performance where the group played on the created instruments; recycled rattles, rain sticks and glass bottle-blowing symphony. Standing in a row, we started playing from one end to the other, and then entering a crescendo, which was to fade once again and end similarly, from one end to the other, leaving only one lonely tune to end the symphony. This performance built upon the communication and attending of each other's signals, and playing together like this with only short instructions beforehand on how it should be done, left me with a sensation of happiness when well completed. The audience applaud was followed by a short introduction of Applied Arts and Design held by professor Coutts, and some words about the theme and the past week

## Appendix C

### **The Story of the Spirit of Log Floating**

**Made by Milla**

“There lives the good spirit of log floating in the river Iijoki. In Iijoki the spirit has lived the longest life, since here has been log floatings done for longest period of times. The spirit was happy to hear the sounds from log floating, such as the clang of logs, neighing of horses, clatter from horses hoofs, men’s shouting, the sound from log hooks, when it hit the logs and also the sound from streaming rapids. But when people stopped log floating completely, the spirit became sad, because it could not hear the familiar sounds anymore. There became more storms, boats keeled over, ice came sooner to the lakes and rivers and also the swimming shores worsen.

One old log floater, who was also grieving the ending of log floating, was often sitting on the shore playing music. He noticed that when he was playing, the waters and everything around him calmed down. So, he gathered old log floaters around him, who started to build different kinds of instruments. They formed a habit of meeting once in a while to the shore and played music together.

And so it happened that a habit stayed a live; once during the summer, people who had been participating the log floating, men and women“, gathered together to play music to please the spirit of log floating. This and the instruments among the way have been planned to please the spirit of log floating.”

### **Tukinuiton henki (Original in Finnish)**

“Asuupa tuolla Iijoen rannalla tukinuiton hyvä henki. Iijoen henki on kaikista pitkäikäisin, koska täällä tukkeja on uitettu kauiten. Tukinuiton henki oli onnellinen kun se kuuli tukinuiton ääniä eli tukkien kalsketta, hevosten hirnahtelua, kavioiden kapsetta, miesten huudahteluja, keksin ääntä kun

se osui puuhun ja kosken pauhantaa. Mutta kun uitot loppuivat kokonaan, henki tuli surulliseksi, koska sille niin tutut äänet lakkasivat kuulumasta. Myrskyt lisääntyivät,

veneitä kaatui, jäät tulivat aikaisemmin, uimarannat huononivat. Eräs vanha uittomies, joka suri myös uittojen loppumista, istuskeli usein rannalla ja soitteli siellä. Hän huomasi että hänen soittaessaan vedet tyyntyivät ja kaikki rauhoittui. Niin mies kokosi ympärilleen vanhoja uittajia, jotka alkoivat rakentaa erilaisia soittimia. Heille tuli tavaksi kokoontua silloin tällöin rannalle soittamaan. Ja niin jäi vallitsemaan sellainen tapa että kerran kesässä uitossa mukana olleet miehet ja naiset kokoontuivat soittamaan tukinuitonhengen iloksi. Tämä ja matkan varrella olevat soittimet on suunniteltu tukinuitonhengen ilahduttamista varten.”

For me, I encountered difficulties when it came to language once again, and afterwards in conclusion I think that my research would have prospered by having included controlled individual meetings and qualitative interviews with local historians, artists or habitants.

## Appendix D

### The Artistic Part

#### “Local Notion” Art Installation at Kemi Art Museum.

This artistic part of my research represent only one 3<sup>rd</sup> of the written thesis. It touches onto the overall research, but only the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of action research (the practical research experiment included 3 cycles) is closely linked with the installation. There are 2 other works in the exhibition which carries connections to my research, and it is the “Ayr” by Katri Konttinen, and the documentation of “RiverSounds,” which are done in collaboration between us (Konttinen& I) These are however not part of the artistic part I wish to include to my thesis.

How to create multisensory art experiences in Lapland?

The piece “Local Notion” is a figuration of how multi-sensory art experience can be created in Lapland. Furthermore, it carries an important part of my research studies of Applied Visual Arts in the North, as it encircles the theoretical parts; where context sensitivity, place research, multisensory- place perception and sensory ethnography are the main focuses.

The materials used are meant to activate several senses towards a meeting point; the Kemi- River.

Among the traditional senses, *hearing, sight & smell*, are in focus. But I find that sensing “time,” *chronoception*, how the passage of time is perceived and experienced, is of double importance in this installation. Through the compilation, I wish for the viewer to experience the piece as a “time machine,” what this hopefully awakens in the consciousness of individuals is something that could be called a “local notion.”

The installation can be divided into 4 parts; *The sound, The oil-drum, The digital photographs, The abstract landscape illustration* (paper and rocks).

### The Sound

The Sound installation derives from one of many sound-recordings done in the planning stage of the *RiverSounds* project. These sounds were recorded by the river during place research and prototyping. The specific sound heard, is created while throwing small rocks onto the newly laid ice, where no snow had yet fallen. The rocks hit the ice, bounces a few times and then continues to slide on the surface of the ice, spinning around creating the reverberating sound.

The reason for choosing this sound was basically its originality in combination with the limited time at the cutting table. It has been added an flanger-effect and reverb, to the already reverberating sound in the original recording. The mix I made consist of 3 sound layers, of which one is the untouched original recording. The second one with flanger and the last one cut and paste pieces of the original sound.

Flanger is an audio effect produced by mixing two identical signals together, with one signal delayed by a small and gradually changing period. Varying the time delay causes these to sweep up and down the frequency spectrum.

### The Oil-drum

A discarded oil-drum was left outside to rust, it was its colours that first caught my eye,

but it also carries a practical function. The Sound is locked inside the oil-drum. It travels inside the metal container, where it creates a miniature sound-environment.

Through the tap-hole it is possible to sneak a peak inside the oil drum, where a view is displayed.

The tap-hole is decorated with modelling clay to make it stand out for the audience, candy- coloured drippings hang from its mouth. The smell of oil can still be detected as the viewer approaches to see inside. Recycling, in design terms meaning giving a produced goods another “cycle” of life, is necessary with certain products which otherwise produce landfill, until they return to the earths ecosystem. The unconventional interaction with the oil-drum causes us to perceive it unconventionally,

furthermore leads us to understand that this mental change of perception can be applied elsewhere. Basically, “things are not always as they seem” and small embodied actions can make us become aware of this.

### The Digital Photographs

Inside a digital photo-frame displays illuminated photos showing river settings. The inside of the drum is a dark space, like a miniature cinema it shows the 49 photos in loops. Most of these pictures I took during the planning stage of our RiverSounds project, as part of place research and prototyping, a few are taken afterwards. All photos are from Kemi-river except three, which are from Kitinen, Muonio and Tornio-Rivers.

The oil-drum can be seen as a metaphor for environmental perception, as there is “one view from the inside” can be read as the “shell” or “bubble” which mankind has created through irresponsible design processes. Inside the oil-drum are mirror pieces placed to reflect the insides, but its not so easy to see the outside from within. Still, there is a chance to fetch a glimpse of the outside, through the small hole. The message confirms that humanity has used design to create this bubble, but a small hope is posed: that by using the same methods we can create a better future. “The challenge is to be both in the bubble and above it, at the same time—to be as sensitive to the big picture, and the destination we are headed for, as we are to the smallest details of the here and now.”(Thackara. 2006: 8)

### The Abstract Landscape Illustration

Surrounding the oil-drum is an extended part which explores the spatial area of the sculpture, it is made by stones and one white folded paper.

The drum is piled up by rocks, as if the dam has dried up the riverbed and left it to stand on itself. A monument done by 'human-made nature.' Equally the rust is representing the bond between human interaction and nature, over time relation, corrosion. The gradual destruction of materials, by chemical reaction with its

environment is depicted in the corrugations.

These place specific minerals, Gabbro, for example, derives from great depths of the earth, as it is formed by molten magma, before ending up in the exhibition they have been rolled and shaped by the river stream through time. Does the dam-constructions matter to the future formation of these kind of rocks? I don't know.

On the wall a white paper is folded, for the initiated it might not appear as abstract, as its simple lines resembles the Iso-Haara Hydropower plant in Kemi landscape. Four floodgates in a line, just opened, water pouring down turning into white foam as it hits the bottom. On the top a car road rail.

The stones are there to delineate the river shore line, and they connect the abstract Iso-Haara with the oil-drum. A three-dimensional visualization of a scenery it is.

The title also carries a subtle rhyme with "loco motion," (crazy motion)

In physics, *motion* is a change in position of an object with respect to time and its reference point. Motion is typically described in terms of displacement, direction, velocity, acceleration, and time. Which is depicting the dark alternative to which the oil-drums content is leading humanity.

### The Interactive Part

During the 20<sup>th</sup> of November a AVA-workshop was held in the museum at the site of installation. It was conducted by Katri Konttinen, Salla-Mari Koistinen and I.

Together with participants we did a version of "a Piece of Place" using small glass jars. The glass jars contained feelings of place, and were placed around the installation, adding to it. (See extras 6)