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# Interwoven

*Ásthildur Jónsdóttir,*

curator and assistant professor at the Iceland Academy of the Arts



The Interwoven exhibition is part of the Arctic Handmade project in collaboration with four art and design universities: University of Lapland in Rovaniemi, the Sámi allaskuvla/Sami University of Applied Sciences in Kautokeino, Bergen University, and Iceland Academy of the Arts in Reykjavik. The project has produced the first joint show of their graduated artists and designers in the Arctic Sustainable Art and Design network. The project was initiated as a reaction to the call for projects in theme of handmade and funded by the Nordic Culture Fund. The exhibition includes works by artists associated with the four universities.

Sustainability, crafts, and culture form the starting point of all the works in the exhibition. The focus of the works is diverse – Sami duodji, nature, colours, culture, daily life, and memories – with some requiring the direct participation of the audience. The exhibiting artists and designers explore the boundaries and bridges between art and traditional crafts. Arts, crafts, and design are strongly intertwined in our daily lives even though we are not always aware of their presence and influence on us. This exhibition shows how contemporary art and design converge with traditional crafts. The artworks embrace traditional knowledge and practices and considers the balance between aesthetic and function where old traditions have acquired new content. Techniques and traditions are transformed through the use of a variety of materials, trying them in a new context, preserving yet altering earlier knowledge.

Regarding heritage as cultural capital, the exhibition invites consideration of sustainability, allowing us to obtain a sustainability rule for building up Nordic cultural capital. The exhibition builds on old traditions and contemporary

Ásthildur B. Jónsdóttir is an assistant professor at the Iceland Academy of the Arts. Her research interests include arts and cultural movements that support sustainable development and Education for Sustainability at all levels, within both formal and informal contexts. She has curated exhibitions, developed curricula and taught in public and private schools in both lower and upper secondary level and collages, in community centres, with people of all ages and backgrounds both in Iceland, Geneva, and New York. She is also a doctoral candidate at the University of Iceland, School of Education and University of Lapland, Finland. She holds a Master's degree from New York University, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development and Master of Education from University of Iceland.

Born 1970 Akranes, Iceland.

approaches; the role of arts and crafts is important in that context. Most of the participating artists reflect on their own identity and the traditions of their people by using old traditional crafts. Craft is a language of material, attribution, and creating. Reflecting artistically on contemporary issues using old traditions is learning the value of things. It helps the viewer to shape and develop a historical consciousness when the works from this group of Nordic artists reflect on their own identity or on the group of people exhibited together. Understanding how something is made and why it's made that way is more vital to modern life than ever. It is both political and social; knowing how and where something comes into being makes us more empowered so that we have the potential to become more responsible citizens.

The Nordic cultural heritage can be used to discover common roots and memories that nurture the past and the values of the Nordic nations. The handmade has unique aesthetic pleasures in itself, but has also become intertwined with a whole bundle of different values, be they anti-consumerist, empathetic, green, or socially aware. The countries in the Arctic region have for centuries created a cultural heritage that keeps them together because of their shared history and common values and virtues.

I want to thank Maria Huhmarniemi and University of Lapland for proposing this meaningful collaboration and for trusting me for the role curating. I would also like to thank professors Timo Jokela, Gunvor Guttorm and Hilde Hauan for their participation in the project, as well as the artists presented in the exhibition and this catalogue.

# Art, Design, and Craft Interwoven with the North and the Arctic

*Timo Jokela*

## Art, Design, and Craft

The *Interwoven* exhibition brings up two issues for closer examination. Firstly, one may not ordinarily connect art and design development with the North and the Arctic. Secondly, institutional connections between art, design, and craft in Western culture differ from the holistic traditions of the Northern and Arctic indigenous cultures.

Art in Western culture has always been about individual creativity, encouraging alternative and critical ways of seeing the world. Instead, in the North and Arctic culture, design has been more about problem solving following other people's needs. Differences in the socio-cultural contexts of art and design have been obvious. For example, stakeholders, sources of funding, and the location of activity have been quite different between art and design. Led by artists or curators, art has taken place in art museums, galleries, art institutions, and cultural events. In contrast, design has been often connected with industrial organizations, businesses, and socio-economic activity. In Western universities and academies, art and design are often taught in the same faculties. Instead, craft is more about vocational education. According to indigenous scholars (Guttorm, 2015), indigenous cultures in the North and Arctic, like Sami culture, offer an alternative and a more holistic way of thinking about the role of art, design, and craft as a part of culture and eco-social life in the North.



Timo Jokela is Professor of Art Education and Dean of the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland. He is also head of University of Arctic's thematic network on Arctic sustainable art and design. He was also a visiting professor of Art Education and Environmental Art at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland (2006–2011). He has been responsible for several international and regional action research projects in the field of art education. Jokela works actively as an environmental artist, often using natural materials and the local cultural heritage as a starting point for his works. He has realized several exhibitions, environmental art, and community art projects in Finland and abroad. Jokela has published several articles and books.

Born 1956 in Kittilä, Finland.

## **Challenges**

The political, cultural, social, and educational landscape is changing quickly not only in the North, but also in Europe and the rest of the world. Teachers of higher education in art and design need to reconsider the new challenges and nature of art in the professional training of artists. Changes have led them to rethink what is taught in universities and how art is taught. Studying the traditional studio- and workshop-centered techniques and expression is not a proper way to deal with the contextual challenges of contemporary art. Today, context-sensitive art and design education have moved away from the prevailing opinion that art and design education convey the same cultural values the world over and that the ways to implement education are the same everywhere. In the Northern socio-cultural setting, cultural-sensitive art education (Manifold, Willis & Zimmerman 2016) and traditional knowledge system of indigenous cultures (Kuokkanen, 2000; Smith, 1999) challenge the Western way teaching art and design.

A closer examination brings out dimensions that show that the North and Arctic environments and social-cultural settings can work as a laboratory for innovative art and design development research and act as an arena in which context-sensitive methods for art and design can be developed. That's not only for the North, but for the rest of the world that observes the special conditions of peripheral areas and culturally sensitive encounters.

The Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland, the northernmost complete art and design institution in the world, has combed contemporary art, project-based learning, community-based art education, and service design thinking to promote art education in order to create artistic activities that generate social innovation and enterprise to support wellbeing in the North.

## **International Thematic Network on Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design**

In order to strengthen international collaboration between North Europe, North Russia, and North America and raise the status and visibility of art and design research and education in the emerging “arctic era”, the faculty assembled the Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design (ASAD) network under the University of Arctic in 2011. Presently, the network consists of 26 circumpolar universities and art,

design, and art education universities and institutions from eight circumpolar countries that combine traditional knowledge with novel academic knowledge cultures and represent an opportunity unique to the Arctic. The main aim of the network is to develop working methods for improving environmental and cultural sustainable development, psychosocial and economic wellbeing through art-based research and activities.

Since the beginning of 2012, the ASAD network has hosted an annual symposium and exhibition in a Northern country; the first was in Rovaniemi in Finland, then Reykjavik in Iceland, Kautokeino in Norway, Anchorage in the USA, and the last one in Shetland Islands in Scotland. Through these events, ASAD has sought 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' (ASAD, 2016). The organization is one of the thematic networks of the University of the Arctic, and its aim to 'foster issues-based cooperation within networks that are focused but flexible enough to respond quickly to topical Arctic issues' (UArctic, 2016). In addition to hosting the annual symposia and exhibitions, there have been numerous collaborations, like student and staff exchanges, workshops, research projects, and publications (see Jokela & Coutts, 2014; 2015) between organizations and members of the network. The alumni exhibition, *Interwoven*, is a new important opening itself and in the exhibition, as ASAD network's activities in general, the boundaries between what constitutes 'art', 'design', and 'craft' are blurred, and that is what the *Interwoven* exhibition explores.

## **Social and Cultural Sustainability and Arts in the North**

Now, the emergent activities of the ASAD network have highlighted some common challenges as well as opportunities in the North and the Arctic. According to the study of Nordic Council of Ministers (2011), there are a few megatrends happening in the Arctic and North. Global warming is happening faster in the Arctic than in any other place on earth with profound consequences for global, regional, national, and local societies while at the same time presenting new challenges and opportunities. Another important driver is globalization, the consequences of which have now embraced the Arctic and will have significant implications for



Arctic societies and their peoples. Globalization is connected with neo-liberalism and the exploitation of natural resources like oil, gas, minerals, and ecosystem services by tourism. Together with globalization, rapid urbanization, the process of transforming the economy, culture, and lifestyle from rural to urban. This leads to a further concentration of the Arctic population in larger places with increased diversification of the economy, social relations, and cultural activities. This entails a complex set of processes, not only in where people live and what they produce, but in who they are and how they live in terms of culture, economic wellbeing, political organization, demographic structure, and social and cultural relations.

Communities in the North and Arctic share a number of characteristics, development issues, and challenges. The blending of indigenous cultures and other lifestyles of the people of the Arctic is typical of the whole circumpolar area. This multinational and multicultural composition creates elusive sociocultural challenges that are sometimes even politicized in the neo-colonial settings of the North and the Arctic. Outside of bigger cities, most communities have suffered out-migration in recent times. This has led, in many small towns and villages, to an erosion of certain social structures and has created a series of recognized problems, including the ageing of the population, youth unemployment, and the disintegration of cultural activities as well as psycho-social problems often related to the loss of cultural identity (Karlsdóttir & Junsberg, 2015; Nordic Council of Ministers, 2011).

Finding solutions to these challenges requires regional expertise, collaborative research, and communality and international cooperation. The questions are tightly connected to cultural identities, which in turn, are often constructed through art. It's not about static preservation of cultural heritage, but about understanding and supporting cultural change according to the guidelines of sustainable development. By furthering art and design based on research and innovative forms of contemporary art and service design, the aim is to seize methods that can help Northern and Arctic actors to communicate their culture by analysing it from within. Art is invariably the renewing and strengthening of cultures (Jokela, Hiltunen & Härkönen, 2015; 2015b).

According to the Nordic Council of Ministers (2011), the Arctic needs to generate more human capital by investing more in its people. The advent of what

is often characterized as the “knowledge economy” needs the enhancement of human skills and talents, which will be the key to the next development process. Members of the ASAD network see that higher education in art and design can play leading role when new initiatives are needed to enable communities to take charge of their own development processes. A key aim of the network is to promote research and academic debate on the changing role of art and design as impacting Northern and Arctic communities (ASAD, 2016).

### **Applied Visual Arts as Social and Economic Development**

To develop a new model for educating visual artists, based on challenges and experiences of project-based learning in art education degree, a two-year Master of Arts program in Applied Visual Arts (AVA) was carried out at the University of Lapland with the help of funding from the European Union granted by the Centre for Economic Development, Transport, and the Environment. The European Social Fund (ESF) program supports initiatives that promote employment and expertise.

Instead of educating traditional fine artists who exhibit and try to sell their artworks, the new programme has followed the fact that artists are more and more employed as specialists, consultants, and project-workers. Artists act as facilitators for a community group, public services, or businesses, bringing their skills and experiences to use in those contexts. For example, visual arts and cultural productions have become an integral part of the tourism-related industry in the North. Creative economy, often characterized by small, flexible and interdisciplinary companies, is an increasingly important sector of the future economies in the North (Jokela, Coutts, Huhmarniemi & Härkönen, 2013).

The program aims to integrate artistic skills as well as practice-based and scientific knowledge to create ecologically and ethically sound experiences of environments, services, and art productions that are based on the cultural heritage and traditions of the area and its people. The studies include project-based collaboration with cultural institutions, the public and social sectors, and tourism companies in Lapland and the North. Applied visual arts are based on the project-based learning and communal and place-specific methods of contemporary art. For example, environmental and community art, among other things, can be considered applied visual arts when the artists apply their own expertise

and art techniques for the purposes external to the art world. At the same time, however, the artist can present a production in art exhibits and thus transform it into art (Jokela et al., 2013).

### **Applied Visual Arts as a Strategic Link to Other Disciplines**

The applied visual art activities and products are based on social or economic needs and are realized, for example, in cooperation with public and social sectors, municipalities, entrepreneurs, and various businesses. The applied visual arts do not stand for the already established professions within design such as graphic design, architecture, and interior design. Among other things, the interaction between science and art, environmental engineering, tourism, and the public, social, and healthcare sectors are potential spheres of operation for the applied visual arts in the North.

One of the aims of AVA was to increase the employment of artists with new forms of collaboration so the artists can take advantage of their knowledge as specialists or designers of art and visual culture. On the other hand, the starting point was based on the idea that the applied visual arts also have a significant impact on other business life, social entrepreneurship, and society. Expectations were focused especially on public, social, and healthcare sector collaboration, and the tourism industry. The training included an extensive project study module where students worked on development projects with other professionals from other fields and the university's cooperation with the public, social, and business sectors and their art and cultural events. Thus, the studies were tightly connected to the working life (Jokela, 2013; Jokela et al., 2013).

### **Arctic Art and Design Master Programme**

Based on the positive results and knowledge acquired from the AVA programme, the faculty's collaborative international intensive courses, and research projects, a new international Master Programme of Arctic Arts and Design (AAD) has been initiated and was launched in 2015. In this new programme, the engaging nature of applied visual arts and the participatory essence of service design merge together through art-based action research.

One of the three priorities of research at University of Lapland is a focus on service design. As a developer of service design, the Art and Design Faculty creates possibilities for effective service production in public services and the private sector as well as in educational and cultural institutions. According to a wider interpretation of service design, it also involves applied visual art complying with the societal paradigm of contemporary art and contains features from both the areas of design and art education; thus, artistic activity is considered to be a service as well as a tool of service development. Art is then understood as a social and communal process that produces values, symbols, meanings, and practices for the North.

The growing fields of service design have much in common with community-based art education and applied visual arts, like using design tools and methods that allow active user participation in processes. Merging applied visual art, service design, and art education opens up new opportunities for Northern social and economic wellbeing.

### ***Interwoven as a Part of the Arctic Design Week (ADW) Programme 2017***

The development of Arctic art and design is closely aligned with the strategic priorities of the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland, based on the entire university's research on the Arctic and change in the North. However, the University of Lapland is not working alone. According Jokela and Tahkokallio (2015), Arctic design has had an important role in the branding of the city of Rovaniemi, and at present, it plays a part in the marketing communication of the city. Arctic design is expected to strengthen the image of Rovaniemi as a modern city. Since the beginning of the ASAD network, the annual Arctic Design Week in Rovaniemi has provided a forum to promote Arctic art and design, for example art and design projects of students, staff, and alumni. On the other hand, ADW has been a catalyst in helping to create innovative experiments and shows encouraging results. Therefore, ADW and the alumni exhibition, *Interwoven*, can also be viewed as a pedagogical forum related to both design and art education that supports innovation, collaboration, and participation in the North and the Arctic.

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# Duodji – What it Means as an Academic Discipline

*Gunvor Guttorm*

In *duodji* research and the contemporary making of *duodji*, the aim is not to find the truth (and you can ask if it is even possible to find one truth), but to translate and understand different phenomenon. I will examine *duodji* as *duodji*, and approach it from the practices of the Sámi community, and how this, in turn, can be used in higher education.

*Duodji* as academic subject is not a new phenomenon, and it has historically been part of anthropological, ethnological, and art discussions. While *duodji* has been framed within these disciplines, *duddjon* (the making) has taken place in many of the Sámi societies. By using the Sámi word *duodji* instead of handicraft, craft, or art, we have already assumed a Sámi approach—which involves a broad perspective—to art education and research. We can say *duodji* is all forms of creative expression that require human thought and production, but it cannot automatically be translated as art. In the Sámi language another term, *dáidda*, is used that can easily be translated as art.

The concept *duodji* is used to describe a specific work that is created by hand and anchored in a Sámi activity and reality. Many objects of *duodji* carry in them knowledge about the past, people's relationships to each other, crafting skills, and aesthetic sense. Further, the *duddjon* (the production) reflects knowledge of time, nature, and place. In Sámi society, both the artist working with *duodji* and art itself have been concerned about Sámi identity issues. Many relate the making of *duodji* itself with building up Sámi identity today, when *duodji*, in a way, is tied to Sámi living and life and includes both the praxis in different levels and personal relations.



Gunvor Guttorm is a professor in *duodji* (Sámi arts and crafts, traditional art, applied art) at Sámi allaskuvla/Sámi University of Applied Sciences, Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino in Norway. Currently she is rector at the same institution. Her research is interconnected with cultural expression in the Sámi and indigenous societies, especially *duodji*. The focus of her research deals with *duodji* in a contemporary setting and the indigenous people's context. She also has had the good fortune to work with elderly *duodji* artisans and share their knowledge of traditional techniques. This has indeed benefited her theoretical work. In her approach, she has also tried to understand *duodji* of today by discussing what position and meaning it has and has had for the Sámi

societies. She has taught both undergraduate and graduate courses in practical and theoretical *duodji*. She has written several articles about how the traditional knowledge of Sámi art and craft is transformed to the modern lifestyle, in the Sámi language, Norwegian, and English. In the indigenous world, she has participated as an invited speaker as well as presenter at indigenous research congresses. Guttorm has also participated in exhibitions in Sápmi and abroad.

Born 1958 in Karasjok, Norway.

By using the term *duodji*, we also launch a discussion about how the term itself was used in the past and the links it has to the contemporary world. My main argument and claim is that as we want to have *duodji* as a discipline in higher education, we need to use the content of *duodji* itself and the way it works in society as a basis.

Even if it is quite obvious for many, it is worth mentioning that *duodji* has its basis in Sámi everyday life where the creation of *duodji* is an integral part. Practitioners have eventually been affected by the current discussions in *duodji*, and today we see that when we are talking about *duodji*, it can have very different connotations.

Both non-Sámi and Sámi have often considered Sámi *duodji* as a common tradition of the Sámi, which has also given it certain distinguishing characteristics. When talking about the traditional knowledge and skills connected with *duodji*, we also refer to the skills and information that were an earlier part of traditional society, but which have been passed on to modern times and have acquired new content. In such a situation, it becomes increasingly important that a work of *duodji* manifest the tradition of Sámi culture. It has features that show that it is part of *duodji*, and both the practised and the unpractised eye recognize these features. The hand making activities, the conventions, and the aesthetic understanding have been formed within this “everyday life”. When the needs of everyday life were fulfilled through *duodji*, it was important to be able to obtain materials, to design and use the needed items, and to repair them as necessary. Often, there are also norms that concern the making and using of such works of *duodji*. These aspects have been analysed by Maja Dunfjeld (2001) in her doctoral thesis and by many other researchers (see also Guttorm, 2001). Such works of craft are often an expression of our understanding of what “made by Sámi” means. They follow the acceptable and high-quality ways of crafting among the Sámi. This gives rise to questions of whether *duodji*, or Sámi craft, is free if it has to observe so many rules and whether these aspects are the reason underlying the fact that *duodji* cannot carry the name art. But this is just part of how *duodji* can be considered.

The reality of living in different nation-states has left footprints on people’s lives, as has the cultural practice of artistic expressions. This is evident when *duodji* over the years became institutionalized in each country (Guttorm, 2010, 71–95). Sápmi stretches over a fairly large area and includes the northern parts

of Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Russia. In the preamble of the draft for the Nordic Sámi Convention, it is stated that the Sámi are an indigenous people with their own society, language, culture, history, traditions, industries, and their own visions of the future (Henriksen 2008, 159).

On the Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, and Russian sides of Sápmi, *duodji* has been institutionalized while people also continued to practice it at home. I have previously written about what this institutionalization has brought with it, especially the on Norwegian and Swedish sides of Sápmi (Guttorm, 2010, 71–95). Although it has not had a common perception of what *duodji* is, and what is considered *duodji*. I will not go into this now, but believe that there are several reasons why it is not possible to talk about one Sámi understanding of *duodji*. Anything done by hand is not necessarily a continuity of tradition, but a contemporary expression, which has a starting point of *duodji* and Sámi life. Today, when *duodji* has become a university subject, many practitioners have been caused by the *duodji*, use their creative abilities to express a feeling, an experience, or will also convey an idea.

When we started working with the education programmes as Bachelor and Master of *Duodji* at Sámi University of Applied Sciences, we had to take into account what parts of the *duodji* that function today in the Sámi society could be transferred into higher education and how to make the situation adaptable for the students. Sámi *duodji* knowledge is a heritage that has been and still is important for the Sámi people; it changes over time in an ongoing dialogue about what really becomes a tradition. For instance, parts of the reindeer, such as skins and antlers, are used in all kinds of *duodji* and are common among different Sámi groups. How to prepare the materials is also common knowledge. When it comes to the creation or production of a certain kind of item, the understanding of collective traditional knowledge can differ from one family, group, or region to another. In an institutional world, it isn't possible to convey all possible views of Sámi knowledge, and it is perhaps not wanted or necessary in any case. However, the goal is to make the students aware of this. Actually, some of the traditional views of *duodji* cannot be applied in an institutional world. The challenge in the process of education is still to find avenues to convey essential parts of the traditional skills and knowledge in an institutional context and develop new platforms for knowledge and creativity. While designing a curriculum that is open-minded



and that allows us to work together with other and different kinds of institutions, tradition holders, and artists, it is essential to respect indigenous points of view in education and to include traditional experts' knowledge and skills that will be useful in education and that can be applied in the modern world.

As an academic discipline, *duodji* has elements of both production of traditional and contemporary arts and crafts and theoretical approaches to the task. The challenges are to take care of the heritage expressed through *duodji* and to develop students' artistic skills. Here we deal with a problem that is common in all kinds of training programmes in academic contexts, that of refining already existing skills and creating new experiences and expressions. This can also be viewed in the handmade project.

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## Rakel Blomsterberg



Touch it and it feels real! Working with my hands takes me into a fantasy world where I lose track of time and all sense of my surroundings. I can think and I can stop thinking; I feel and it all makes sense. By bringing together memories of the past, hopes, and maybe fears, for the future, and experiences of the here and now, I want to create a little bit of magic. By incorporating various textile techniques to build up layers to make the images tactile, I can make them even more alive. Inspiration for the artwork *Welcome to La La Land*, I decided to review my previous work to uncover how emotion had worked knowingly and unknowingly as part of the inspiration. Taking what I found a few steps further, I decided to work on this piece consciously and directly through my emotions. By working with every image and detail on the basis of the variety of emotional states, I have experienced both the past and the present; my aim to tell a story of feelings through a colourful landscape of emotions.

Rakel Blomsterberg is originally from Iceland but has spent the last few years travelling and living around the world. After gaining a Bachelor of Fashion degree in New Zealand, where she graduated highest in her class and received the first prize at the iD International Emerging Designer Awards, she moved to London and set up her own fashion label (Rakel Blom) focusing on garments made from her own unique and colourful textile prints. Recently, she moved back to her home city of Reykjavik to supplement her creative work with an MA in art and design teaching.

Born 1986 in Reykjavik, Iceland.



*Welcome to La La Land, 2017, 110 cm x 110 cm.*

# Ann Majbritt Eriksen



I am a Saami *duojár*, or in English a Saami crafter. I grew up in an environment where the Saami culture with reindeer herding and *duodji* is one of the main ways of living. In the past it was crucial for everyone in the family to learn and to master handicraft for survival. The way of making warm clothes and items from reindeer skin was necessary in the cold Arctic area. Even though times have changed slightly and it is no longer crucial to know how to make handicrafts for a living, I was still able to experience the importance of knowing the Saami handicraft. It is simply a way of life, and the unique knowledge is passed down from generation to generation. It is its knowledge about Saami dress cut, patterns, reindeer skin preparation, sewing techniques, woven techniques, and so on. I chose the Saami *duodji* way of life because it was a natural choice for me as I grew up in a Saami environment, learning by watching my mother, my aunt, and other relatives making handicrafts. It led me to where I am today. I enjoy making things by hand in the traditional Saami way, and I also enjoy adding my own untraditional twist to the usual Saami handicraft. That is my way of keeping the Saami handicrafts tradition alive

When I started my professional education, it was an easy choice for me to start with bachelor's degree in *duodji* at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences. During that time, I realised that handmaking, and *duodji* especially, could be an avenue for personal expression.

Ann Majbritt Eriksen is working as a costume maker at The Saami National Theatre, Beaivváš, in Kautokeino, Norway. She has made costumes for many theatre pieces that have been performed at Beaivváš. She is a leader of the costume department at the theatre. Her main achievements are a craft certificate as a gown- and dress-maker in Narvik in 2004 and an MA in *Duodji* (Saami Handicraft) at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in 2015. The main theme in her master's degree was the traditional Sámi costumes ribbon woven technique.

Born 1981  
in Kautokeino, Norway.



*Four seasons transformation, 2016,  
silk, wool, ribbonbands, and wool-  
ribbons made by woventecnique.  
Photo by Sami Daiddaguovddas.*

# Maria Huhmarniemi

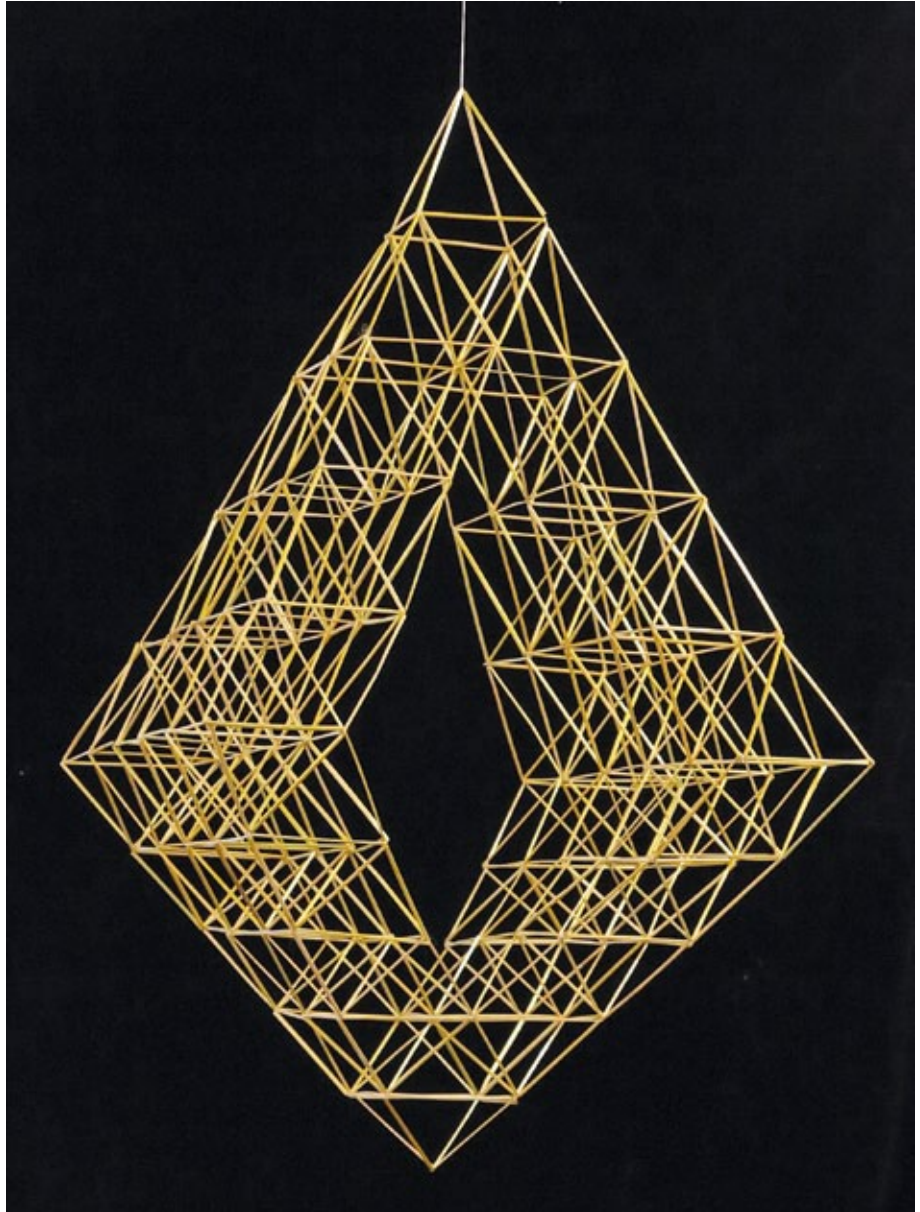


I started making the series of *himmeli* sculptures in reaction to a comment in 2011 by the True Finns Party, proposing that only Finnish nationalistic fine arts should be supported by the Finnish state. They admired fine arts from the period of National Romanticism, (the Golden Age of Finnish art), but ignored the fact that Finnish art has always been influenced by other countries and cultures. *Himmeli* is a traditional Finnish decorative mobile. It is made from short strips of rye straw tied together with string to form a complex and symmetrical three-dimensional structure. It is used as a Christmas decoration that hangs over dining tables in many Finnish homes. What is less well known is that the origin of *himmeli* is thought to be a canopy decoration used in Medieval and Renaissance festivities in central Europe. The word *himmeli* has its origins in the Swedish and German languages, in which *himmel* means “sky and heaven”. I began making *himmeli* sculptures by extending traditional decorations that my mother had made. I morphed their forms into free and wild sculptures using coloured plastic drinking straws.

For the Interwoven exhibition, I have done several *himmelis* from natural straws. I have designed new models that respect tradition and stepped to the field of handcraft. I have also enlarged traditional straw decorations into installation art. As part of the process, I have carried out art-based action research in community art in villages in Lapland. In my workshops, *himmelis* have been built as an intergenerational activity and group work. The participating groups have included art teachers, women in the villages, and immigrants and asylum seekers. I present photo documentation of these workshops in the exhibition along the sculptural mobiles.

Maria Huhmarniemi is an artist and a teacher at the University of Lapland. In her work as a visual artist, she engages with questions concerning the North, multiculturalism, and communality, as well as environmental issues such as the relationship between people and nature and environmental responsibility. In her doctoral thesis, she studied how artists can participate in environmental politics through art. She has also been chairperson for the Artists' Association of Lapland since 2012 and a member of the Finnish Bio-art Association and the Artists' Association Muu.

Born 1977  
in Rovaniemi, Finland.



*A series of Himmels-  
sculptures made from  
straw and documen-  
tary photos from the  
community art work-  
shops, 2017.*

## Jóní Jónsdóttir

All is somehow woven or embroidered together in life – memories, feelings, art, work, and play. My memories of my grandmother are mostly of her making something by hand or planting flowers. She was very skilled and made the most beautiful dolls, paintings, and buckets of nylon stocking flowers. My mother was the same; she always painted wild pictures of people, animals, and the things in life that inspired her. These memories have been in my heart and in my practise as an artist both in my collective work with the Icelandic Love Corporation and in my own individual work. I am inspired by their craftsmanship and use their techniques with a twist as a contemporary artist to tell my own stories of my experiences in life, memories, and feelings.

For the *Interwoven* exhibition, I have made works based on my experience of becoming a mother. When I was breastfeeding my son I had to use disposable breast pads since I was allergic to the multi-use pads. For 16 months the pads kept piling up; I was concerned about how environmentally unfriendly this was, so I collected them thinking that maybe in some sustainable way I could use them to make an artwork later. *Nacre* is a work made of the pads. Every pad has a pearl sewn onto it. The pads are then sown together in a shape of a shield. Nacre is a blend of minerals in some shells that make a coating or a shield to protect the shell from parasites and foreign objects. Eventually the nacre becomes a pearl. The mother's milk works in some ways as the nacre; it feeds and protects the child from diseases; it shields the baby. My other works in the *Interwoven* exhibition are *Mamma Bomba* and *Urinary Mamma*, water colour paintings of biological inner system after birth and *Geo Mamma*, an embroidered watercolour work on sheet. With these works I want to sew together memories and feelings from the past to new life and experiences as a mother today and embroider my feelings from my mind and onto fabric to make space for new beginnings.



Jóní graduated from the sculpture department at the Icelandic Collage of Arts and Crafts in 1996. She finished two years of study at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Copenhagen in 1999 and graduated with MArt.Ed. from the Icelandic Academy of the Arts in 2011. Jóní has exhibited her individual work both at home and abroad and has designed and made costumes and scenography for dance and theatre. Jóní is one of three cofounders of the art collective the Icelandic Love Corporation, a group that was established in 1996 by three woman artists, Sigrún Hrólfsdóttir (1973), Jóní Jónsdóttir (1972), and Eirún Sigurdardóttir (1971). She lives and works in Reykjavík.

Born 1972 in Akureyri, Iceland.





*Nacre, 2017,  
breast pads and pearls,  
130 cm x 130 cm.*

# Thelma Björk Jónsdóttir



The installation piece is a result of an analysis of communication between two friends and the impact it has on their lives. My dear friend Guðjón Tryggvason and I worked on memories that we share. We embroidered ten pairs of gloves from the 1940s, dividing them between us, half left and right, and worked on them in our residences in Reykjavik, Iceland and Brussels, Belgium. In the process we only used repurposed materials that we possessed and had worked with in our many collaborations over time. We deliberately kept the individual work on the gloves a secret so neither of us had an idea what the other person was doing. The element of surprise and the unexpected became visible only when the gloves came together as a pair. The complete pairs form the contribution to the exhibition.

The foundation of the work is a self-analysis, which requires inspection of the communication between two individuals. An honest, and sometimes difficult, inward journey aimed to answer profound questions about friendship and its essence: How it is maintained? Can it be sustained, and what are the elements required for such sustainability? Has the relationship reached an equilibrium? Is there a fundamental difference between friendship and love? Does distance, both physical and spiritual, play a part? The conflicts and their resolutions are embedded in the work as the process of working has mirrored the apparent realities of the relationship between the friends.

A friendship that spans personal development, changes, triumphs, and losses deserves a profound inspection of the role and content of communication between the individuals involved. How does a dense network of meanings, that at first glance appears unbreakable, undecipherable, and yet fragile and apparent, materialize? A final question remains and it is perhaps the most important one: Does friendship erase the physical boundaries of two individuals and create synergies beyond time and space?

Thelma Björk is a fashion designer from Iceland with a keen interest in and knowledge of handcrafts such as knitting, crochet, and needlework. She has studied fashion design at the Iceland Academy of Arts. She has attended Studio Bercot in Paris and completed a diploma from Ecole Lesage (Atelier de Broderie) in Professional Haute Couture embroidery techniques. She has specialized in embroidery, knit, and crochet. This knowledge and savoir-faire directly fed into her work and harmonized perfectly with her interest in fashion accessories such as headwear and gloves. Her label, Thelma Design, was launched in 2005, specialising in handmade headpieces and embroidery.

Born 1982  
in Reykjavík, Iceland.



*Hands where I can  
See them, 2017,  
ten pairs of gloves.*

# Gabriel Johann Kvendseth



Gabriel Johann Kvendseth's artistic practice encompasses sculpture, installation, writing, and performance. He has an inclination towards abandoned materials and disregarded knowledge, which he manipulates in idiosyncratic and vaguely esoteric ways. In his work he transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary, attempting to break free from common conceptions of ritualistic, practical, or economic value in objects and actions. His work has been exhibited in venues such as the Arkhangelsk Fine Arts Museum, Del Infinito in Buenos Aires, LYNX in Oslo, the Kreuzberg Pavilion in Berlin, Supermarket Art Fair in Stockholm, and KODE2 in Bergen. Future exhibitions include RAKE in Trondheim, the Northern Norwegian Museum of Art in Tromsø, and Murmansk Art Museum. Kvendseth lives and works in Bergen, Norway and is a graduate of the Bergen National Academy of the Arts. Born 1984 in Karlsøy, Norway.

My work is often characterized by a rather primitive approach, a more or less auto-didact craft that is imperfect, rough, and idiosyncratic. My artworks often dwell at an intersection of art and craft, somewhere in the landscapes of weapons, tools, or placeholders, balancing formalism against function and the primal with pop.

All my raw materials find their way to me – from the sidewalk, from the shore, from attics and basements, from construction sites, forests, and flea markets. Over time I have acquired a distinct affinity for this multitude of castoff materials. What they all have in common is that they are not new; they don't create any production demand and are thus outside of the conventional market economy.

During reshaping and repurposing, I seek to understand the materials released from their original intention and conjure the latent potential from them. I try to see not what the objects *are* but what they *can be* when released from the semantic bond of functionality.

The sculptures are made with a modest selection of hand tools, and sometimes the tool and the finished artwork overlap. The process is sometimes instant, other times painstakingly slow, but it is never planned.



*Vexilloid for and  
Artist Crusade, 2016,  
various reclaimed and  
repurposed materials.*

# Maarit Magga

I have long experience in the traditional Sami handcraft, *duodji* (Sami traditional and applied art and design). I had to try to do something new as my masterwork, and as my research moved along, I had a special experience. I found an old leaking shoe by chance at my parents' place in the mountains. I felt strongly the leaking shoe would like go home with me, and it became the initial idea for my research project. I understood it as a sign for me.

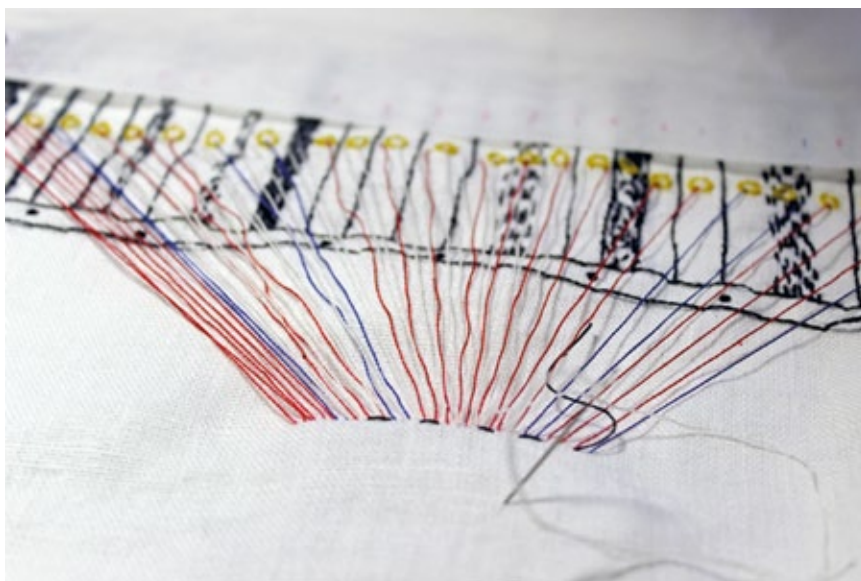
My research questions are: How can you introduce/express and analyse experiences of *a place* with *duodji* and narratives? How can you visualize these experiences with embroidering pictures? What is the *idea of place* behind the narratives? I have chosen three places. The first one is Ovnnesduottar (my ancestors' place/area); the second one is Gálggojávri (my parents' place); and the third one is Sálvvošjávri (my husband's and his ancestors' place). All the places are in the Enontekiö area. I have chosen the places on the basis of my personal connection with them. An oral tradition, narrative, is a main research material as well as experiences, interviews, memories, and stories. The approach is indigenous knowledge. I have approached research as *duojár* and experienter. Methods are the craft research of *duodji*, and the most important is *duddjon*, doing the crafts. Photographs and literary sources of *duodji* are very major methods too.

I have experienced places consciously as a ritual. I've also written a diary during my trips and seen these experiences as pictures and as stories. I have analysed and deciphered events and places and have embroidered pictures of with them. A conclusion of my research is that experience and analysing are dependent on the places you're working with; for example, Gálggojávri as a childhood place and is the nearest place mentally. I have never seen the areas of Ovnnesduottar or Sálvvošjávri, so I don't have memories like I have of my own family places.



Maarit Magga is an artist and *duodji* expert. She has a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Oulu and master's degree in *duodji* from the Sámi University College. She has over 35 years of experience in traditional *duodji*. In her studies the Sámi University College, she has oriented to a new field in which she combines crafts and literature; she tells stories through embroidery. She has exhibited in a number of exhibitions on Sami handcraft and culture in the Nordic countries and elsewhere in Europe. She also holds many positions of trust in the Sámi culture.

Born 1968  
in Enontekiö, Finland.



*The Narratives  
behind the Places, 2015,  
embroidered pictures.*

# Marjo Pernu



Marjo Pernu is a visual artist who works and lives in Rovaniemi. In her art she explores and develops a collage technique using natural materials such as birch bark. Pernu calls her technique image building. Besides her artistic work, Pernu teaches art education at the University of Lapland, in Rovaniemi.

Born 1986 in Kemi, Finland.

I build images out of pieces. My technique is something between drawing and sculpting. My father and grandfather were sculptors. They made wooden housewares and articles just for pleasure. The older generations of my family made almost everything by hand.

My primary material is bark, but sometimes I gather the lichen beside it or other objects I find along the way. For me, gathering is art making. I gather natural materials when wandering, picking berries and mushrooms in the forests. There must be an ancient gatherer's gene living inside me!

Sometimes my family members and friends join the gathering trips. That's how these people become a part of my art work. The materials gathered together remind me of the people and moments and the places we experienced together.

In my works I often describe northern birds and landscapes. In those characters I see strength and fragility, security beside insecurity, freedom against fetters, joy beside sadness, in other words, the biggest contradictions in life.





*October View, 2017,  
43 cm x 32 cm  
⊕ 42 cm x 60 cm  
⊕ 42 cm x 32 cm,  
birch bark, hypogymnia  
physodes, hard pastel, pins.*

# Antti Stöckell



Antti Stöckell lives in Rovaniemi and works as a lecturer at the University of Lapland in the Faculty of Art and Design. He graduated as an artist with a specialization in sculpting and teaching art. He has also studied to be a nature and wilderness guide. In his artistic work, he focused on working in nature and in the fields of environmental art and community art.

Born 1973  
in Hyvinkää, Finland.

For me, bodily involvement is inevitable in artistic work. All of my newest artworks have their beginnings in hiking or cross-country skiing. Hiking is a kind of warm-up for artistic work followed by handcraft work.

On these hikes there are many necessary practises and utensils interwoven into everyday aesthetics. From that aesthetic, it is easy to move on to the artistic expression. At the same time, the affection felt for the places where hikes have taken me, deepens through the bodily presence and working by hand.

As a researcher, I'm interested in such spatial experiences and their relation to places, particularly in the environment that is changing due the politics in contemporary society. I am interested in studying how people can handle total change in the places that are important to them.

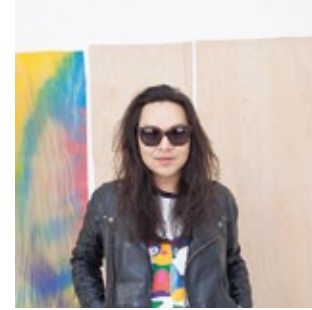
I think that the artist and art educators can play an important role in the community facing the changes or the complete loss of their environment. In those situations, the strength of the art lies in the bodily involvement that binds people to place and experiences.

The wooden spoons in the *Interwoven* exhibition were made around campfires by my colleagues, friends, and family members. The heads of the spoons were burnt by glowing embers. In the spoons made by myself, one can be seen references to the places I have been on my hikes. I feel that self-made everyday utensils empower their user every time when used!



*Wooden Spoons, 2017,  
Rovaniemi, installation.*

# Kiyoshi Yamamoto



Born in Brazil in 1983, but deeply influenced by the Japanese culture of his parents, Kiyoshi graduated with a master's from the Bergen Academy in 2013 and has already exhibited internationally and participated in Design Weeks in London, Helsinki and Milan. In spring this year, he was invited to design for the Vossa Jazz festival and to take part in Dimanche Rouge's 'Focus on Norway' performance-art event in Paris. His textile works have recently been acquired by The Norwegian National Museum for Arts, Crafts and Design.

I am a textile artist who floats between material and concept. My work explores the relationship between colour and identity, activism and material experimentation. I am interested in industrial production and collecting and learning about materials. In my work I use found materials that in some cases are acquired in unconventional ways, sometimes oddments from past projects, sometimes borrowed or stolen from friends or institutions. With experience I have developed methods that are about being rude to the material, breaking taboos and not letting the material, a thing, or a person become too mentally dominant.

I am always researching. The research question issues directly from my practice. I do use material as metaphorical away to express my views or frustrated experiences.

Giving a value to an object is to realize that it really does not mean a thing. The paradox of giving material things value, or to juxtapose the material with humans, giving the material a love, is the best and worst of us. Although composing a nice thing is pathetic, my work always has an eye pleasing form. It is this paradox I explore today.



*Broken hearts are for assholes,  
2016, screenprint, engraving,  
laser engraving and painting:  
found and stolen material.  
Yamamoto's work is supported by  
Norwegian Crafts.*

# The Educational Institutions

## **Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design, University of Bergen, Norway**

From January 2017 Bergen Academy of Art and Design (KHiB) and Grieg Academy. University of Bergen (UiB) are merged. They are organized within the university as the new Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design, where they are one of seven faculties that constitutes the institution. The Bachelor's programme in Fine Art is a study programme for students who wish to study to become professional artists. The core of the programme is the development of the student's own artistic practice, seen in conjunction with art's place in culture and society. MA studies provides the graduate student with artistic, methodological and theoretical tools to work professionally within the field of contemporary art.

## **Iceland Academy of Arts**

The Iceland Academy of the Arts in Reykjavik, Iceland, provides higher education in fine arts, theatre, dance, music, design, architecture, and art education. The role of the Iceland Academy of the Arts is to encourage progressive thinking in the arts and to stimulate innovation and development in different fields. The Academy offers education in the arts at the university level and conveys both knowledge and professionalism in the arts to Icelandic society. The three main values that guide the focus and direction of the Academy are curiosity, understanding, and courage.

### **Sámi allaskuvla/ Sami University of Applied Sciences**

Sámi allaskuvla/Sami University of Applied Sciences in Guovdageaidnu, Norway is a small, but important, higher educational institution for the Sámi people. It is the only indigenous higher educational institution in Norway that offers different programmes and courses that are taught in Saami language. *Duodji* is taught at the bachelor and master levels. Although students come from the whole of Sápmi, which includes Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Russia, the majority of the students come from the Norwegian side of Sapmi. The Sámi language is both the main language in teaching and administration of the University.. Sámi allaskuvla has about 200 students.

### **The University of Lapland, Faculty of Art and Design**

The University of Lapland is located in Rovaniemi, Finland. It is a vital wellspring of Northern creativity where science and art go hand in hand. In the artistic work of the university, the international perspective joins forces with the Northern dimension and its cultural heritage. The artistic work aims for ecological, cultural, and social sustainability in a close connection with the Northern environment and community. This is why art is made and developed in collaboration with local, regional, and international partners. Studies are based on the interaction between artistic work and research.

Sustainability, crafts, and culture form the starting point of all the works in the *Interwoven* exhibition. The focus of the works is diverse – Sami duodji, nature, colours, culture, daily life, and memories – with some requiring the direct participation of the audience. The exhibiting artists and designers explore the boundaries and bridges between art and traditional crafts.

**NORDISK  
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