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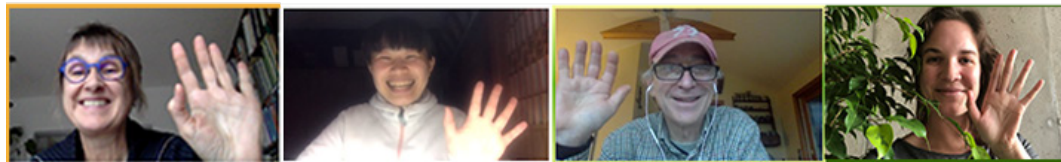
RESILIENCY THROUGH ARTMAKING

Re-charging the IMAGination

As artists and educators, we continually find ways to energize and invigorate our practice. Now, as we strive to make sense of unprecedented global events that have uprooted our routines we are at new beginnings compelled to again witness the power of art to bring us hope, joy, and meaning. In this issue we present visual essays that have demonstrated novel and innovative ways that artists, educators, and community members recharge as an active commitment to revitalize the imagination and sense of wonder. These essays illuminate how visual language and aesthetic experience brings optimism and resilience into the creative process. By exploring the unexplored they refresh the imagination of self, learners, and community members.

As newly appointed co-editors we are also at new beginnings exploring the unexplored and honored to present this, our first issue. We are grateful to Teresa Eca who pioneered and edited IMAG through these past seven years and to graphic designer Angela Saldanha for her keen dedication and vision. We hope to follow their path to Re-charge Imaginations for our readers through many upcoming IMAG issues.

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IMAG issue 11 **RESILIENCY THROUGH ARTMAKING**

The first issue by the IMAG QUARTET ::

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Maria HUHMARNIEMI

Front and back cover image: ©Wanfei HUANG

Invitation to Use Your Imagination

Keywords or phrases: Imagination, photographs, scenes from Cuba



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Visual art teachers search for ways to help their students see the world with open hearts and minds, study what they see and be open to a multitude of interpretations. Through this series of abstract photos from Cuba, I invite you to use your imagination as you interpret each image and share your readings. My own interpretations, as along with those of some viewers, are also partly discussed, and can be found via the link included.

Look, interpret, and replace "Untitled" with your reading.

Take a moment: breathe deeply and let your imagination discover the meaning of the following images. If you want to share any of your interpretations, please follow this link and add your text after the existing titles.

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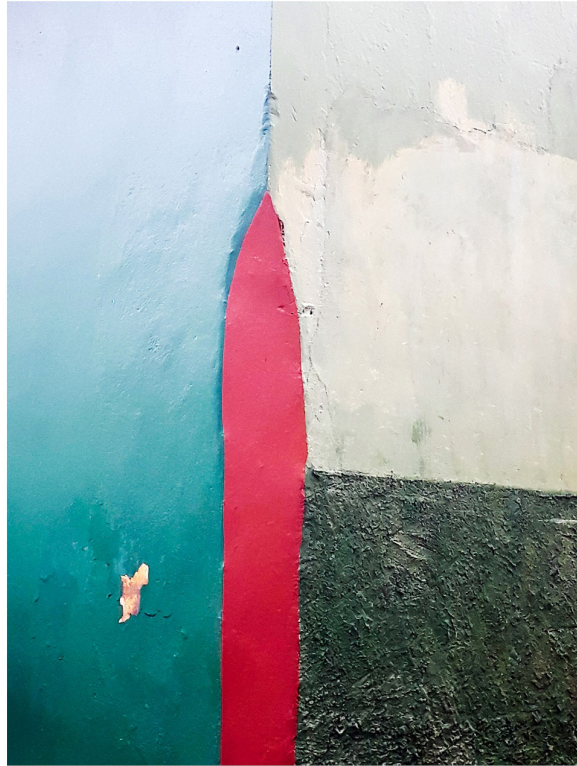


1. Author: *Untitled*



2. Author: *Untitled*

Seija ULKUNIEMI - Invitation to Use Your Imagination



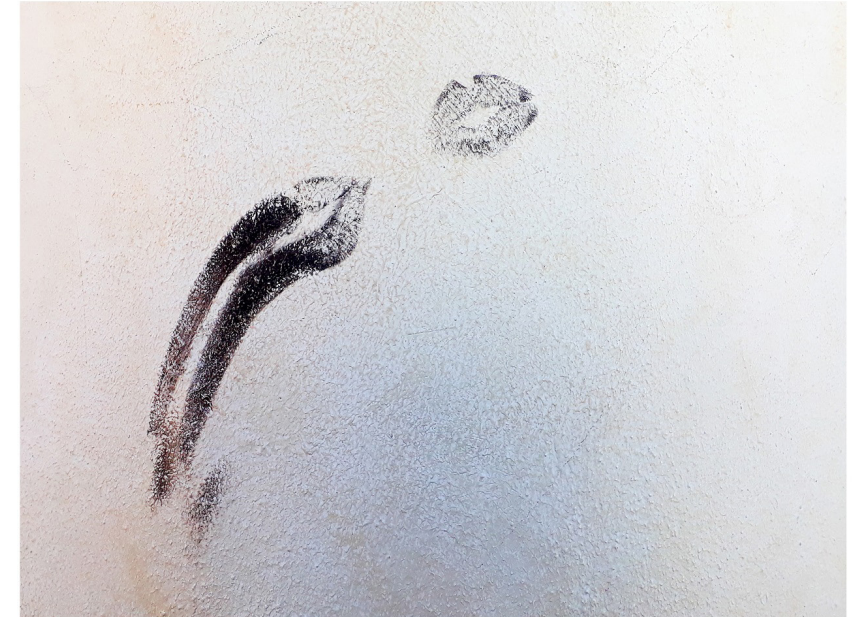
3. Author: *Untitled*



4. Author: *Untitled*



5. Author: *Untitled*

6. Author: *Untitled*7. Author: *Untitled*8. Author: *Untitled*

Homage to (Cuban) house painters whose works tell (hi)stories

In 2017 I visited Trinidad, one of the oldest cities in Cuba. As I wandered the streets, I was transfixed by the beautiful colours of the walls. In Trinidad, when the surface of a wall is damaged, it is fixed, plastered and painted in whatever colours are available. The various layers of colours and textures, seen through cracks and chips in the paint, change over time. Sometimes you can see traces of multiple decades, even on tiny wall areas. I took photographs of these "miniature paintings," which tell stories of the past.

In 2020, I selected some of these photos for an exhibition called *Histories of Painting*, referring to both the layers of paint and the various told and untold histories of visual art. The exhibition was an homage to the house painters who are

generally left anonymous but whose work affects much of our daily surroundings.

For over two decades, I've encouraged viewers of my photo exhibitions to participate in the process of meaning-making. The data of my doctoral dissertation consisted of their opinions and comments about the images (Ulkuniemi, 2007).

This exhibition was first shown at the Oulunsalo library gallery as part of the Oulunsalo Music Festival, where I was the invited artist of the year. As I have here, I offered each viewer a list of the works, all of which were "Untitled," and asked them to record their title suggestions for any piece in the guest book. They could read my personal interpretations, which you will also find in this essay, on the back of the list.

–
Photographer's interpretive look and some quotations from the viewers' texts

To demonstrate the power of participatory imagination, I offer you example of viewers' title suggestion for these eight photos. I have included my own suggestions in *italics*, and some additional remarks.

Most of the photos have a figure-like area due to the cropping decisions I made when taking and editing the photos. These figures represented various characters in viewers' eyes.



Where I saw *A man resting on his blue fruit bed*, others found animals, such as "Ms. Mouse hurrying from the fruit shopping market to her home cavity" or "a squirrel".



A big-headed child rests relaxed on a rock next to a slender birches was seen being a person "at the dentist". The backwards leaning position is indeed like a patient's position.



The most congruent interpretations were made of *The first kiss of a match girl*. All the given titles were associated with love: "Touch of hearts" and "Oh! And they found each other."



I titled this photo *A wounded horse that escaped from Picasso's Guernica painting*, referring to the famous painting artist. The cracked surface gives the impression of movement: one viewer saw it "Santa Claus and the summer rush", whereas another named it "a thick bullfighter chasing a thin bull".



The title "...Picasso was (also) here!", offered for the photo I titled *A mother protects her baby in her arms, as though humbly kneeling for prayer*, represents intertextual reading. Somebody associated the figure with Picasso's drawing style with a reference to the saying, "Kilroy was here".



One viewer had philosophical artistic thoughts about *A red tower rises, knife-sharp without questioning justification for its existence*: (s)he saw it as "the messenger of avant-garde" with an addition that "it is never self-evident how the future will define it".



After reading the viewer's title suggestion, "Särestöniemi's dream" for the piece I called *I think I can see an angel that appears to the birds huddling in the shade of a tree*, I realised that the texture is, indeed, reminiscent of the [special painting technique] used by Finnish expressionist painter Reidar Särestöniemi.



Traces of love in flight was titled by someone honouring the famous Finnish ski jumper "Fly, Matti Nykänen". I find this a hilarious example of flight of imagination.

Concluding remarks

My series shows that originally abstract walls can become figurative simply with certain photo cropping. People also tend to look for representational forms that help them make meaning, especially if they are encouraged to do so. I hope that you as a viewer will continue looking at the surroundings with the playful and interpretive attitude I offer you. I am also planning to show this photo series to my students and invite you to do the same.

My experience in Cuba made me pay more attention to the fact that the buildings in my area lack both colours and cracks of paint layers. Here, the "histories of painting" are hidden, harder to find. But let us try!

As photographer, I am happy that viewers in Oulunsalo were engaged, taking the time and effort to write about their exhibition experience in the guest book. Personal reflections give new insights to those who read them. I have already started to view my photos with new eyes: e.g., when I look at the image 2, nowadays I always first see a squirrel instead of a resting man, and now I associate the image 6 with a situation at the dentist where I am often rather nervous than relaxed.

Viewers' participation has encouraged me to continue playing with my collection of Cuban wall photos. There will soon be a *Histories of Painting Part II* again open to interpretation and interaction through inventing titles.

Finally, if you have stopped to take a second look at any of the photos and given it a new title, my goal for this visual essay has almost been reached. If this experiment has made you smile, the aim was fulfilled.

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Explaining “Real” in Landscape Photography

Keywords or phrases: art-based education, photography, visual arts

Introduction

When I teach Interpretation of Visual Media to bachelor students, nature photographs inspire long discussions about their authenticity. The question about what makes photographs “real” may seem trivial, but it becomes very complex when looked at in more detail. This has led me to search for new ways to extend the students’ understanding of the topic.

Photojournalism and nature photography are considered “the last fortresses of the authentic image.” However, their walls are, if not falling, then at least cracking. In nature photography, using photo hides, feeding wild animals, and organizing the environment to be visually more appealing have become standard practices. Reflectors, even artificial light, may be used to set the mood. New technology enables creation of images that do record the actual nature but in ways that human eye cannot capture. On Instagram, there are images so heavily processed that they no longer describe reality. They are simulacra, representations, or copies where the original no longer exists, as described by Baudrillard (1981).



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While Figure 1 is an authentic photograph of the Milky Way and airglow, the human eye cannot catch them with such detail. Similarly, wide angle lenses can “condense” an aurora storm that covers the whole sky into one image, and sensors capture colours better than the naked eye (Figure 2).

In my landscape photography I have extended the concept of “real” even further by depicting elements of our surroundings that are directly unobservable to our limited human perception. I want to relate to the viewer tacit aspects of reality that are hard, even impossible to express in a precise, textual manner. This topic is also part of my ongoing doctoral thesis work.

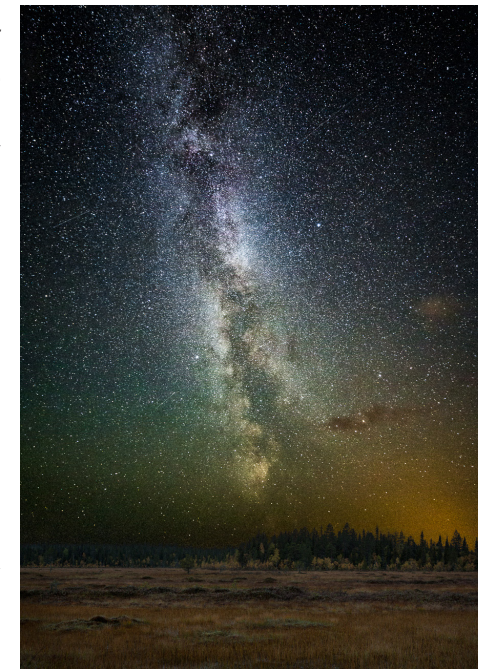


Figure 1
Airglow and The Milky Way at Syöte National Park.
Photo: Esa Pekka Isomursu, 2015.



Figure 2
Rare-colored aurora storm.
Photo: Esa Pekka Isomursu, 2015.

Extending the Real

It is often pointed out how a photograph always has a direct physical connection to reality because it is formed when light from the photographed object draws an image on film or a camera sensor. However, as Shusterman (2012) points out, not much attention has been given to photography as a physical act. He argues that we identify photographic art so one-sidedly with the end products, i.e., the photographs themselves, that it occludes the aesthetics arising from the somatic, performative process of taking the photograph – or viewing it.

The extent of the physical process of making a photograph is obscured by the fact that pressing the shutter button to expose an image requires no special skills. However, a complex performative process occurs before the shutter release. It includes all the actions that are necessary for achieving the desired photographic image. This includes composing the shot in one's mind, selecting the lense and exposure values, moving to the right position, and waiting for the right moment. In a wider sense, it includes everything that the photographer has done previously to gain the skills s/he has.

One aspect of this physical process is being in nature and observing it when taking the photograph. I want to make students think about how, and to what extent, a nature photograph can convey to the viewer the physical experience of being in nature. A photograph can, of course, show what the photographer saw. But is there more to this? Seeing a direct photographic image of the scenery does not alone convey much of the bodily experience.

Consider Magritte's painting *Voice of Space* (<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/2593>) where huge spherical bells float in the sky, above a Renaissance style landscape. By adding an unnatural element to the landscape, Magritte can make the viewers hear the hum of the wind in their mind and physically transfer them to a moor on a windy summer day.

Another way to relate fragments of the physical experience to the viewer could be the movement of either the photographer, the camera, or the subject while taking the photograph. Consider the two photographs from Lofoten (Figures 3-4). In them, I have used intentional camera movement to convey the prevailing mood and weather conditions better than in a direct presentation of the landscape.



Figure 3
Winter seas at Lofoten.
Photo: Esa Pekka Isomursu, 2018.



Figure 4
Summer night at Lofoten.
Photo: Esa Pekka Isomursu, 2019.

One inspiration to my work on “Extended Real” is photographer Mikko Silvola. He has recorded echolocation ultrasounds of bats and lowered the frequency to make them audible to humans (Figures 5-6). Thus, a part of reality that normally is not observable to humans is made observable.

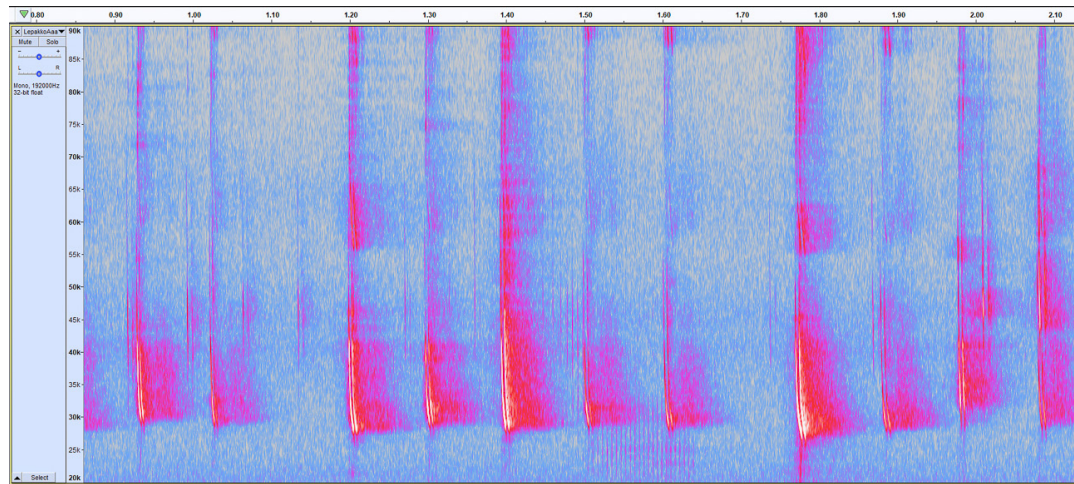


Figure 5
Spectrogram of bat echolocation.
Photo: Mikko Silvola, 2020.



Figure 6
Bat preying on insects.
Photo: Mikko Silvola, 2020.

Modern cameras can create “unreal reality,” e.g., by seeing in the dark or by showing a different perspective (focal length). This fact along with images from such artists as Magritte and Silvola have inspired me to think how else we can extend the experienced reality in photographs.

One new dimension would be to break the visible light into its components. In a double exposure of a foggy day, I have combined a natural image with the same view through a spectroscope (Figures 7-8). In the spirit of traditional nature photography, I have created the image on site, directly on camera, and done only basic image editing. The grey landscape is actually full of colour, we just do not sense it. From the picture, one can even recognize Fraunhofer lines, a set of absorption lines in the optical spectrum of the sun.



Figure 7
Double exposure of a foggy landscape.
Photo: Esa Pekka Isomursu, 2021.



Figure 8
Spectroscope connected to a SLR camera.
Photo: Esa Pekka Isomursu, 2021.

Spectroscopic images can also reveal an interesting contrast between natural and man-made landscapes. In a nocturnal cityscape, bright narrow emission lines of artificial light stand out (Figure 9).



Figure 9
Double exposure of a nocturnal cityscape with spectroscope and normal camera.
Photo: Esa Pekka Isomursu, 2021.

Thermal imaging can reveal yet another level of reality. A double exposure of thermal and natural images (Figure 10) shows how snow-covered trees store heat from the Sun during the day and radiate it out after the sunset. This technique creates visually fascinating images, reminiscent of traditional photography (Figure 11), yet oddly different.

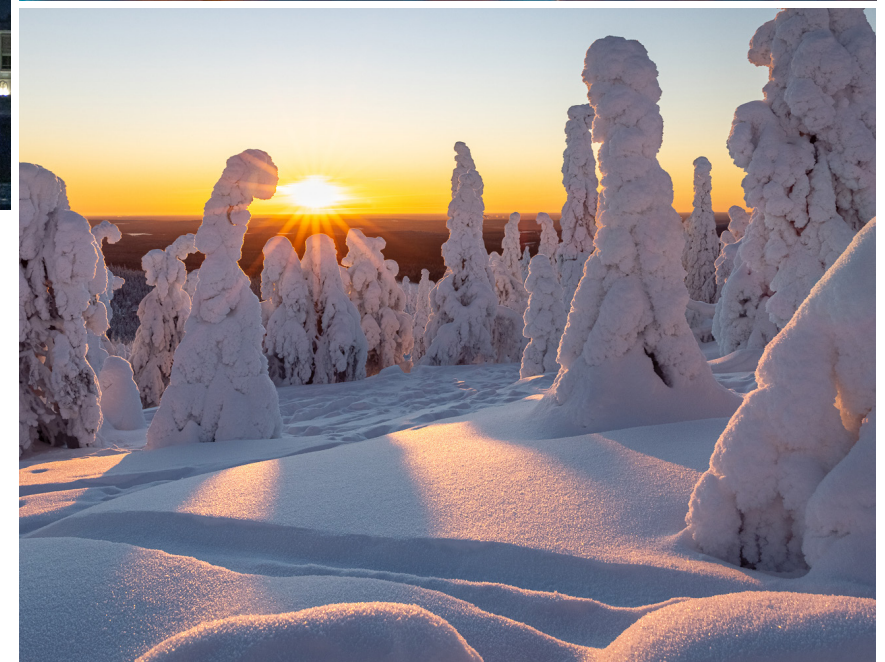


Figure 10
Combination of thermal and natural images of a snowy landscape. Photo: Esa Pekka Isomursu, 2021.

“To be continued”

In addition to their aesthetic value, images in this essay reveal new dimensions of reality. Presenting such photographs to my students has sparked lively discussion and given them better insight to the concept of authenticity. I am currently working with new ideas to expand the concept. I will present a larger set of concepts and images in my course next fall, after which a more detailed article will follow.

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Renew, Recharge and Resiliency Development Through Artmaking During a Global Pandemic

Keywords or phrases: Covid-19, resilience, arts-based learning



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With 15+ years of teaching experience, Dawn Stienecker, PhD, has taught in EC - university environments. She has written art reviews and several art education articles. Her research interests are in the ways classroom and community practices can shift to formal research projects that demonstrate critical investigation and praxis.
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Abstract

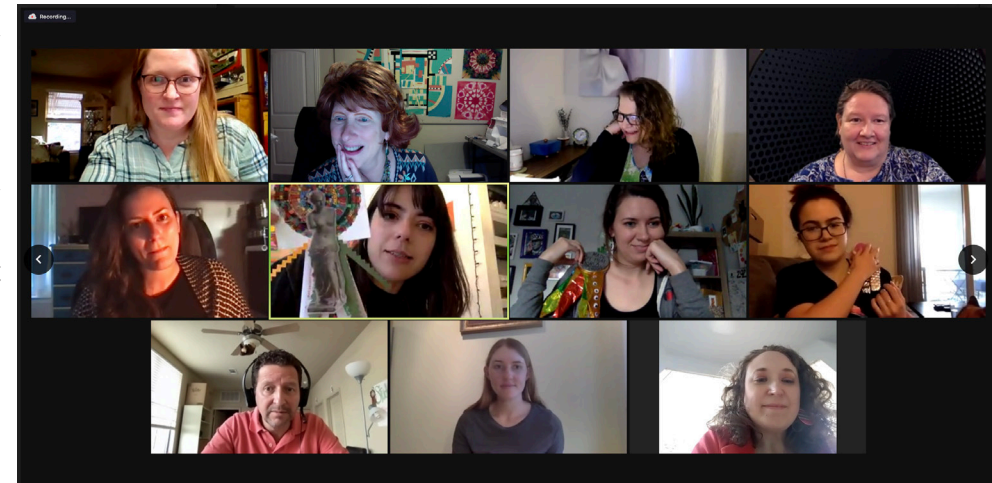
Resilience is the ability to cope in the face of adversity. This visual essay describes how artmaking served as a catalyst for personal and professional rejuvenation and resiliency building during a global pandemic. Data was collected through visual artifacts, reflections, discussions, and exit surveys. Findings suggest that workshop participants felt that artmaking strategies could be integrated into their curriculum and adapted for their personal and professional well-being.

Introduction

If we asked you to name a historical event in your lifetime, what would you choose? A year ago, we might have selected the horror of 9/11. However, the COVID-19 global pandemic would now top our list. Indeed, living, learning, and working during a pandemic has been fraught with both enormous challenges and opportunities impacting our personal and professional lives (Hicks, 2021; Kantawala, 2021; LeJevic, 2021). This visual essay describes how artmaking served as a catalyst for personal and professional rejuvenation and resiliency building during a challenging time. More specifically, as the pandemic dragged on, we wondered: "Who is taking care of teachers' well-being? How might we utilize artmaking to support local teachers?" These concerns inspired us to create a four week-long visual art professional development workshop for K-12 teachers.

Our Participants

We invited a group of educators from a local school district to attend a free artmaking workshop (February 4 – March 4, 2021). Participants who attended all four sessions earned a continuing education certificate.



Workshop Overview

During our weekly synchronous zoom meetings, we engaged in brief warm-up activities, introduced contemporary artists and children’s literature¹, and provided artmaking prompts. “Completed” art works were not expected, but participants shared weekly reflections and artworks.

Prompts included:

Week 1- Repetition. What is worth repeating? What is not?

Week 2 - I AM (my identity)

Week 3 - I Can’t, But I CAN...

Week 4 - Celebrating Our Accomplishments

¹
Contemporary artists featured in workshop:

1. Reginald C. Adams (US)
2. Melissa Miller (US)
3. Susan Herbert (British)
4. Alma Lee (US)
5. Ken Hoffman (US)
6. Svietlan Junakovic (Croatian)
7. El-Anutsui (Ghanan)
8. Olu Amoda (Nigerian)
9. Ocean Sole (Kenyan artist cooperative)
10. Calder Kamin (US)
11. Virginia Fleck (US)
12. Vic Muniz (Brazilian)
13. Yao Lu (Chinese)
14. Victor Nunes (Brazilian)

Children’s literature featured in workshop:

1. *Quick As a Cricket* by Audrey & Don Wood
2. *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* by Simms Taback
3. *Galimoto* by Karen Lynn Williams



Cat Face (joy):

- I love animals
- I have 3 cats
- I feel like my personality is similar to a cat. Some days my joy is being able to sleep all day and other days I want to be around people

Cactus (strength):

- TEXAS
- Doesn't just withstand harsh climates, it adapts to and thrives in a harsh climate
- Resilient



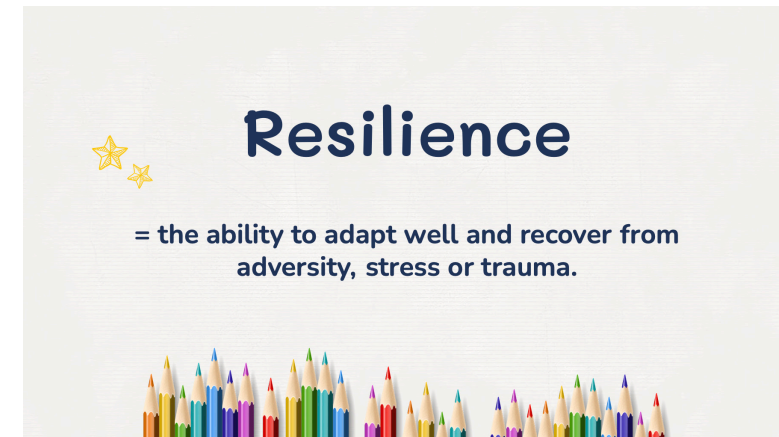
For my animal I choose a moth. A moth is a symbol for **transition and change** which I believe to be a theme in my life recently. Moths are also always **determined in seeking the light** in the darkness. This has been a dark year and I have often had to remind myself to focus on the positive and seek the light in others/situations. The moth is also a creature of the night guided by the moon which is a symbol I included in my border.

Mother Nature Interlude

After our second workshop, Austin, Texas experienced unexpected severe winter weather, causing widespread power outages, water disruptions, as well as business and school closings.

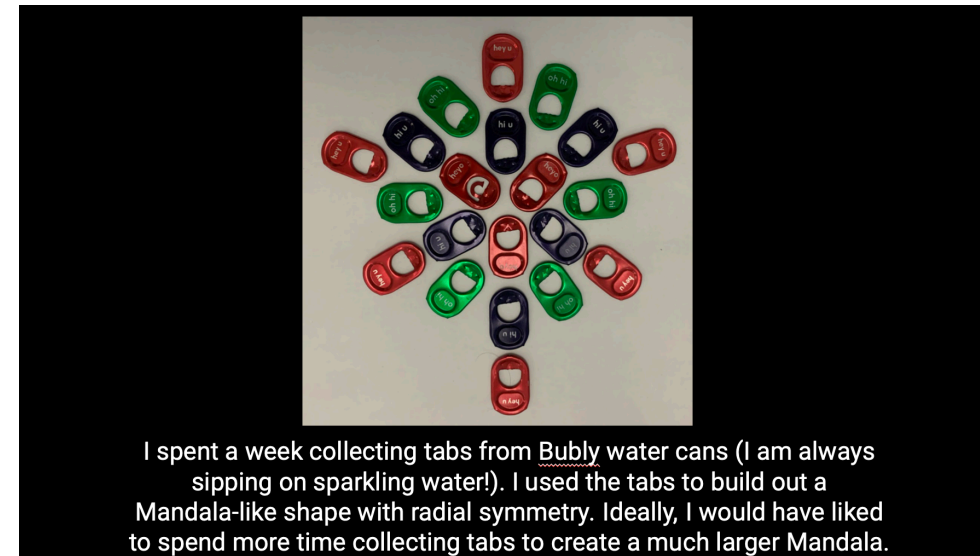


We had no choice but to reschedule our third workshop. On top of many personal and professional demands, the storm gave us an opportunity to demonstrate flexibility, which is an important characteristic of resilience.



After The Storm

Our group was eager to reconnect with one another, share our winter weather stories, and begin a new artmaking activity. As we discussed how lack of resources had recently impacted our lives, conversely, we considered how limitations in materials might inspire creative solutions. After examining several artists, such as El-Anutsui, who use discarded objects to create artworks, we were eager to create art from recycled materials.



I spent a week collecting tabs from Bubly water cans (I am always sipping on sparkling water!). I used the tabs to build out a Mandala-like shape with radial symmetry. Ideally, I would have liked to spend more time collecting tabs to create a much larger Mandala.

Virtual Gallery Walk

As part of our final celebration, we utilized Artsteps (2020) to create a virtual gallery. Participants expressed surprise and pride at seeing their creations in a digital format. Beranger commented that it was exciting to see her work on such a large scale and that she looked forward to using a virtual gallery in future critiques with her high school art students. Kaley, a speech pathologist, said that she never imagined that her artwork would be in a gallery, and she thought it looked “pretty cool” (personal communication, March 4, 2021).

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The Award Goes To...Or What Our Participants Gained

As a wrap up activity, participants created an achievement ribbon that showcased a personal success from the workshop. Kaley felt empowered to create art without step-by-step directions. Similarly, Angela said that the open-ended activities reminded her how much she enjoys making art *for her own enjoyment* as opposed to simply making instructional examples for her classroom.



Each participant acknowledged the need to re-connect with their creative side and not “worry about how things are supposed to look—just do it” (personal communication, March 4, 2021). Beranger reflected that making time for artmaking is important and that “this hour is a gift to myself” (personal communication, February 11, 2021). Katie’s grandmother passed away during our workshop and she stated that artmaking contributed to her resiliency during this difficult time. The participants felt that our professional development workshop was informative, engaging, as well as personally and professionally useful. Initial findings suggest participants experienced additional factors which strengthen resiliency through artmaking, such as personal accomplishment, self-awareness, freedom to take risks, creative expression, and vision for the future.

What We Learned

In closing, it has been said that the arts cannot change the world, but they may change human beings who might change the world (Greene, 2000). We hope that the lessons learned in this workshop will not only find their way into our participants’ classrooms, but also into their lives. Artmaking helps us make sense of the world, process our feelings, connect with others, renew our hope for tomorrow, rejuvenate our well-being during difficult times, and help build resiliency (Heise, 2014; Heise, 2013). Online teaching and learning can feel isolating, yet technology enabled us to build new and strengthen existing relationships with educators through artmaking during a global pandemic.

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Imaginary classrooms. Exploring new directions in visual art education through future workshops in teacher training.

Keywords or phrases: future workshops; teacher training; art classrooms

Introduction

Future workshops were originally developed to facilitate civic participation among groups that otherwise seldom take part in decision making processes, such as children and young people (Jungk & Mullert, 1987). It is a collaborative method where participants identify problems within a specific context and come up with concrete solutions together. This text combines the future workshop model with creative and participatory approaches as a way to discuss and imagine alternative futures for visual arts education with students in teacher training.



Ingrid **FORSLER**

Ingrid Forsler has a PhD in media studies and work as a lecturer at Södertörn University in Stockholm, Sweden where she is involved in the training of art teachers and in media literacy research and education. Her academic passions include school environments, media infrastructures and visual methods
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Figure 1
Future workshop discussion. Photographic field note from PhD project (Forsler 2020).

Process

Future workshops have later also been used as a research method to explore future imaginaries among specific groups such as children and young people (Alminde & Warming, 2020; Clausen et al., 2019) and teachers (Dirckinck-Holmfeld et al., 2019; Forsler, 2018, 2020) where it has been considered useful to facilitate discussion and reflection between participants. When used in research, the workshops are usually divided into three phases, a *preparation phase* where the framework for the workshop is introduced, a *critique phase* where participants identify and visualize perceived problems and a *fantasy phase* where they come up with a shared vision of how these problems can be solved. The method can easily be combined with creative methods as both the problems and the imaginary future in some way should be materialized through for example notes or drawings.

I used this workshop methodology in my PhD dissertation to study how prospective teachers in visual art reason about the relation between the art classroom and their teaching, and how this space could be re-imagined as to facilitate alternative directions and approaches in the subject (Forsler 2020, pp. 76–80; 191–211). The students participating in the study became

very engaged during the workshops and some of them explained that it had helped them to think more concretely about their future profession. Based on these accounts, I continued to explore the use of future workshops in the training of visual art teachers (for grade 1-6) at Södertörn University in Sweden. The workshops were implemented in a module focused on how visual art education has developed over time and the role of the art classroom in the compulsory school.

The workshops lasted two hours and were performed with 56 students in groups of 4-5. Half of the workshops were performed in the classroom using colored paper, markers and scissors and the other half online using digital tools. No teacher was present in the online sessions that were performed in study groups, but these students were introduced to the workshop format beforehand. In this preparation phase, the length and structure of the workshop was described by me as a teacher. The students also prepared for the workshops by reading about the method in the previously mentioned dissertation. In the following critique phase, the students were asked to draw and cut out all the media technologies, tools and materials they have encountered in visual arts education during their own schooling or in teacher training.



Figure 2
Critique phase. Photographic field note from PhD project (Forsler 2020).

In the final fantasy phase then complemented these cutouts with other ones that they thought could facilitate the kind of art education they thought will be needed in the future and placed these within a desired teaching space.

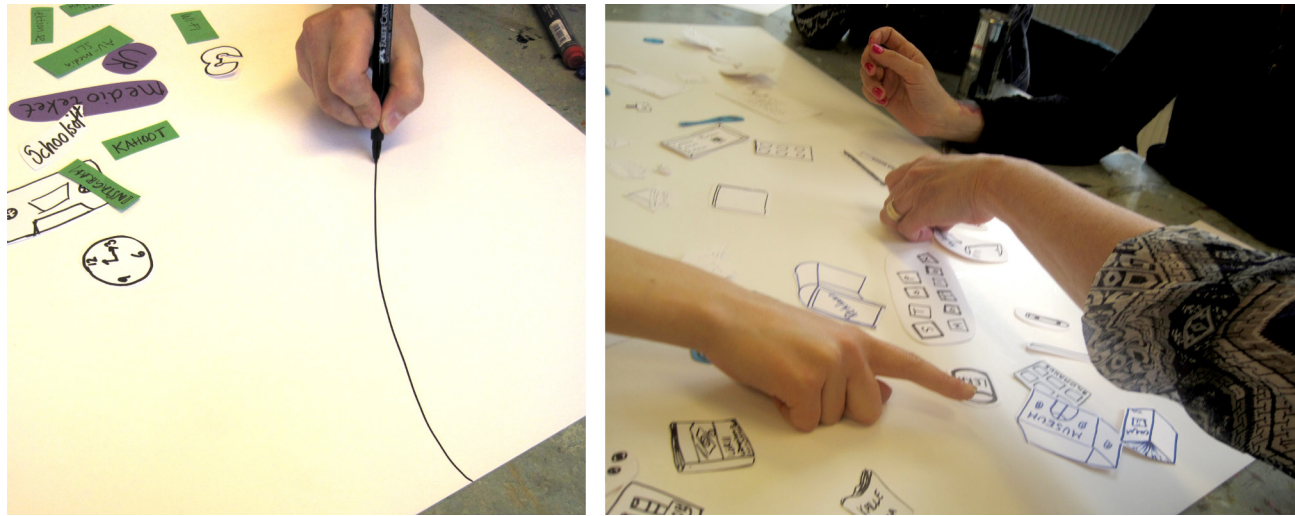


Figure 3
Fantasy phase. Photographic field note from PhD project (Forsler 2020).

This imaginary classroom was not restricted to the school building but could be distributed to online spaces, outdoor environments and cultural institutions.

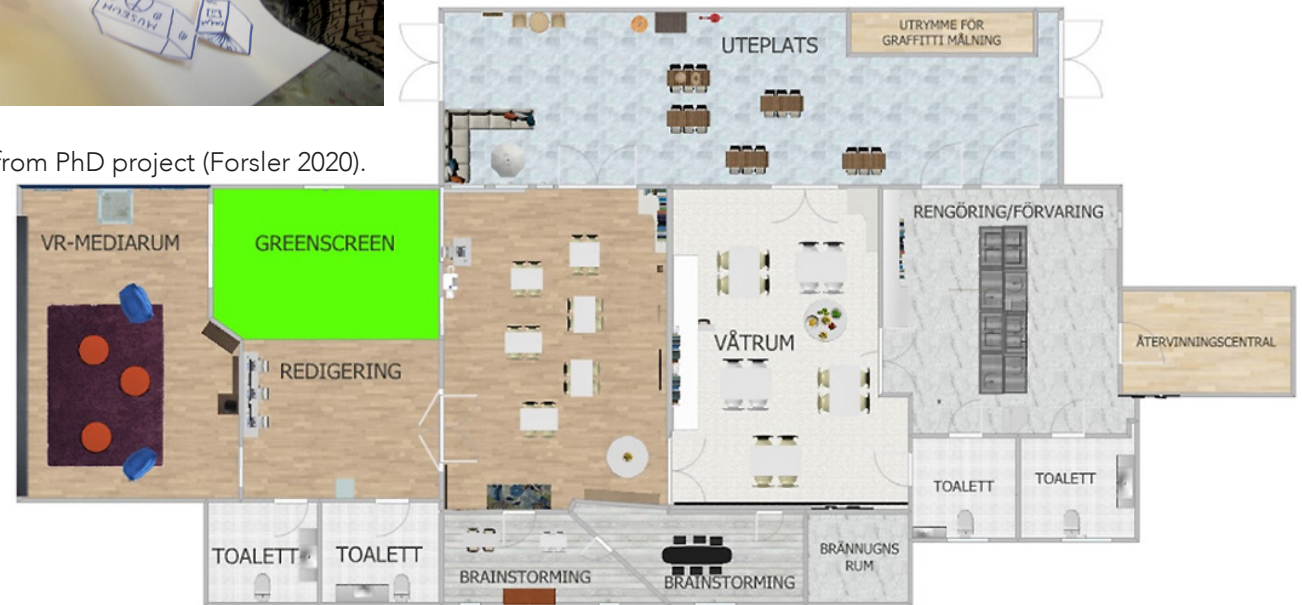


Figure 4
Students imaginary classroom with integrated outdoor area, editing area, storage area and brainstorming area. Digital image from teacher training exercise (2020).
Text on map reads "media room – green screen – editing – outside area – graffiti wall – wet area – cleaning/storage – recycling – toilets – brainstorming – kiln room".

The students appreciated the assignment and for many of them it seemed to spark a discussion about the underemployed potential of visual arts education, due to limited resources. In a written reflection one student states that "it was really fun to dream this big but at the same time sad because it differs so much from reality." Another student's vision "an intercultural classroom centered around art as visual culture" and describes this space as an attempt to move away from past paradigms within the subject as well as from an outdated and male bias definition of art.

The students also used the assignment to reflect over the relation between the teacher and the teaching space. One explains that s/he sees the classroom as an extension of the teacher, and that if structured right it can embed a certain mode of teaching that will remain even if the teacher falls ill or even changes workplace. "There is an aspect of the art classroom that lives in the teacher" explains another and continues that without him or her "even the most advanced art classroom will remain an ordinary room."

Ingrid FORSLER - Imaginary classrooms

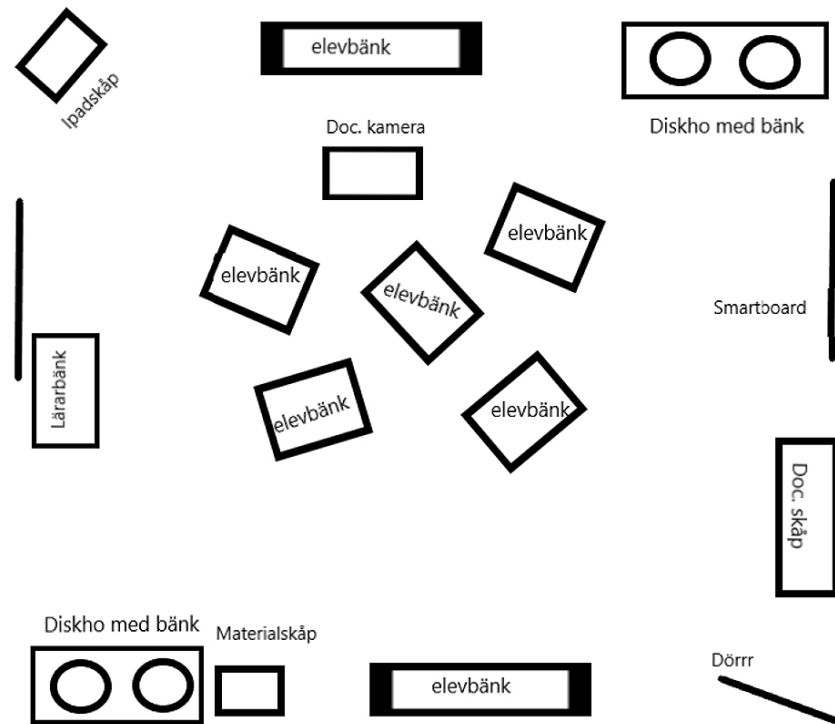


Figure 5
Students imaginary classroom with nonhierarchical furnishing. Digital image from teacher training exercise (2020).
Text on map reads "student desk – teacher desk – iPad locker – document locker – camera locker – material locker – smartboard – zink – door".

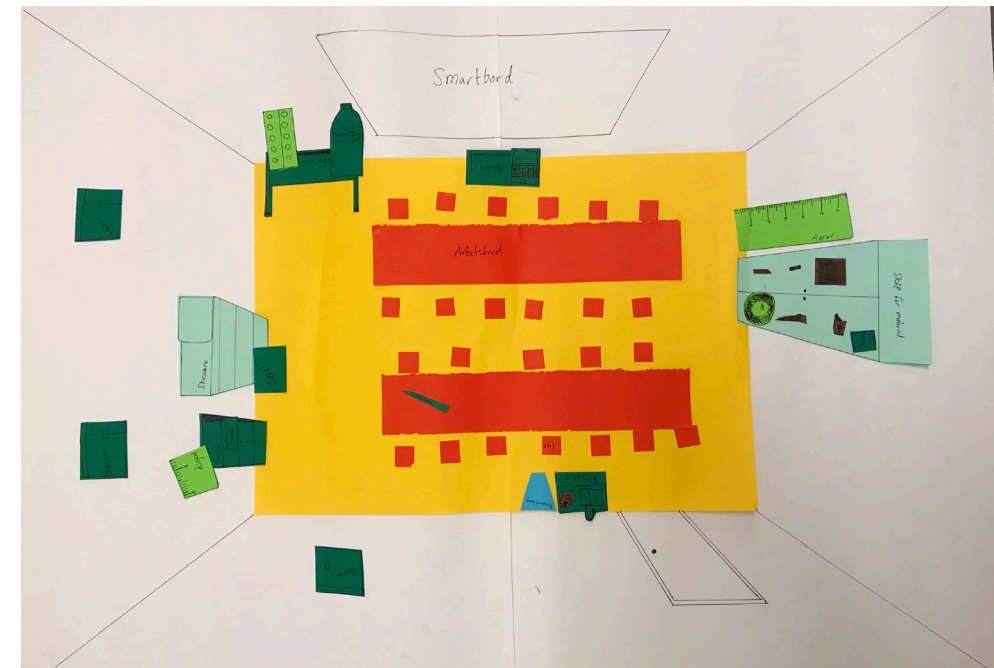


Figure 6
Students imaginary classroom with empty walls for highly sensitive children. Collage from teacher training exercise (2020).
Text on map reads "printer – desk – material locker – zink – smartboard – paper basket".

While the students appreciated the opportunity to “dream big,” the maps and their reflections are also characterized by a kind of pragmatism, a practical thinking based on experience from teaching. Many maps include storage facilities, solutions to darken the room and also accommodations for children with special needs, such as a classroom with empty walls for highly sensitive children.

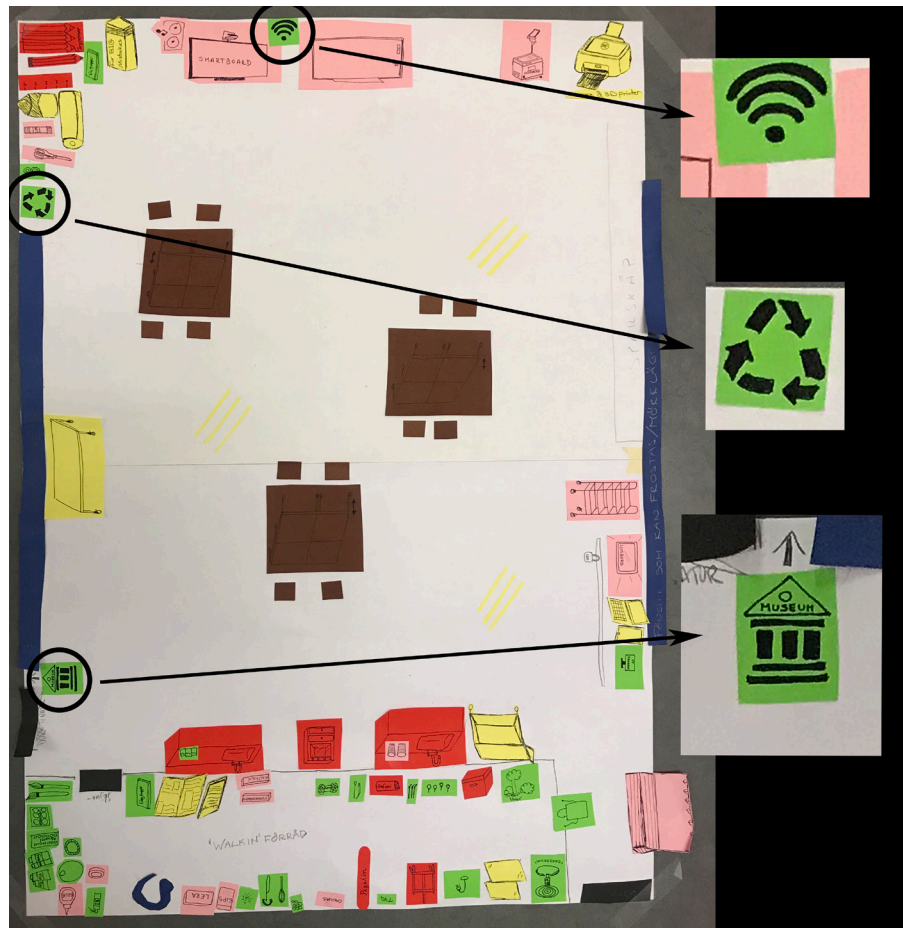


Figure 7
Students imaginary classroom as a distributed space (details of internet connection, sustainability mindset and cultural institutions). Collage from teacher training exercise (2020).
Text on map reads “walk in storage” and “windows that can be darkened or made matte”.

Reflection

The main aim of this intervention was to encourage prospective teachers to see the future as non-given, something that is not predetermined but that can be reshaped based on our actions. In an increasingly neo liberal school system – based on the logics of economy, efficiency and employability rather than on holistic learning and civic skills – we need teachers who are able to imagine alternative modes of education that in turn can enable a more sustainable future. Future workshops offer an opportunity to combine such utopian thinking with concrete questions “from the floor” concerning housing facilities, equipment, budget, groups sizes and curricula. Within teacher education, this method can be used to train the professional judgment and autonomy of the students. It is also way for them to get familiar with a format for discussion that can be used to develop the civic literacies of children and young people in educational settings. To create a classroom where new knowledge is possible, we need teachers who dare to think beyond the present.

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An extra-curricular art engagement for Irish secondary school students within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic

Keywords or phrases: *'creative intervention', 'digital engagement', 'female empowerment', 'artist teacher', 'wellbeing'*.



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Whether it be art educators themselves or the students they teach, creative interventions are needed to enhance the creative lives of the educator and those being educated in the 2nd level system.

It is the striving for continuous creative progression that art educators of the 21st century seek to incorporate within their own creative practice. For many of us, working in second level education in Ireland, our current art curriculum only seeks to limit certain aspects of creativity within the classroom (e.g. digital art) and reduces the scope for opportunities with external artists/ organisations/ institutions. I refer here specifically to experiences of Irish art educators working with a curriculum which has not seen substantial changes since it's introduction to the Irish 2nd level education system in 1971

(NCCA, 2017) (A new visual art curriculum is to be introduced in September 2021, and addresses digital art in schools, while also encouraging external creative engagements).

Due to the limited scope within the curriculum, many opportunities to 'Recharge the Imagination' take place in extra-curricular contexts where students themselves sign up to participate in these unique opportunities for creative development.

I will draw on an example of an intervention that sought to reinvigorate the imagination (during a time of remote learning) and creative techniques of the learners, both teacher and student, from my own practice experience.

When one stages an intervention of this nature the timing and purpose of such must be defined beforehand. Is it, for instance, to reinvigorate the learner during a scheme of work or is it an opportunity to engage learners with organisations and institutions from the art world in an extra-curricular context. I will speak to the latter, the bridging of the gap between 'school art' (where artwork is primarily created with assessment in mind) and the world outside the classroom (where process is central to creating artwork(s) - where the act of marking is more experiential) both in terms of processes and working experiences.

Case study:

An Eco approach to printmaking: Tetrapak art with Roberta Feoli De Lucia from the Scuola Internazionale Di Grafica, Venice Italy.

Within the context of current times and due to the international aspect of this engagement, the workshop took place via the online streaming platform Vimeo. This workshop involved a group of secondary school students (13 – 18 yrs) from St. Louis Secondary School (girls school), Dundalk engaging online on the 11th February 2021.

In running this type of workshop within current context of the Covid-19 pandemic a certain level of buy in was needed from myself as Art Teacher to facilitate the supply of essential materials in a timely and safe manner. While basic materials were supplied to the group involved in this engagement, it became evident through planning discussions with the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica that there were substitutes available for art materials and tools that, while readily available in the classroom, were not accessible to students in their own homes. Accessibility in terms of materials but also accessibility in terms of learner age and prior knowledge became two of the core takeaways of this project (see summary).

During the course of the workshop, learners worked alongside printshop manager Roberta Feoli De Lucia to create a Tetrapak print using the inside of a milk/ juice carton. The process involved catered for all levels of learners and each student was encouraged to work within their own ability with a number of different project ideas given at the start of the workshop.





The use of Tetrapak cartons offered an opportunity to change the shape of the block, something which is not possible with other printing blocks readily available in the artroom (perspex, copper plate). For this reason the workshop facilitator, Roberta, sought to encourage learners to manipulate their juice carton into a unique and personal piece of art. A number of learners used the shape of their hands as their block, both tracing and cutting out a hand, to create their 'canvas.'

From this point on the subject matter/ theme of the work was left to each individual learner. For some, it was an opportunity to experiment with mark making and trying to see what they could create with their DIY scribers, and for others it offered a place to further develop skills which could then be translated into coursework for state exams. The reasons for each student participating differed; from seeing the engagement as a creative wellbeing opportunity to the desire to improve their own creative abilities, and also for others to find out about what the art world is like – especially for women.



On the last point, Roberta Feoli De Lucia spoke at various intervals about her own creative journey, how initially she shortened her signature to just initials to hide her identity and fit in with her male contemporaries. Subconsciously, the work we show on a daily basis in teaching the art curriculum is predominately created by men (due to well documented factors including; women's perceived place in society at the time and lack of ability to financially support themselves). Speaking with Roberta from the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica gave the girls an authentic insight into a female artist, her creative practice, working day and the changes she has seen in the art world.

Dempsey et al. (2018, p.7) states how interactions and dialogue of this nature enhance the quality of work undertaken and motivate participants due in part to the "authentic partnerships" established between all learners and the workshop facilitator.

The end outcomes of the workshop varied in both style and ability something which was always anticipated in running a workshop with such a varied skillset of learners.



Students involved in the workshop expressed afterwards how this intervention not only helped stimulate their creativity but also contributed towards positive mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic. The ability to communicate with their peers, teacher and workshop facilitator in an extra-curricular context from their own home offered much needed connectivity in a time where everyone was encouraged to stay apart.

Subsequently, since students have returned to the classroom and recommenced their in-school education, several of the students have shown a new found desire to experiment more with found material – the unconventional material that today contributes to modern art.



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A Pedagogy of Photographic Seeing That Seeks to Dwell

Keywords or phrases: photographic seeing, photographic composition, self-cultivation



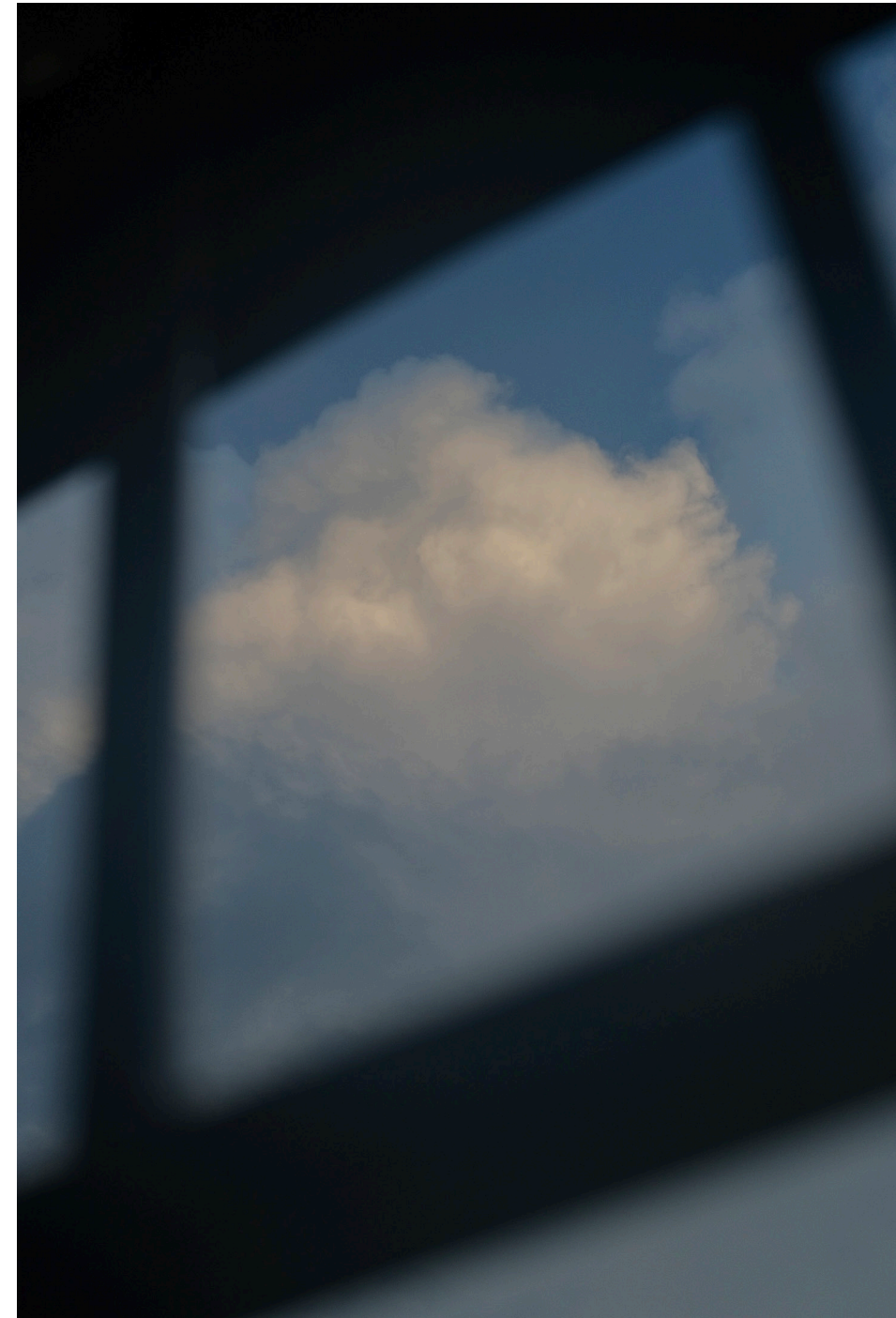
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This photo essay presents my living inquiry (Springgay et al., 2005) about the possibility of poetic dwelling as a newcomer to a huge and populated city, where I also started working as an arts-based educational scholar in a local university. Amid a changing urban living environment, the anxieties of surviving in a stressful academia and emerging inner queries about the purpose of living at a new life stage, I seek out a way through with a digital camera in hand. Being one of the mediums closest to reality, photography may enable a realization of spiritual self-renewal that is both grounded in the mundane and generative in affecting poetic thoughts.

Inspired by Elliot Eisner's (2002) framing on the pedagogy of art (i.e., what and how art teaches), I propose the particular inquiry question: how and what could photographic seeing teach me in the quotidian life?

To engage with the question, I designed an initial self-practicing protocol inspired by relevant photographer's heuristics (Fulford & Halpern, 2014). I set up a spatial condition (limitation) for photo-taking that avoids sites popular opinions regarded as beautiful or fit for making eye-catching images. Instead, I make photographs only within the spatial range of my daily routines (i.e., urban routes of less



than two miles between my apartment and the workplace) no matter how plain or lacking beauty the surroundings appear. The condition enables me to perceptually engage with an ordinary environment with aesthetic alertness. The whole protocol enacted over months aims for making some photographic work in the expressive form of sequenced photos. It is a practice of creating a potential whole (i.e., photo narrative) from collected parts (i.e., separate photos). There are three basic activity components that I articulate with a simplified analogy of writing composition.

First, walk with a camera regularly as processes of visual drafting. In this phase, I required myself to take photowalk almost once every week. I spent longer time than usual walking slowly at a random pace, learning to allow myself to be guided by immediate qualitative experiences with the camera eye in an environment. The taken photos are my attempts of photographic seeing, which form an initial archive of some raw vocabularies and(or) perspectives.

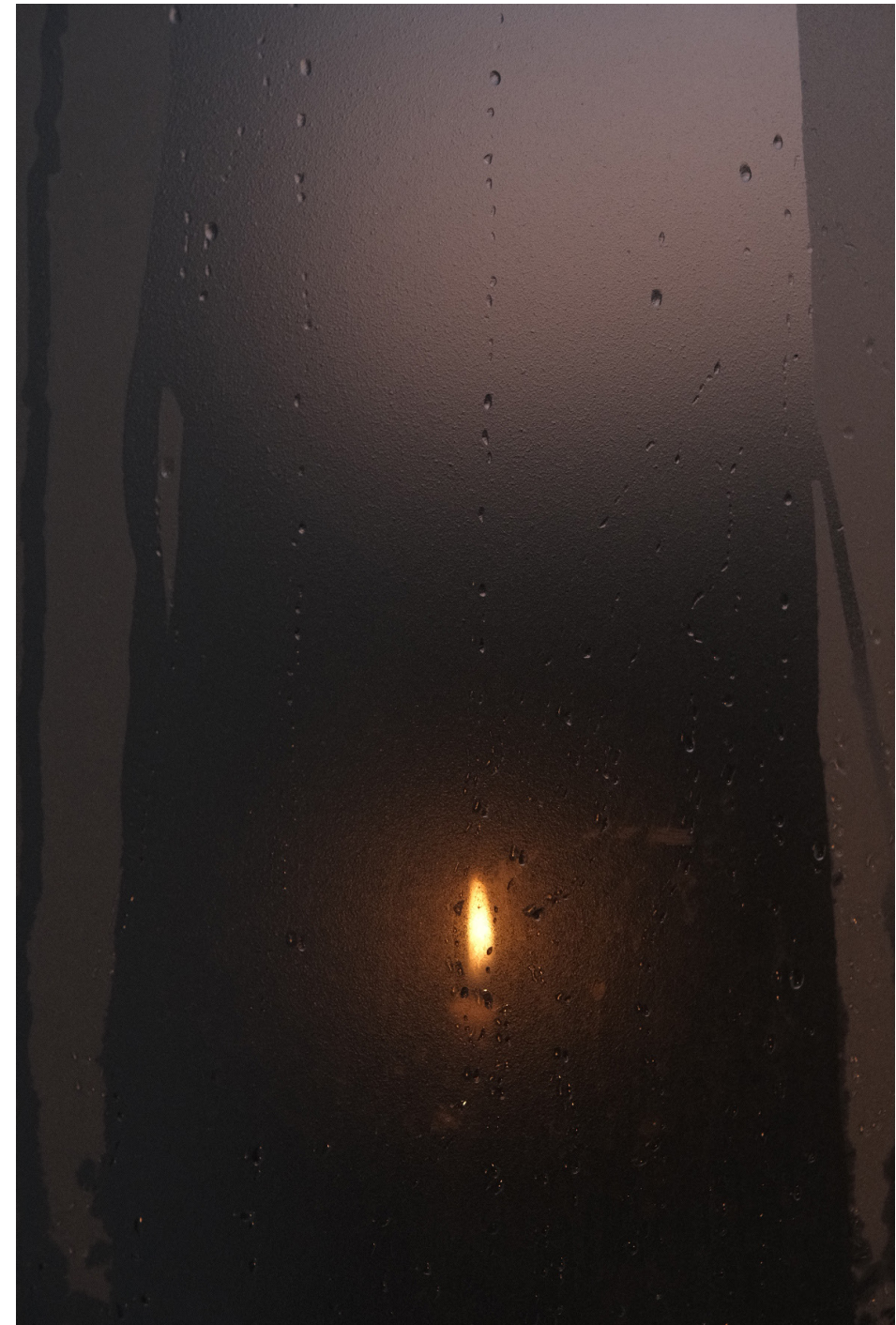
Second, select photos out of the initial archive as identifying appropriate compositional words, phrases or a particular lens of seeing. In this phase, I spent time on the computer reviewing the photo archive. I asked myself to “listen to” (Webb & Webb, 2014) those visual drafts, perceiving and identifying the sticker ones, which bear longer gaze or generated visual engagement beyond the fixed frame. It could be a process of distilling aesthetic clue(s) of qualitative perception from the archived mess.

Third, sequence photos with an attempt of composing an expressive whole. This final phase demanded me to put the pieces into a visual narrative and often went back and forth with the first and second phases. The process of sequencing photos could evoke affective writing upon an aroused poetic impulse. And I made the photographic series with an intention to, ideally, effect in readers an enhancement of certain qualitative experience.



Maxine Greene once stressed the necessity and significance for educators themselves, if wanting to realize aesthetic education among students, to “develop a heightened sensitivity” and experience “what it is like to live inside” varied art forms (Greene, 2001, p. 8). In her sense, the described photographic practice has become an aesthetic process of self-education to me. The process has taught me to attend instead of to intend when feeling the perceptual and qualitative elements in an ordinary material environment and in processes of composing an expressive photographic work out of them. It has helped nurture a sense of hope, joy and even living wonder, when I did not know in the very beginning what vision may come out of this process under limitations. The protocol itself, when enacted and revised repeatedly, has a potential to become one technique of living and self-inquiry. This protocol, together with the idea of sequencing photographic narrative as a mode of living inquiry, could be considered as an alternative vision for utilizing photography in arts-based pedagogy and educational research.

As a direct visual illustration and a temporary closure to the beginning inquiry question, I present a nine-photo series created with a title and an opening text I felt compelled to write upon an emergent impulse in the process.



—
Like Dwelling in A Bird's Eye

How can I make my gaze more settled in the hurried and crowded corners of this huge city? A material home or shelter can be a haven bringing a sense of security, but the gaze longs for a space to breathe widely. In the day-to-day structures of ordinary life, I need to understand and practice photography as a way of self-cultivation. Framing a photograph can be an exercise of breathing. The frame of the lens can become a perceptual filter, being able to identify and eliminate visual redundancies through deciding a visual focus and the periphery, discriminate between a foreground and the background, a move that also allows the rigidified eyes to stretch out from time to time. There are also those times, when secretly praying for the unexpected, one may encounter an existential moment of (self) presence.

Sitting in front of the computer, sorting, selecting, and sequencing photos, from this one to the next, I try to breathe in different walking rhythms. From this photo to the next, eyes perching, moving away, perching, moving away, again and again. I try to put temporary moments into those intervals, those moments of intrinsic stillness, to let the gaze rest in a nearly imagined way.

A little more agile, if possible, and a little lighter, to approach the health and spirit of a bird, like dwelling in a bird's eye.



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Forest talks to us: Art and coping with forest disputes

Keywords or phrases: installation art, forest disputes, post-humanism, eco-anxiety



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Figure 1
 Detail of an installation. Amir Abdi, *On the Ropes? BioArt yantra: Rope and oyster mushrooms*, 2021.
 Photograph by Maria Huhmarniemi 2021.



Figure 2
 Forest in Finland.
 Photograph by Saara Huhmarniemi, 2020.

Introduction

Most Finns spend a lot of time in the forest, resting and recharging in a nature. The coronavirus pandemic has motivated Finns to spend even more time in the forest since social interactions have been discouraged and even forbidden. At the same time, global awareness of climate change, of the role of forests as carbon sinks, and of decreasing biodiversity have increased. More and more people are experiencing eco-anxiety due to concerns about the state of nature and the local and global ecological issues (Pihkala, 2020). As a result, time spent in the forest may now be shadowed by anxiety especially when seeing traces of forest industry. Artists and art education respond to issue in many ways by making art in nature and discussing forest issues in their art. This essay focuses on installations and bio-art interpreting forest conflicts.

The essay presents artistic interpretations of the dispute over Finnish forests and illustrates efforts to co-create with nature. This approach draws on post-humanistic theories that encourage recognition of the agency of non-human parts of nature. Artists can enhance human collaboration with non-human parts of nature to change human's relationships with the non-human world, and post-humanist discourses are increasingly influencing pedagogical studies and art education (de Oliveira & Lopes, 2016; Rousell & Fell, 2018).

The artworks presented in this essay were included in the group exhibition *Forest Talks to Us*, which was curated by Maria Huhmarniemi, the author of this essay. The

exhibition was part of the project *Acting on the Margin: Arts as Social Sculpture* (AMASS) at the University of Lapland. The project focuses on promoting art that moves people, educates society, questions broadly accepted narratives, and introduces new perspectives for the future. Art as a tool for participating in local and global political discussions is central to AMASS. *Forest Talks to Us* is part of the growing genre of art addressing sustainability and sustainable development in the Arctic (Huhmarniemi & Jokela, 2020); it also contributes to the body of political contemporary art dealing with ecological and environmental issues (Demos, 2016).



Figure 3
Forest in Finland.
Photograph by Saara Huhmarniemi, 2020.

Art installations commenting on forest disputes and highlighting the agency of non-human nature

Finland is Europe's most densely forested country. However, biodiversity in forests has decreased significantly due to the reduction in mature forests. The timber industry has endangered many forest species. Clear-cut forest looks like rape (Fig. 2–3, 10).

The exhibition *Forest Talks to Us* offers new perspectives on forest disputes and highlights the constant contact of human and non-human nature, emphasizing the need for cooperation and dialogue. This group exhibition included a number of artworks; below are works by the two artists, Huhmarniemi and Amir Abdi. The exhibition was curated by Huhmarniemi as part of the AMASS-project.



Figure 4
 Maria Huhmarniemi, *Forest Culture*. Part II of the series *Sense of Forest Conflict*, 2021. Installation: Eight knitted punching bags hanging from chains. Photograph by Maria Huhmarniemi. Photograph on wall by Touko Hujanen 2020.

Most Finns have an emotional relationship with the forest and strong opinions about the current state of the forestry industry. Conservation organizations and some decision-makers are calling for the protection of biodiversity and of forests as carbon sinks. Continuing the current method of industrial forest maintenance is not an acceptable solution to many Finns. However, this ongoing battle positions most of us in the audience. We follow the battle as we would watch a boxing match on television (Fig. 5).

Maria HUHMARNIEMI - Forest talks to us: Art and coping with forest disputes



Figure 5
 Maria Huhmarniemi, *Battle*. Part I of the series *Sense of Forest Conflict*. 2021. Installation: Boxing gloves and stickers from companies in the forestry industry and conservation organizations. Photograph by Maria Huhmarniemi.

Recent research indicates that Finns gain a stronger sense of well-being from mature forests than younger ones (Simkin, Ojala & Tyrväinen, 2020). The installation presenting knitted punching bags reflects on human well-being gained from encountering trees (Fig. 4, 6, 9).



Figure 6
Maria Huhmarniemi, *Forest Culture*. Part II of the series *Sense of Forest Conflict*, 2021. Installation: Eight knitted punching bags hanging from chains. Photograph by Maria Huhmarniemi.

A yantra is a geometrical diagram used as a meditation aid. This yantra was co-created by an oyster fungus and artist Amir Abdi with the help of mycologist Katarina Česnik for the *Forest talks to us* exhibition. The title *On the ropes?* refers to a fighter in a conflict. It is a vulnerable position for a boxer to be pinned against the ropes that enclose the boxing ring (Fig. 1, 7-9). The artwork can be interpreted as a proposal to focus on mental capacities to cope with wicked problems such as forest maintenance and eco-anxiety. While previous studies show that artists mean to intervene in environmental conflicts include fostering of cultural resilience, transforming values, supporting hope and campaigning with art (Huhmarniemi, in press), the presented artworks of the *Forest talks to Us* exhibition highlight arts leverage on human capacities at the age of environmental crises and social isolation.

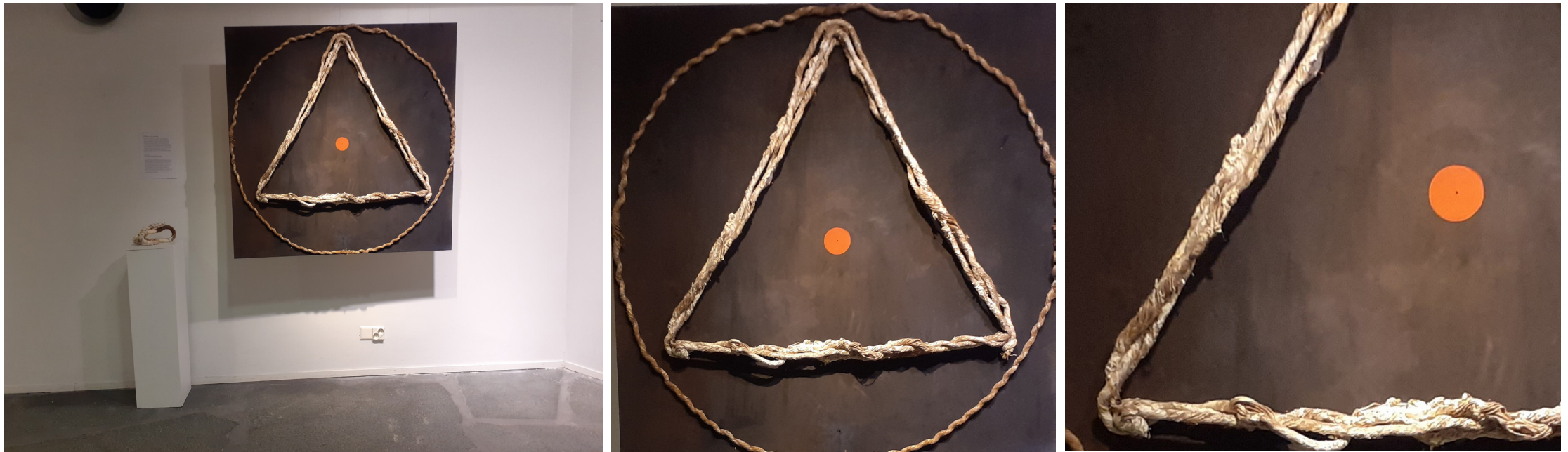


Figure 7-9
 Amir Abdi, *On the Ropes?* BioArt yantra: Rope and oyster mushrooms, 2021.
 Photograph by Maria Huhmarniemi.

Reflection

Discussions about forest maintenance in Finland have been polarized by traditional and social media. It is necessary to understand the cultural backgrounds of environmental conflicts and to balance the conflicting needs of encouraging rapid tree growth and protecting forest biodiversity. The works of art presented in this essay seek to make sense of these conflicts over forests by interpreting and representing some aspects of this dispute. One of the artworks explored artistic collaboration with non-human nature. Ways to release stress in forest and cope with environmental awareness and eco-anxiety were the main conclusions of the presented exhibition *Forest talks to us*.



Figure 10
 Maria Huhmarniemi, *Forest Culture*. Part II of the series *Sense of Forest Conflict*. 2021. Installation: Eight knitted punching bags hanging from chains. Photograph by Maria Huhmarniemi. Installation in the middle by Katja Juhola 2020.

Acknowledgement

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Figure 11
Forest in Finland.
Photograph by Saara Huhmarniemi, 2020.



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RESILIENCY THROUGH ARTMAKING