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RECOLLECTIONS OF VATTAJA

Preserving collective place memories
through applied visual art

Master's Degree Programme in Arctic Art and Design

2019

University of Lapland, Faculty of Art and Design

The title of the pro gradu thesis: Recollections of Vattaja
- Preserving collective place memories through applied visual art

Author: Niina Perander

Degree programme / subject: Applied Visual Arts

The type of the work: pro gradu thesis

Number of pages: 90

Year: 2019

Summary:

This study examines how applied visual art can be used in the context of communal place memory work. Theoretical background for the work is multidisciplinary and comes from humanistic geography, sensory ethnography, memory studies, microhistory and contemporary art done working in the context of memories.

The research was conducted as a part of Visualising Kämpävattaja - project. Memories were collected about a seaside cabin village that the community had lost. Different possibilities to use art as a tool for recollection were tested with community participants, both as a collective and as individuals. Data was collected with enhanced interviews, workshops and auto-ethnographic work and part of the work was shown in an exhibition.

The first research question focuses on different methods applied visual arts can be used in eliciting and collecting place memories. The second question considers how applied visual art can be used to process and present collected place memories. These main questions opened up contemplation about the value of accuracy and aesthetics in collective memory work. Some consideration was given to the possible mending effect recollections process could have for the community when working with lost place.

The artistic conclusion showed different methods that worked well to elicit memories. Remembering a place was easier if with sensory experiences and with the textuality of the place. Creating a narrative helped the participants and the researcher process memories. Tested methods showed clearly that the type of art done with the participants effected how the remembering process happened.

Keywords: applied visual art, place memory, memory work, contemporary art, communal art.

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Introduction

Vattaja is a very minimal place. Just the sky, sea and sand.

You could draw the landscape with two lines.

It is a seaside where I have spend all my summers since before I can remember. Over six generations of people have loved Vattaja, more affectionately calling it Kämppävatattaja 'Vattaja with the cabins'. It has been an impromptu village of small fishermen's huts and later summer cabins. A community of people bound together by the place.

Most of Vattaja peninsula was expropriated in the 1950s by the Finnish Defence Forces. Fortunately, Kämppävatattaja was left to be and the civilian use of the place was tolerated. Sadly that attitude changed later. After a long period of uncertainty, the cabins were finally demolished in 2013. Since then the seaside has changed, it is difficult to find anything familiar from the time of Kämppävatattaja.

In this thesis, I bind together the love of Vattaja with the interest in Applied Visual Art. The focus of this master thesis is exploring and testing out the possibilities of using art in memory work. To achieve this exploration, a suitable topic was needed for collecting memories. This larger framework was quite naturally provided with Kämppävatattaja, moreover, by the small community built around that specific place. The topic for this study grew from an actual need to find ways of preserving the memories of a lost place, from a broken community feeling that their shared memories could also be lost.

This thesis works well in the context of applied visual art as it is both done for and done with a community. Doctor in Art Maria Huhmarniemi (2013) comments that contemporary art done in Applied Visual Arts is based on social needs and realized in cooperation with a community (Huhmarniemi, 2013, 43). The role of the artist in applied arts is less self-expressive and more as a facilitator for a community group. Professor Glen Coutts (2013) adds that applied art practice needs skills not only to make art but on how to work in partnership with the community and understand their issues. (Coutts, 2013, 27)

The main focus in the thesis is in applied contemporary art but there is a need to also delve into the concepts of place, memory, and community, simple everyday words that hold a deeper meaning. If memories are the building blocks of an individual, shared memories are the foundations of a community. These communal memories are nurtured and passed on from generation to generation. They are not important enough to be in the official written histories but they shape the people sharing them.

When Kämpävattaja area was demolished the community lost its anchoring place and was scattered. There was no longer a reason to come together. For many, the loss of a loved place was a hard one. Some still do not visit Vattaja because seeing it so altered is painful. Few years after the loss of Kämpävattaja, the summer cabins in Pyhäjoki saw similar fate when it was decided to build a nuclear power plant there on the seaside (Kettunen, 2015). Again the cabin owners, people who cherished that place, tried to protest but were not heard. It is not uncommon, people lose their places all the time, to war, to natural disasters, even gentrification (Massey, 2005, 155–159). Shared memories can be fleeting. If the links inside the community get weaker, if things that held people together stop existing, memories are not passed on anymore. Applied arts can develop means to examine and manage these type place memories, find ways to hold on to the lost places, to keep them as part of who we are. The act of collecting communal memories endeavors to give some part of Kämpävattaja back to the community.

Choosing this community and this place felt natural as I am part of it too. As a 5th generation Kämpävattaja goer, I saw and experienced the loss of the cabins firsthand. The way we lived there during the summers was unique to that place. Without it, our whole community was just suddenly gone. Kämpävattaja disappeared even if the same seaside still exists. My connection to the place and community can be seen as beneficial to this study. I have good background knowledge about the location and its issues. I have such strong ties that I cannot take outsider's view on the place. Instead of trying to force myself to be separate I can use my connectedness as another tool to understand the community and the memories better. When acting in one's own community, artist work is in ethically safe ground (Huhmarniemi, 2013, 46). According to art historian and curator Lucy Lippard most practical community art is realised in the artist's home and neighbourhood environment (Lippard, 2006). Because I am so close to the subject of the collected memories, I am also using my own memories as a material for exploration in

AVA. As throughout this paper I am examining my role as a researcher and community member to keep my goals transparent.

My work is based on the idea of a place as more than just a location. Influenced by the humanistic geography, for me, place is a specific location that is made import by an intricate amalgamation of shared memories, experiences and meanings linked to it. Grant Cresswell sees place being at the same time a simple and complicated issue. A geographical location, space, is turned into a place when we attach our experiences to it (Cresswell, 2004, 5–7). Space becomes a place when we give it value. In a way, place exists as much inside our minds and in memories than in real life. Place is located on the map of a person's life (Lippard, 1997). All the memory collecting will be focused on to the place-memories of Kämppävatjaja.

The experiences of Vattaja are individual but also collective. Our memories, identities, and places are closely linked. Philosopher and author Dylan Trigg (2012) writes that places are not only part of who we are but also the culture we are. He states that places are invested with cultural, ecological and political values. They are not only purely locations (Trigg, 2012, 33). Places are also timeless in a sense, they exist in multiple times in our minds. We remember past happenings, we are there in the present and we imagine the future of that place (Trigg, 2012, 38). The range of different generations and memories of a community give a lot of material to work with. Here knowing the overall basics of the Kämppävatjaja memories and the participants left more room to concentrate on testing Applied Visual Art methods. I also decided to limit my work only to a few cabins but have participants from different generations. This made it possible to test how art making would help to remember with people of diverse ages while still keeping the material more manageable. Even if the memory collection is at the center of this paper, the main focus has to be in AVA. From the community's perspective, this still gives interesting views on how Kämppävatjaja was experienced in different ages. The earliest generations have already passed away. There are still some second or third person accounts of their life in Vattaja. It was especially important to the community to preserve the oldest and so the most endangered memories.

The structure of this thesis follows the process. To test out the tools and effectiveness of Applied Visual Art. in this content requires a deep understanding of what AVA actually is. This paper begins by laying out the different methods, principles, and tools used

inside the field of AVA. Those methods are then tested in practice to collect, elicitate and present memories with the participants from Kämpävattaja community.

Collecting process is done with interviews enhanced with using AVA for memory elicitation. Different AVA techniques are also tried out in small workshops and artistic collaborations with some members of the community. In the scope of this project, I will test out different practices on how to present and illustrate individual memories of a place in a way that still feels authentic to the whole community. This thesis had an artistic part that was evaluated as an exhibition.

Background - the visualising Kämpövattaja Project

This thesis was done as a part of a project to collect memories about Kämpövattaja and combine them into a visual book. The need for this work rose from the community, but the day to day work was done mostly by me. The community has been a positive force for me, an irreplaceable fount of information for the project and also a willing testing ground for the thesis part. I also applied and got some funding for the book project from the Finnish Cultural Foundation.

Since this project is so strongly linked to a specific place I'm going to explain little more about the area. Cape of Vattaja has over 15 kilometers continuous of sandy beaches. In the very top of the cape, there is a small island of Ohtakari. Lahenkroopi is part of the southern coast of the cape. The area gets its name from a small Lahenkroopi-lake close by. In my project I am concentrating on the Lahenkroopi area, between the lake and sea, more affectionately called *Kämpövattaja*, 'Vattaja with the cabins' [Figure 1].

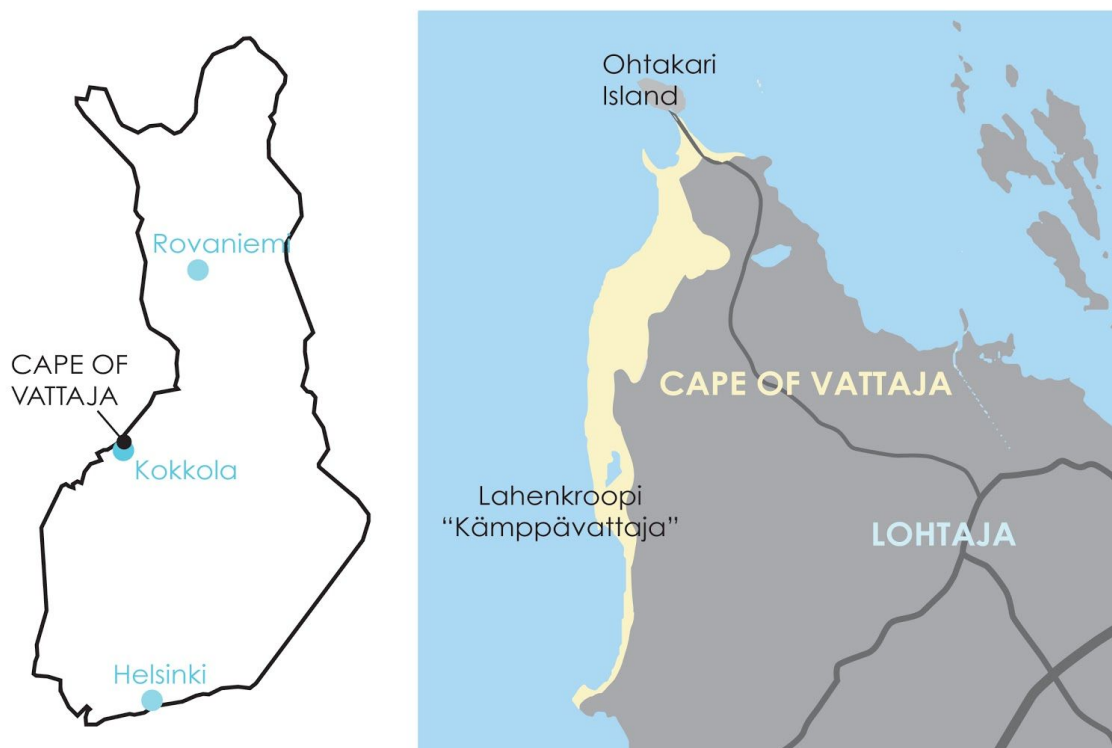


Figure 1: Map of Vattaja

Vattaja cape is part of Nature 2000 preserve sites for its rare dune types and bird life. Nature 2000 is an EU network and environment protection program. Vattaja has the biggest area of Boreal zone dune habitat types in Europe and also the largest drift sand area in Finland and Northern Europe. Drift sands make the landscape very altering. The moving sands are moulded by winds and snow every year into a different waterline. Most of the southern side Vattajanniemi was expropriated in the 1950s by the Finnish Defence Forces. Vattaja is one of the army's most important training areas. Mainly because of the expropriation the cape of Vattaja is the largest unbuild sand beach and dune area in Scandinavia. There are only small cabins in Ohtakari island and along the northern coastline. There is very little tourism in Vattaja. To give it a perspective Kalajoki, 40 kilometers north from Vattaja, is a bustling tourist spot. It has over 1.2 million travelers each year. Administratively the cape of Vattaja is located in Kokkola, Lohtaja village. Lohtaja was its own municipality until in 2009 when it was connected to the neighbouring town of Kokkola.

Kämpävattaja was a different summer community. The land was communally owned, the rights to use the fishing grounds were given to the local farmers and maintained by the villages. The cabins were mostly minimal one or two room huts and used by many households. As one of the participants noted in a group conversation: *'At that time it was perfectly normal that if a cabin was empty and the owners were not staying there, it was free for anyone else to use it. It was not [considered] a crime. You just needed to leave it in good condition, the same as it had been before. It was ok to be there. Usually, everyone knew where the key was, under a certain stone there.'* (Group conversation, August 26, 2018)

Kämpävattaja began as a working place. The cabins were built for practical needs, not leisure. As the times changes and people had more free time, fishing huts turned into summer cabins. Time was mostly spent outside. It was usual to gather driftwood to make simple campsites. Bigger logs were used for seats and smaller as firewood. People connected to nature without built boundaries. This minimal framework actually enhanced people's wellbeing. Lahenkroopi was a blank canvas to relax and play. *'The best thing to do here is just sit down and stare at the horizon. You don't have to do anything. Just be.'* commented one of the workshop participants. (Conversation in Vattaja after a workshop, September 9, 2018)

In this thesis, I am adopting the style of naming the place from the community I am working with. They call Lahenkroopi area as Kämpävattaja or just Vattaja. I will be using these terms interchangeably.

Charting the landscape

The characteristics of Applied Visual Art

This thesis revolves around place and memory, everyday words that hold many meanings. I attempt to present how these themes are understood in the context of contemporary art and, more specifically, Applied Visual Art. To begin the reader needs a clear idea of what is meant by the term Applied Visual Art (AVA). To give it shortly, AVA is a contemporary art practice where art is done not only for the artistic expression but to benefit wider public needs. As the word applied hints, art used as a tool to be applied to solve various problems and issues.

Artists are traditionally comfortable standing on the boundaries, on the thresholds of issues. The edge gives freedom and place to move. Applied visual art itself is a leap towards something new, an amalgam of ideas and practices. AVA can be seen to function between contemporary visual art and applied arts, differing from both enough to merit its own classification. The actual term was coined in the University of Lapland, but similar sensibilities can be seen active in the contemporary art world in general. The concept was developed to specify a new kind of professional artist, who uses visual arts' tools for a broader purpose than just their own personal creativity.

AVA combines elements of both fine arts and design in its practices. To differentiate from design, there is no client with a brief to work with. Rather the artist works in collaboration with the client to find the problems to should solve (Coutts, 2013, 27).

There are no strict guidelines for what is and what is not Applied Visual Arts. Rather there are shared characteristics that can be used to identify and frame the practices of AVA more clearly. Applied Visual Art practice is embedded with practical but also philosophical and ethical aspects. The need for this new form of an artist comes from both external and internal factors. AVA takes a turn away from the deep-rooted conception of seeing art as a separate entity, still located inside galleries, museums and the public sphere. Professor and artist Timo Jokela (2013) writes that these conceptions spring from the modernist movement that viewed art as an autonomous universal

phenomenon. Art was done for the art institutions as it was thought almost independent from local, political or other social factors (Jokela, 2013, 11–12).

Daring to be local

AVA contrast and question the modernist worldview by embracing locality and community. Working locally is to benefit both the local people and the art world in general. Instead of having only a few clusters of art making, mostly in the larger cities, spreading artist and their work makes art more accessible to everyone and thus more equal. The importance of place in Applied Visual Art can be seen in both the practical and ideological circumstances.

Regional art has been long considered somehow less important. It has been belittled as not yet evolved to the level of the mainstream art and the global art markets (Lippard, 1997, 36). AVA diverges from these notions by focusing on locality, on making art for a specific place and even time. Instead of trying to separate oneself of regionality artists should thrive to find the interesting in their own local cultures and celebrate it. As Lippard (1997) writes 'Everybody comes from someplace, and the places we come from - cherished or rejected - Inevitably affect our work' (Lippard, 1997, 36). The artists that are rooted in their communities, using locality as their benefit, can offer more diversity to art.

On a more practical point of view, AVA offers new ways for artists to employ themselves. Economic realities for the artistic profession are daunting especially in the rural areas of Finland. A visual artist cannot support themselves merely as a contemporary artist. Exhibiting venues and galleries are far and wide and the population is not large enough from a commercial perspective. Many artist works for example in art education alongside their artistic profession. AVA is another way to find employment in the visual arts world (Huhmarniemi, 2013, 52). Future megatrends conceived by Sitra, the Finnish innovation funds, sound promising for applied visual arts. They predict that creativity will bring about work and well-being, as more mechanical jobs are lost to robots and further digitisation creative areas will create new employment. Arts and experiences are sources of meaningfulness to people and so cannot be substituted by machines (SITRA 2017a).

Artist as a creative nexus

Borrowing from the practices of the design world, artists are encouraged towards networking and collaboration. Collaboration forces the artist to redefine their role. Artists in AVA are less working in a studio alone and more a creative nexus for different participants, whether they are from a community group or a local business. A facilitator, 'art whisperer'. Working this way demands from artist flexibility and diverse social skills (Jokela, 2013, 11–16). Collaboration forces to find new ways to be an artist. Art historian and an expert on dialogical art, Grant Kester (2008), states that the more collaboratively an artist work the more they 'disappear', at least in the more traditional role. He sees this change as a potentially good when the bubble of veneration build around artists is popped they become more attainable. We can then move away from the mythical gifted genius artist and see 'creative insight as a shared human capacity' (Kester, 2008, 60–61). Correlating with these notions of locality and collaboration, the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra also envisions revitalisation of locality along with globalisation and the increasing importance of social capital of networks. They state that new technology application and evolving internet will abate distances and make it possible to work in rural areas (SITRA 2017b).

As previously mentioned AVA resides between the worlds of design and fine art. The complexity does not end there. Working as a creative facilitator requires from the artist a wide spectrum of knowledge and deep understanding of the human condition. This is reflected both in the art projects and in the research done in the field. AVA could be called omnivorous in its pursuit for knowledge. Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary processes are used to accumulate relevant information from all around and then those pieces into quilted together into a larger coherent entity. In the academia Applied Visual Art studies connect with multiple different fields of research (Coutts, 2013, 27). This type of working across the fields can easily be seen in the selection of references for this thesis that range from art, history, sociology, psychology, geography, and anthropology even to gerontology, as I was partly working with older people.

This tendency to use information from various fields and disciplines makes it essential to disclose and define the concepts and their meanings to the reader as same words and terms can have different meanings and nuances depending on their origin. Art, from its

core, is in a state of constant change. Art is like the perpetual motion machine going through endless cycles of new invention turning into the established convention, then having people question those conventions, and inventing something new to oppose them. However, we do not lose the previous ideas but simply build on them. Burning inside art is the need for questioning: inquiry and reworking of art's frameworks comes naturally. There is a larger trend in the art world for artist engaging in multi- and interdisciplinary projects. For example, there are many connections and overlap between art and geography. Place-specific art shares common theories about most of its main concepts, like place and site, with geography (Till, 2008, 100–109). Even more, contemporary artists are working as archivists, cartographers, ethnographers, doing scientific fieldwork as part of their artwork. (Hawkins, 2012, 61–62).

Perspective on place

Places are constructions between a location and the people experiencing that location (Trigg, 2012, 33). We can use the home as a simple example to understand this better. Home is not just an address. It holds much deeper meanings to the people living there. It can be a shelter, a place to be oneself, significant and full of memories. The example of the home also illuminates how subjective places are. The meaning of that specific place is shared only by the small group of people who call it home. Of Course, places can be much larger, their importance shared by large communities, even nations. One could argue that the world heritage sites of UNESCO are places for all of us. Collective love of a place can sometimes be overwhelming. After the fires in Notre Dame Paris, close to a billion dollars was donated for renovations, from all over the world (Noack, 2019). With the astonishing amount of money came almost as many stories shared about the place. The overflow of care given to Notre Dame has been criticised. There are people in need of help all over the globe but this cultural and historical place got much more notice and funding than they ever will.

'Place is the setting where the events of individuals life happen' (Trigg, 2012, 39). We exist in places, place determines our experience (Cresswell, 2002, 23). Place can be the starting point for many artworks. Arts connection to a specific place is emphasised in AVA. Again, there is a strong current in the general contemporary art world towards place-based art. There are echoes of this in applied visual art but it also grows naturally from the focus on locality.

The art made in AVA is often bound to a specific place. Art is inspired by a place, it is the foundation for the ideas. Artwork gains its meaning from the place. Many times the place can also be the location for the artwork. Art is done in a place and specifically for that place. Instead of making a painting that can be set up on any wall, the artwork creates a symbiosis with its surroundings. In some cases, the art can be even done with the materials gotten from that place, like in snow sculpture or earth art.

Place-based and site-specific art practices are centred around participation and human experiences. They form a structure in which to observe those experiences, perhaps more clearly. When mundane everyday moments are framed in a new way with art, cut away from the numbing familiarity that would drown them out, they can be seen more clearly. Cultural geographer, ethnographer, and curator Karen Till sees value in the diversity of methods artists and activists use as they 'animate the multiple spacetimes of memory through their work', work that grows directly from the location, site, instead of just inserting their signature art into a chosen location. (Till, 2008, 100–109).

Oh the humanity (in geography)

Contemporary art and AVA borrow many of its ideas about space and place from the humanistic geography. The place has always been a central part of the geographical studies but definitions and attitudes towards it have changed with the times. As a concept, Place, its significance and substance, has always been relative with the ruling world view of its time. Renaissance saw the world as an unmoving focal point of everything. Now we see Earth floating in space, spinning around our small sun, a mere speck of sand in the vastness of the universe (Kanerva, 2002, 99).

Regional geography focused on describing the distinctive differences of places in detail by drawing boundaries between these regions. The environment was first seen as a thing that determined the locations, culture, and society. Cultural geography turned this notion upside down and focused on culture as the important transforming power of the natural environment. In the 1970s spatial science lifted the concept of space as their focal point. In search of clean scientific laws and generalisations to understand space, human connection was divided from it, turning places into mere locations (Cresswell,

2004, 16–18). As a response to these sterile views, there was an emergence of human geography and later humanistic geography. The focus was turned from lands and environments to humans, from landscape to human experience. To mirror this in art we moved from landscape paintings to place-based art.

Early humanist geography started to consider the complexity of our connections to our surroundings. How we humans give meaning to certain places and by doing so, make them something more than mere location, just like in our home example. The counterpart terms of space and place were introduced by Yi-Fu Tuan (2011). He wanted to differentiate between mere surroundings and those locations made meaningful. He called all the surroundings as space. When definition and meaning were connected to space, it turned into a place (FIGURE 2) (Tuan, 2011, 36). This interpretation of space and place was adopted and expanded by later humanistic geographers. Cresswell (2004) adapted John Agnew's notion of three different perspectives onto the meaning of place: Location, locale and a sense of place (Cresswell, 2004, 5).

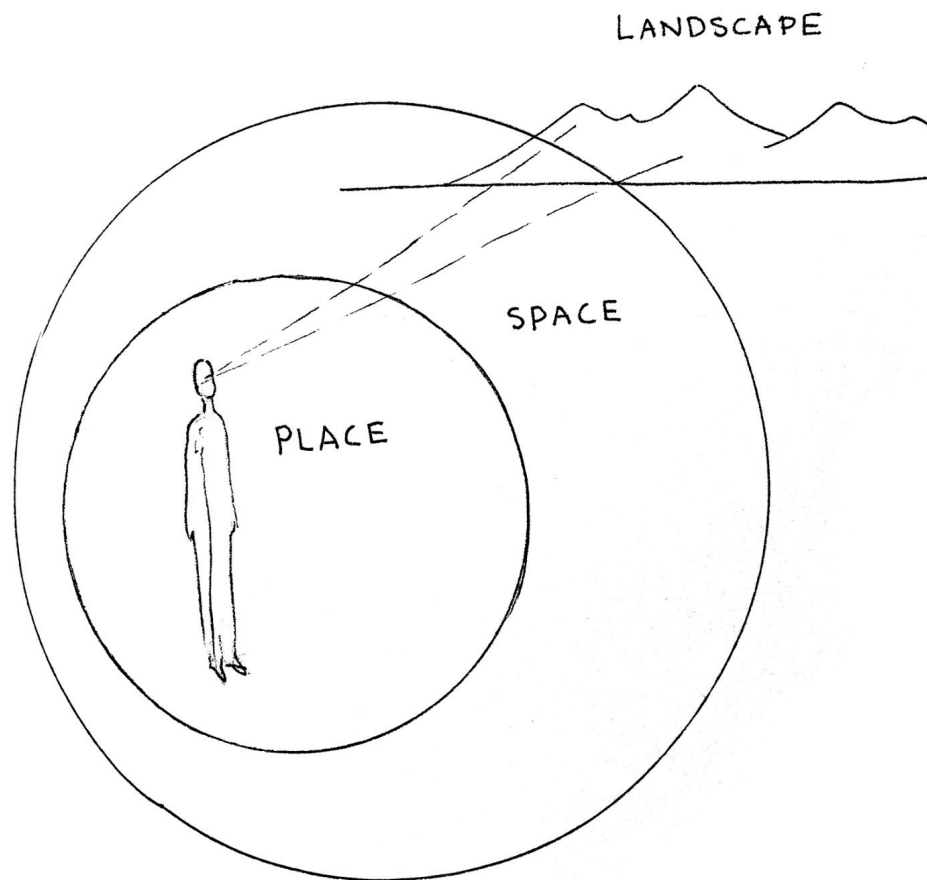


Figure 2: Individual in relation with place, space and landscape

Recollections of memory

Memory can be seen as many things: some information one remembers, the actual method of remembering, the imagined storage device of memories in our mind. (Tulving, 2000, 36) The type of memory I am concentrating on is more related to human experience than biology or neurology. It is still good to have some understanding of the essentials of memory. Study of memory is interdisciplinary, scholars come from fields like psychology, neurobiology and brain research, computational science and philosophy. Each discipline has its own vocabulary, terms, and understanding of memory. (Dudai, Roediger & Tulving, 2007) Most memory scholars agree that there are different forms of memory. Three major systems of memory all have different purposes.

Episodic memory recalls previous experiences from one's past. Semantic memory holds general knowledge of facts and concepts. Procedural memory works with processes, gaining skills and procedures. (Schacter, 2007) Memory is not just a simple recording device. It is crucial for our identity and our knowledge of the world. (Michaelian & Sutton, 2017)

Memories shape the identities not only individuals but also communities. Shared memories create bonds and a feeling of togetherness in people. In this project, I try to map the place existing inside the memories of a community. Our memories, identities, and places are closely linked. Trigg calls place and time the 'two pillars of identity' (2012, 12). Places exist in multiple times in our minds. We remember past happenings, are there in the present and imagine or dread the future of that place. Memories are weaved into our surroundings. As Langford writes 'Memory is not secluded living only inside our brain; we start to remember when we are connecting with the world. Things surrounding us activate the mind and draw us a map of remembering.' (Langford, 2007, 74) People experience memories through their senses, through places, as stories, as a way of understanding the world. Memories are strongly connected with places. Places, as well as memories, are part of people's identities. (Till, 2009, 100–109)

Memories are not absolute and true recordings of past events. They are subjective and changing, constructed new every time we do the remembering. There is a relationship with memory and imagination. The concept and understanding of memory have gone through several changes during the course of our history. Just like the place. Before books and other means of archiving memories and stories were stored in the minds of the community. Told from memory from people to people. Remembering things by heart was valued above all as a way of collecting knowledge. Memory skills, mnemotechnics, were considered as one of the liberal arts during the middle ages and Renaissance. Memory was strongly connected with visual skills as memory techniques used mental images to remember better (Gibbons, 2017, 2).

Because of this 'emphasis on imaging or the formation of impressions, memory became closely related to the imagination'. (Gibbons, 2007, 2) The attitude toward memory started to change. The truthfulness of memories was questioned and remembering was seen more akin to imagining. The perceived value of memory was changing. In the early twentieth century ideas of memory turned from a depository of universal knowledge towards more emotional and personal.

The mistrust of memory was advanced further with the social change movement. The previously 'true' histories and, linked closely with them, memories, were reevaluated and retold from the point of previously marginalised groups. How could memory be true when it had different points of views. This doubt was corroborated later in the 1980s when, now disapproved, memory recovery technique in psychotherapy produced completely imagined recollections (Gibbons, 2007, 2–4). This false memory syndrome widely published and talked about.

The scientific field of memory studies begun in the 1970s. The emerging practice has become more interdisciplinary as it has become more established in scientific communities. It has grown into a wide spectrum of different study subjects and methodologies involving memory and remembering, for example, the politics of public memory and what has been chosen to be officially forgotten. The value of memory has in some ways lessened now that almost everything is only a few google searches away. The shift from memory as storage to memory as the construction of knowledge and emotions has been important for art. Gibbons uses Proust as an example saying that memory 'has creative power in bridging the gap between past and present in a way that connects personal truths to a wider audience or readership' (2007, 3). Art can translate individual and communal memories into something that can be shared and understood by many. Karen Till (2008) suggest that the scientific field of memory studies would benefit from a closer collaboration with art. To illustrate this Till showcases different aspects of memory-work which include it being used for social engagement, as a way to relive things both individually and socially and also as a tool for witnessing and hopefully healing painful histories. Artistic and activist memory-work could contribute to memory studies as they can give life and emotional depth to the works (Till, 2008, 100–109).

True (Hi)stories

Even as we are focusing on memory, it is good to take some steps towards its cousin, history. There is a relevant link between memory and history, after all, both focusing on the comprehension of the past. I am not making historical research but I am collecting and working with memories of the past. Therefore It is rational to do some benchmarking into the field skilled in this area. The meaning of history has been seen in different ways

during its course. Historians have been focusing more on the religious aspects and in the role of Providence. Or after Enlightenment, in the ideas of progress, humanity working towards betterment. There have also been more material points of views emphasising the economical connections in history. Some scholars have adopted seeing history as cyclical, the great wheel of the rise and fall of civilisations (Meacham, 1995, 38). What is interesting and noteworthy from this is, that all of history is built on different perspectives. History has never been objective. Emmanuel Le Roy has said that historians are either parachutists or truffle hunters. Watching the events from far away or digging out interesting details. John Brewer (2010) continues this duality by adopting ideas of prospect and refuge, places of seeing far and of hiding, from human geographer Jay Appleton. Prospect history is looking at things from afar with a single point of view. It is interested in the larger scale, in movement in spaces, observed from the outside.

Refuge history is the opposite, small scale and close-up. It focuses on specific place interested in capturing details. Instead of one god-like observer, refuge history works towards understanding multiple points of view (Brewer, 2010, 88–89). The reader will not be surprised that I am leaning more toward the latter.

This is a good place to introduce an interesting term that influenced my research: Microhistory. Like the name might hint, microhistory is a historical investigation on the smaller scale. Magnússon and Szijártó explain in their book *What is Microhistory?: Theory and Practice* (2013) that microhistorians ‘hold a microscope and not a telescope in their hands’. They continue that microhistory is not one unified idea, every researcher has their varied ways of seeing their work. Still, some principles are shared. Microhistory does not end on the small scale study; the idea is to focus on something small and then try to see it within a larger context (Magnússon & Szijártó, 2013, 147–148). Microhistory can be compared to the qualitative principles where a small unit can be used to understand something much larger.

The more traditional historical research is interested in big events that shape the world, long time periods and wide geographical scope to build a great narrative of humanity’s development. Microhistory, instead, concentrate on the more personal level focusing their work on single events, small communities or even individuals. To give a broad example, where conventional history would study the pyramids as a part of Egyptian culture, microhistory might focus on the life of one lowly administrator or a family of

stonemasons. The scale should not be thought to reflect the significance. Brewer (2010) questions the conceptions that somehow small means less important writing that 'scale has a powerful bearing on the sorts of effective and psychological responses we have to both accounts of and objects from the past' (Brewer, 2010, 88).

Another shared concept is the importance of the researchers seeing the people of the past as an active participant in the world, not just things floating on the sea of history. As Magnússon and Szijártó (2013) see it 'The microhistorians is not interested in how the mass of the population lived their lives, only in how the subject of their study managed his/her affairs. For the microhistorian knows that each of us walks his/her own path when we grapple with living our lives, and that is the path the microhistorian seeks to trace' (Magnússon & Szijártó, 2013, 150). Individualism and the importance of everyday people is a rather new approach in history. Again we found ourselves meeting ideas that were growing with the wave of the postmodern and post-constructivism. Microhistory has been used to give room to more varied and equal histories, many microhistorians focusing to study minorities. Brewer (2010) sees it as a departure from the previous history where people were objects, rather than subjects (Brewer, 2010, 90). Going against the modernism seems to be a unifying theme for the more humanist approach.

I was interested in the way microhistory emphasises the narrative of the research as part of the work. Research is a quest. 'In order to connect it with the narrative, we must offer the reader the opportunity to participate with us in the research process, by providing information on the researcher's material (sources) and the gaps that exist in knowledge of the subject.' Says Magnússon (online lecture 2017). Microhistorians should invite the reader to join in the hunt for the historical knowledge opening up not only the historical part put the search itself. Brewer (2010) connects this seek for realism as rising from the early microhistorians being influenced by neo-realist aesthetics. He ponders how realism works with post-positivist ideas, if there is not one true history but multiple interpretations, what then is 'real'. He concludes that realism is something different for microhistorians. It is brought by given a realistic account of the process, opening up research itself and giving room for the reader to make their own interpretation (Brewer, 2010, 101–102). For me, this feels similar to documentaries. They try to be truthful and real but acknowledge that they are working from a point of view, choosing what to show to the audience. But as this process is done openly the truthfulness and realness of the documentary is more like an agreement between the

viewer and the documentary makers, some relative middle point of ‘truth’ and their own views.

I am aiming to use the microhistorian practice of opening up the process for the reader with my research. Introducing the ideas of microhistory was meaningful to my research for other reasons too. The focus on seeing individual people as agents of their own life was compelling and encouraging. Additionally, for a long time, I was preoccupied with the notion of staying true to the memories I collected. It was important for me but here again, we are faced with to the truthfulness of memories. What people remember and explain is already an interpretation of the past. How I collect, archive and understand them adds a second layer of interpreting and possible misunderstanding. How well could I possibly understand these past events as I see them through the lens of contemporary? Microhistory gave me some perspective on this. Lastly, microhistory encouraged me to place the memories into a more wider picture of time. Even if the actual memories are not the main focus of this research, rather the methods used to collect and visualise them, this gave me more scope to understand what I was working with. For example, wartime memories of Kämpövattaja could not be separated from their temporal realities.

Likewise, I adopted ideas from the practice of oral histories, a longstanding method in the historical research. A large part of the practical work done within this thesis is collecting oral stories, so it felt a natural ally for me. As oral history is in its core the practice of collecting people’s memories, it is understandable that the value and idea of oral history have gone through similar changes as the value and idea of memory. For a long time, oral histories were less appreciated as sources of knowledge than the more ‘reliable’ sources, for example, historical archives and written documents. With the post-positivist thinking from the 1970s and onwards, the subjectivity of recollections was acknowledged in memory research. This meant that oral histories were seen less reliable, but instead of seeing this as a shortcoming, such subjectivity was embraced. The expectations that told memories had to be unbiased and true were demolished and oral accounts were celebrated as ‘important representations of cultural constructions, with value in this respect’ (Andrews, 2017, 730).

The researchers adopted a more self-reflective way of working when working with oral histories analysing their own role more closely, Andrews explains. It was better

understood that the way oral histories were collected, how the interviews were done, could have an impact on the end results. Later there have been even bigger changes in the role of the oral research historians. According to Andrews, it can be linked to the growing interdisciplinary in working with oral histories for example involvement with the social sciences. Many researchers are getting more involved with the communities and groups they are working with, working as advocates and sometimes even as activists for their research subjects (Andrews, 2017, 729–731). Here we can draw interesting parallels with the artist working in community settings and reflect a similar increase in involvement within socially engaged art projects.

Engaging the community

Our existence oscillates between internal and external, we all live in the material world but also inside our minds. This duality is evident in the idea of place, a material location that gets its importance from the workings of our minds. Even more, it is seen with memories, they are fuelled by the interplay between and outside. As Dylan Trigg (2012) states: ‘the interaction between person and world provides genesis for remembering’ (Trigg, 2012, 74). The idea of community is entwined with both place and memory. All elements need each other to work. People, communities, create places when they infuse locations with meanings. To know the importance of a place is to know the history, to share the memories of that place. To define Community one does not have to go far from the origin of said word: common. Community is a group of people that have something in common: location, occupation, belief, heritage, hobby. Many communities form around a place. Just like this thesis, where place is at the heart of it all. Kämpävattaja is both the motive and the subject for the memory work.

Communities are groups where individuals live and grow. Communities are part of individual identity and vice versa. Being part of a community is a defining factor. We compared to all the others. We have roots and feel connected, we belong. The other side of this is to feel like an outsider. to not belong. Community is also an interaction between persons, a ‘place’ created by conversation. Laura Praglin combines ideas from a philosopher Martin Buber and a psychoanalyst D.W. Winnicott to explore this in-between, as she calls it, a ‘meeting ground of potentiality and authenticity, located neither within self nor in the world of political and economic affairs’ (Praglin, 2006, 1).

How we meet and communicate matters. There is a worrying trend of bipolarity in the public conversation. The impersonality of the internet and social media has given room for black and white thinking. There are no gray areas in opinions, it seems, only room to be for or against. We are more and more focusing on the differences than similarities inside our increasingly multicultural communities. Kester (2005) worries that the echoes the 9/11 attacks only magnify the divide between people. There is a need for more open and meaningful dialogue. Kester(2005) suggests artist may be able to help facilitate this using dialogical art processes common in socially-engaged art. He demonstrates this with art projects where participants were given a moment and a place outside of their accustomed roles, and accompanied prejudices, to have a more real conversation (Kester, 2005, 1–2).

This whole project was born from a community's need to preserve their memories about Kämpävattaja. To somehow collected their shared histories and stories to keep the memory-place from vanishing. Working for and with a community is one characteristic of Applied visual art. Using the community as a ground for making art is already a well-established field in contemporary art. Starting in the late 1960s the practice has grown to have many forms and many names like community engaged art, dialogical art or community-based art. What community art entails differs from artist to artist and case to case. In the early days, it was strongly connected to grassroots movements and social activism and this can still be seen in many community art projects today. Engaging community with arts is seen for example as a way to give them a forum to speak their minds, help the community members to understand each other or solve community's problems in more creative ways (Frasz & Sidford, 2017 4-41).

Kester explains that collaborative practices can bring about 'empathetic insight'. It can help us to see other people as complex multidimensional individuals instead of stereotypical people-objects. (Kester, 2005, 7) Empathy is an important ingredient in collaborative art practices and as such also integral in applied visual art. The artist needs empathy to connect with the participants, with the place, with the process. This is a link to the design world, especially to the service design, where the value of empathy has been acknowledged and even build into their practices (Kolawole, 2015, 22).

Sometimes art can be used to process traumatic events within a community. For example, the Finding the Light Within project started 2011 in an urban community in

Philadelphia burdened with an increase of suicides. People were encouraged to share their experiences to make the issues more visible and less stigmatised with guilt and shame. Told experiences were morphed into a large hopeful mural painting (Mohatt, N. V., Singer, J. B., Evans Jr., A. C., Matlin, S. L., Golden, J., Harris, C., . . . Tebes, J. K. 2013, 197-209).

Memory works have a wide range of scope. Perhaps more intimate reconstruction of memories is found in Swedish photographer Johan Willner's Boy stories. Willner's father was committed to a mental asylum when Willner was still a child. There were no photos taken of his father's life in the asylum, no moments memorised. Willner staged and photographed again the 'lost' moments with his father (Willner & Crafoor, 2013).

Karen Till (2008) describes how artistic memory works have been used in places she calls wounded. These locations have hurtful hidden histories that have not been given time or space to heal. She uses as an example South African town where during building excavations hundreds of skeletons were found, forgotten and unmarked. She comments that as the country is still trying to cope with the history of apartheid and oppression, these type of findings dredge up the hurtful past. Science can study these wounded places and their history. However, with artists and activists doing memory-work, these places can also be given a new voice. To help people to understand and come to terms with their history (Till, 2008, 100–109).

The healthcare sector has long been welcoming to community art projects with varying levels of participation. For example, in her project Memory House Laura Fitzgerald build a cardboard house in the lobby of a local hospital she was collaborating with (Durand, 2009). Fitzgerald sat in the house inviting visitors in to tell her stories about their lives. Fitzgerald drew the stories as they were told. The visitor got a copy of their story, all the drawings are were exhibited later (Fitzgerald, 2009). This types of projects break the somewhat faceless monotony of a hospital or other institutional place by adding an element of unordinary.

Mapping memories

Between science and art

As the main research strategy, I am using art-based research (ABR). It is a large umbrella that shelters many different ways of thinking and doing research (FIGURE 3). What they all have in common is that they use the artistic process as their primary mode of inquiry. Art can be used as a way to collect information, to do analysis and represent the findings. The basic idea is that artistic knowing and creative making can generate knowledge that otherwise might not be available. It is a way of expressing things that are difficult to convey in conventional language. Art-Based research has roots in art therapy but also links to Practice-led research. ARB is usually connected to the qualitative research paradigm (Knowles & Cole, 2008). The purpose of Art-Based research is to ask questions and generate conversation. It is used to help people re-experience things from different perspectives. The goal is not to get absolute final answers but provoke re-thinking (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

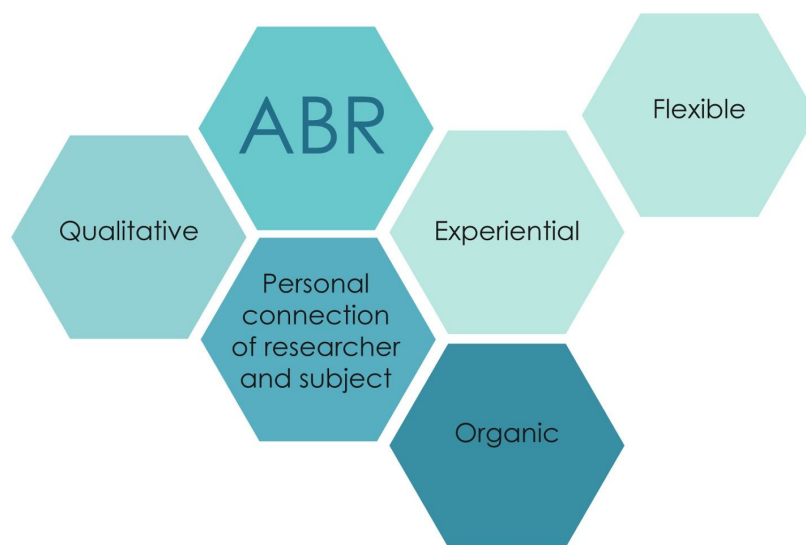


Figure 3: Qualities of art based research

Art Based research can be defined by the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expression in different art forms. Using the artistic process as a way of understanding and examining experiences of the research participants and the researchers themselves (Knowles & Cole, 2008, 29). ARB uses the expressive properties of the arts to contribute to human understanding (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Hearing or reading about a fact is not the same as feeling it yourself.

A prominent writer on ABR, Patricia Leavy, has decided to raise art-based research as its own method in her book *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. (Leavy, 2015) She writes that after the social justices movements in 1960s Art based and Community based methods have been used to study issues that previously have had little visibility in the research world like women, African Americans, and minorities. They also have been a preferred tool for many researchers belonging to these previously marginalised groups (Leavy, 2017, 27–29).

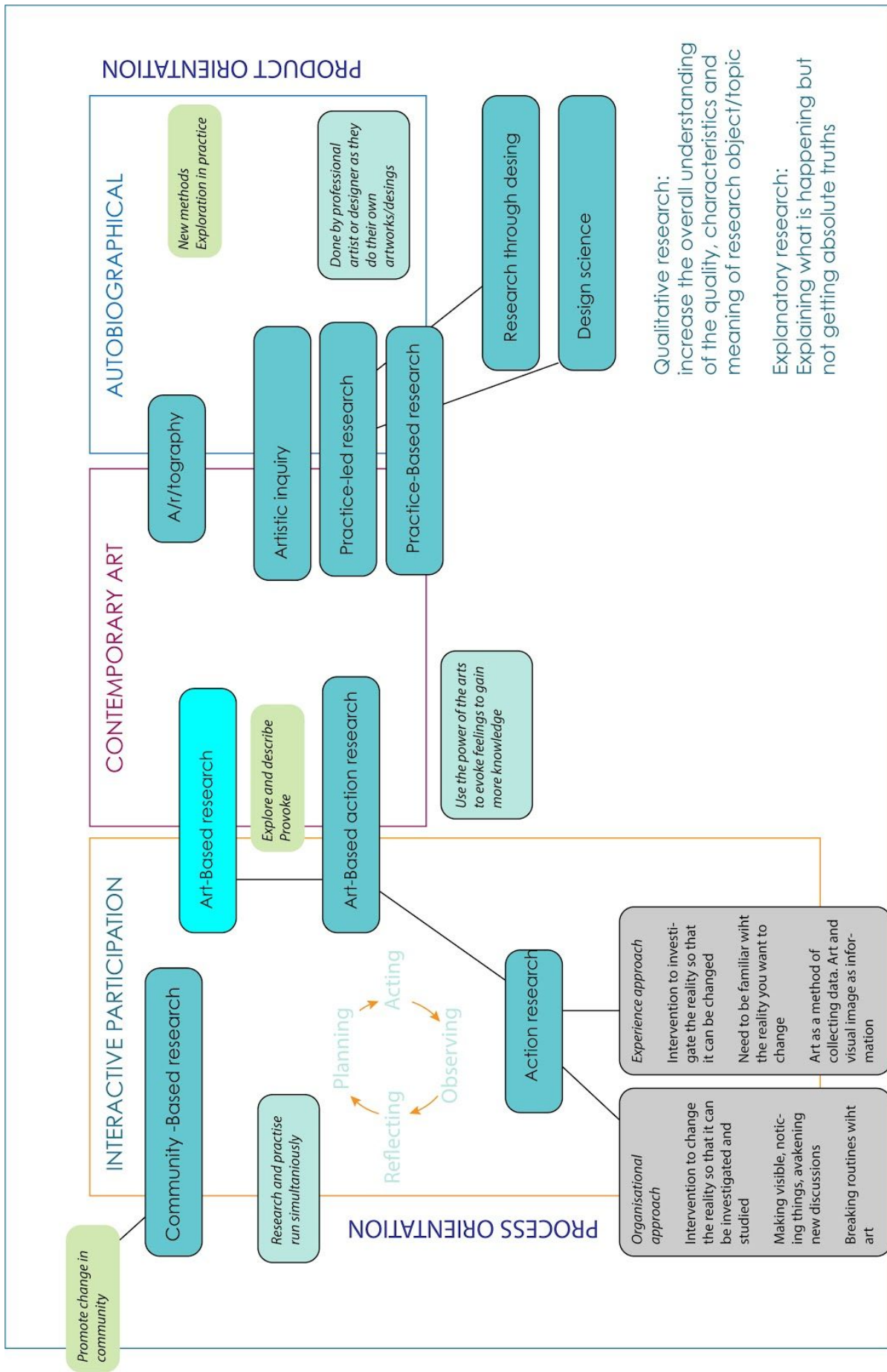
In an interview for *The Social Imagination* Leavy clarifies that ARB and Community-based research (CBR) are too important to 'hide' under qualitative research practices. Both ARB and CBR have given voice to a new kind of researchers and science and grown into their practices, Leavy says (Carrigan, 2017). Art-Based research is not only meant as a tool for the artist or art educator but anyone doing research (Barone & Eisner, 2012). As arts and human experiences are at the heart of ABR, it is noticeable that art-based research is much used in human centred sectors like education, health, psychology, and sociology. Art-based research is done under many different names as researchers use terms related to their own fields. For me, ARB is a way to infuse art making into the whole process of the research.

Multiple disciplines in different phases

The people doing art-based research come from many scientific backgrounds. The art making part in research is also wide and varied. Generally, it can be divided by the arts that are used to include writing, music, dance, drama, photography and visual arts. I'm basing my categories on the structure of Leavy's book *Research design* (2009) but most use similar categories when listing the spectrum of art-based practises (Leavy &

Scott-Hoy, 2009). This is a very broad categorisation because many times different artistic methods are used together or at in different stages of the research process.

The division is more to help to understand the possibilities of ARB than limit their use. Every researcher chooses what works best in their own process. As research methods are chosen to suit each study particularly, there is no one-size-fits-all format, instead, the usable tools are chosen to suit every particular project, couture science if you will. What art-based methods are used and how depends on the topic and the researcher. Because the possibilities are so numerous I will give examples of how I chose to use ABR myself as I am also explaining more about the general practices of ABR (Table 1).



Qualitative research:
increase the overall understanding of the quality, characteristics and meaning of research object/topic

Explanatory research:
Explaining what is happening but not getting absolute truths

Table 1: Mindmap about Art-based research and Practice-led research in relation to other research methods especially used in University of Lapland Applied Arts.

ABR can utilise a wide variety of different artistic tools to encompass the whole arc of the research process. Art based research practices are useful tools in all the phases of research (Leavy, 2009, 12). In the beginning, art can be used to explore the research theme to better understand your research subject and help to find the research questions. To me, this felt like a very natural starting point since art and visual image making helps me think and understand the world in general. I began my research project by making mind maps, visiting the location and making sketches, watching photos and home videos about the place. All this helped to form my research.

The literary review gives the study its scientific background. With ARB encourages to use creativity with the review materials. In addition to scientific writings, the researcher might get insight into the theme by reading a fictional novel or a comic, some private documents about the topic or watching a movie. Using more unconventional materials has to be logically justified but they can give something more emotive to the literary review. For my research, this unconventional the emotive material were cabin journals from Kämpävattaja. Since there were so many users for every cabin the communication was much done with communal journals (FIGURE 4). Most of the cabins had one where everyone left notes when visiting Vattaja, pre-social media sharing sites. People wrote simple everyday things about the weather and other people met there but also about bigger things, thoughts and feelings. Poems. Who won the Olympics. Kids would sometimes doodle on the books, adults draw more seriously. Sometimes photos or an article cut from the local newspaper was added. This gave a direct link to what the people in Vattaja had been thinking and feeling important enough to share with others.

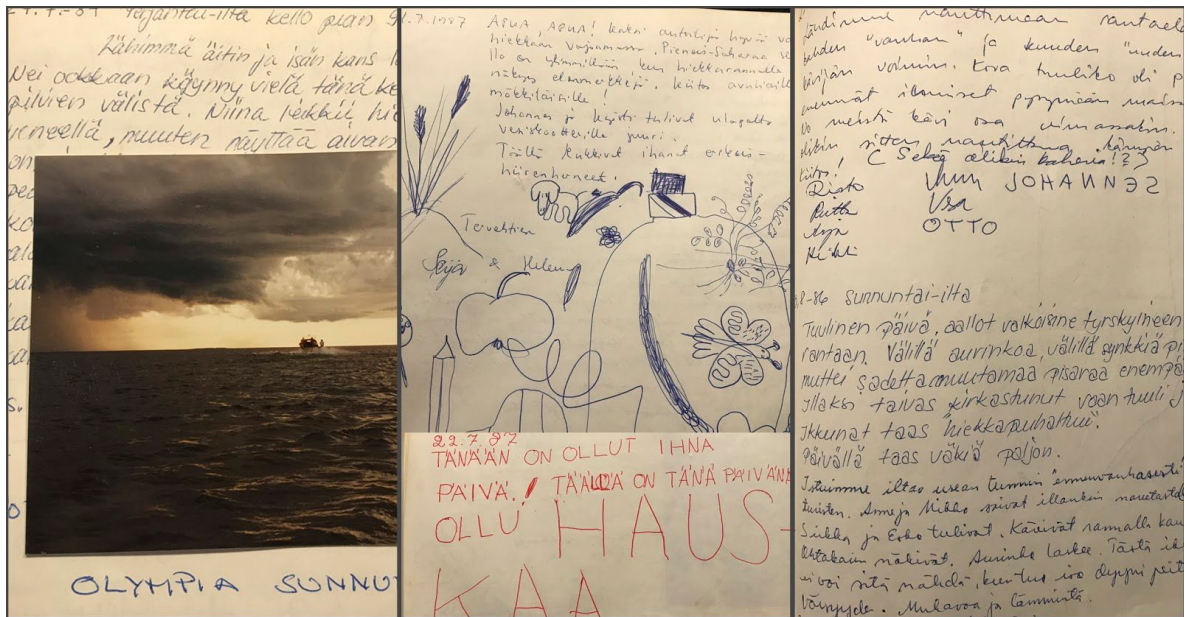


Figure 4: Cabin journals

Most commonly Art based methods are used while collecting data. Enhanced interviews and photo elicitation are common practices. Another prevalent method is asking the participants to make artworks to understand more about the topic. All these techniques are widely used in my research. With this research project, I wanted to try different facets of memory collection with art. As my whole research is centered around the use of art, it is build inside the data collection, both as the subject of study and the method of working. Art can also be incorporated with the interpretation of the collected data. For example, I wrote the memories from the interviews into short prose and drawings.

To keep the work more coherent, I chose to split the research into two separate parts: collecting and presenting (Table 2). Collecting was more about gathering data and presenting more about sharing the material. Dissemination is an important part of any research study. With ARB there is more freedom to share the findings to the participants, academic field, the general public. Sharing the knowledge in an easily attainable and emotive way is one of the art based research' strengths. In layman thinking that is when research shows how useful it is. In her interview to The Social Imagination, Leavy talked about how astounded and appalled she was after hearing that most scientific papers only get read an average audience 3-8 readers. To weigh that over all the resources used Leavy continues 'there is an ethical, moral and practical mandate to make research more widely available both inside and outside of the

academy. She says ‘Research should be of some value in real-world context’ (Carrigan, 2017). To disseminate this thesis some of the processes were presented in an exhibition. The goal was to share the project and also tell people about Kämpövattaja. The exhibition was aimed at the wider audience, to share the place and the memories with people outsiders the community.



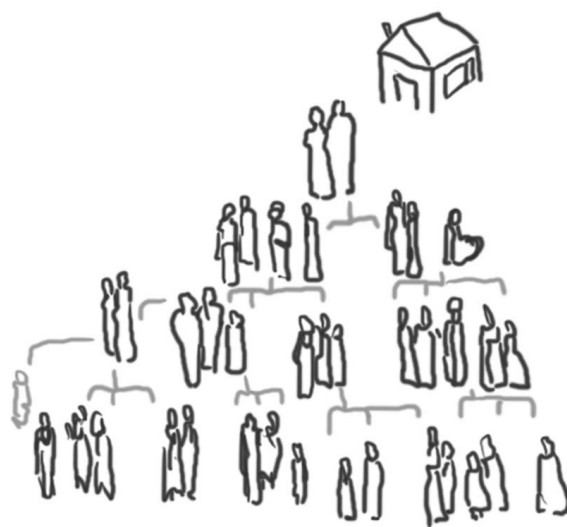
Table 2: General division of work to collecting and presenting parts

Community of participants

All participants working with me in for this research are community members of Kämppävatattaja. The term community in the context of Kämppävatattaja means people who owned a cabin there, or were related by birth or by marriage to a person who owned one. That said, I did not specify any rules for selecting participants, I was interested in anyone who felt connected to Kämppävatattaja. Depending on their age it meant different things some participants never experienced having their own cabin in Kämppävatattaja. In their time the older cabins had already vanished completely or just a pile of logs still marking their location. These people identified as part of Kämppävatattaja, belonging there as someone whose predecessors owned a cabin there.

After the initial idea of the memory project was introduced to the community and collaboratively planned further, I contacted community members and asked if they would like to participate in my research. Some were also proposed to me by other members. All participants were very accommodating and positive in their attitudes towards my work. Most were more interested in the overall project outcome, collecting and preserving memories of Kämppävatattaja. My research into the possibilities of art when doing memory work was understandably secondary to them.

Time limitations mean that I would not be able to work with every single of the seventeen cabin clans all with multiple generations each. To keep the schedule and work amount reasonable I decided to concentrate on only a few cabins and their owner lineage by working with a limited amount of people. This was after all only the beginning of the whole project. For the research, I wanted to capture the many layers of generation by having participants from different age groups (FIGURE 5). Even with these restrictions, the scheduling was sometimes challenging.



GENERATIONS OF A CABIN

People passed away. Some rare photos and writings. Second and third hand stories

Elderly people. Last changes to collect their memories. Few photos, writings. Can still tell about how things were in their childhood. A link to previous generation.

Older adults. Photos and writings, cabin diaries, artworks. some 8mm film, some low quality video.

Adults. Lot of photos in different forms. Writings, cabin diaries, artworks. Many low and medium quality videos

Teens and kids. Some memories about the cabins but vague. Digital material.

Figure 5: Different generations and the memory material that could be found

The different approaches to collecting the memories grew both from practical needs and scientific curiosity. Working with the community gave parameters for the research. I wanted to try out multiple ways to integrate art into the memory collection process to see what worked best. To simplify the reasoning behind choosing these three angles for the work is to consider the interview as a more traditional way of collecting information from people, the workshops as a way of seeing how more in-depth co-operation changes things and the last to look at the memory work from a more insular point of view.

Working partly with elderly people gave me practical boundaries. For example, it was not possible to conduct the interviews on location because for many elderly participants it would have been too physically exhausting. Going to Vattaja means a long drive on small bumpy dirt roads and the beach itself is only reached by walk paths in soft sand. There are no facilities nearby, no disabled access. Kämpövattaja area is also repeatedly closed from civilian use during the summer because of the Finnish defence forces using it as a training ground.

Enhanced interviews were completed with 11 participants who had been part of the Kämpövattaja community all their lives. Most of the interviews took place in the summer and autumn of 2018, with some additional phone interviews to clarify and expand already shared memories. There were also few preparatory interviews done in the winter 2017 and spring 2018 to fine tune the process.

Most of the enhanced interviews were done with retired persons (N=7), the oldest participant being 94 at the time of the data collection. The earliest memories collected with the interviews would then be of their childhood and youth in the early '30s. Apart from a few interviews most of them took place at the participant's own homes, even the elderly participants still living independently. Meeting people in their home made it possible to use their own photos and other memorabilia of Vattaja as a starting point (FIGURE 6).

Figure 6: Old photo albums.

The participant noted that this trip to Vattaja had been memorable. They had traveled with a pickup truck of a family friend. It had been stinky and noisy but exiting.



Some participants were interested in doing art together. This allowed me to try out different methods than during the interviews. we did small art workshops and collaborations, some even on location in Vattaja. Most workshops were based on one specific shared memory.

I also did some auto-ethnographic work trying to capture my own memories of the place. A more fancy way of saying I was trying to recall my personal memories and experiences of Kämpävattaja. At the begin of the process, I had to think long about what my own role would be as a community member. Keeping myself out of the remembering would have been very artificial. Instead, I thought that making a part of the memory project self explorative would offer more possibilities for study. Using my own

memories gave another aspect into the research since I could study how art making affects the remembering process internally.

Based on these different starting points in the way of participation and data collecting methods, I have chosen to use these categories as a guideline throughout the whole process: the enhanced interviews, the small workshops, and the auto-ethnographic work.



THESIS TIMELINE



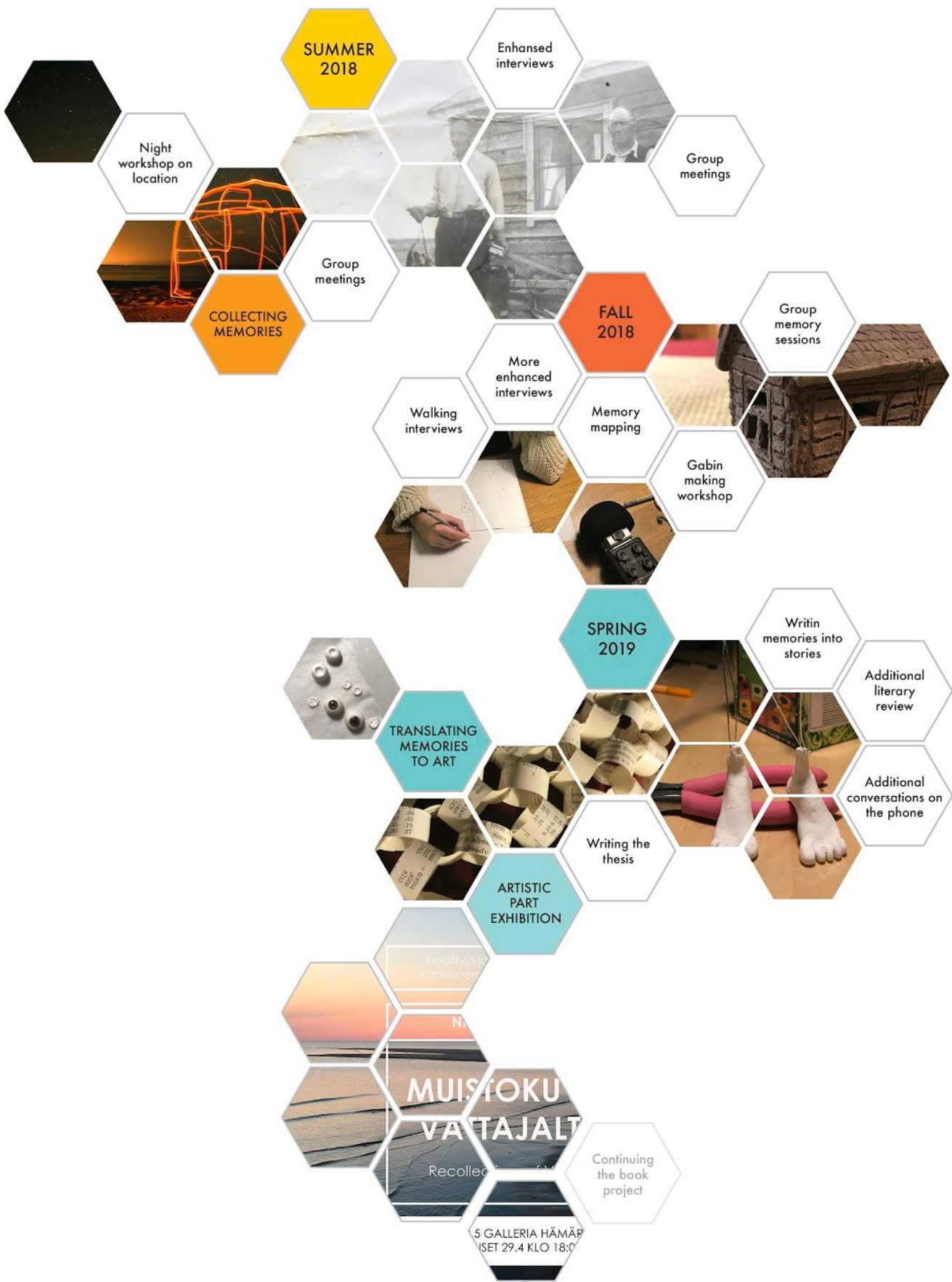


Figure 7: Timeline of the Kämpävattaja project and the thesis

Research with binary goals

Before we dive further into the research, it is good to address the duality behind the whole thesis process to clarify for the reader the multiple goals for the participants and me. As we rewind to the beginning, this thesis began its life as a project. The community had wished for a concrete way to keep and share memories of Kämpävattaja, a way can salvage something of the place and share it not only with the community but also with others. From early on it was decided that a book form would be most appropriate. It was felt as a distinguished way to present Vattaja. I would collect memories and other materials and make artworks that would be used to illustrate memories that were never captured with photos. Some of the community members expressed interest to do also some collaboration. The end result would be an artwork in book form you can leaf through, this form connecting to the tradition of keeping communal journals in the cabins. Also for the elderly people, who do not own or use computers, the simple user interface of a book was most approachable.

I decided to use the first portion of the project toward the book as my thesis (FIGURE 7: Timeline). For me, the focus was to do research. For the participants, it was to share their memories for the future book. The duality of working both towards a book and a thesis has been sometimes a struggle. The material gathered from the interviews done within this thesis will be also used for the book project. The memories and findings of Kämpävattaja itself have been very interesting but outside the research scope of the thesis. The research is not about the oral history of Kämpävattaja but the possibilities of art in memory work. For the research, collecting memories was mandatory to test different methods to use art in memory work. That those memories happen to be useful for another related project is a bonus and a way to motivate participants. Research data was collected while doing the memory collecting part and also while processing them for further use. This duality inside the project can be confusing. It is important to differentiate between the act of collecting memories from the overall collection of research data to keep the two goals separate and clear for the reader.

The whole process can be roughly divided into two part: collecting and presenting . The collection part of the process yielded data in many forms as it included most of the active collaborative work with the participants. There were sketches and other drawings

done during the interview. I also photographed all the visual materials that were used to elicit memories - old photos from family albums, short diary or letter writings or artworks done by the participants before - and made notes about them in my research diary. In the presenting part, data was collected mostly from artistic work and from processing the memories. The participants were in a more commentary role. They gave feedback about the works and clarification about their memories when I needed it and these comments were noted down. Some information was also gathered from the exhibition audience.

All of the interviews were recorded as audio files, barring few technical difficulties in the beginning. It was a good way to return to conversations. There were so many details that I couldn't internalise during the interview itself. I transcribed parts of the interviews and summarised all the memories told. Some of the participants used the old Lohtaja area dialect (that mixes Swedish and Finnish together) and I needed to later clarify some words and their meanings. There were some telephone conversations that I only recorded as quick notes. Research diary was my constant tool through the whole thesis process.

There were also additional conversations as a larger group I partly recorded and wrote down. It was more for the community so the conversations were free and not everything was related to this study. With some of the interview participants, we did walking interviews, talking while strolling down the beach. These were technically impossible to record in a meaningful way, it would have disrupted the ease and flow of conversation. Instead, I noted down things afterward in writing.

With some participants, we did walking interviews, mostly on the seaside. This meant that the recording was impractical, the sounds around us, wind, even the swishing from the clothes rendered them useless. The main reason for talking and walking was to loose into the simple action and free the mind to remember. Carrying equipment and concentrating on sound quality would have fractured that leisurely atmosphere. There is a long tradition walking as a method of connecting in ethnographic research. Pink sees walking together as a way to create rapport between the researcher and the research participants. It is a simple activity that almost any human can do and can encourage the researcher towards self-reflexivity. (Pink, 2015, 111). Walking gives rhythm for the talking, natural pauses to think and to speak. For example artist/researcher Arliid Berg used walking and talking interviews with young participants when planning a public

artwork for a school. Moving in space created a different mood for the conversations, it made them less formal and more connected to the location (Berg, 2014, 141). I found the same with my test, the walking interviews were most informal and easy. At the same time, there was little material to be collected except the memory-stories. Artistic tools for the walks were simple, both the participant and I took photographs but this was not very useful for elicitation. Pictures taken were too 'fresh', too connected to that moment to bring up any older memories. I would recommend Keeping the information gathering minimal and using these walking interviews as a way to break the ice between the researcher and the participant. The simple harmony of walking together makes talking so much easier and lowers the barrier between the 'official' roles of the researcher and participant.

Some of the workshops were done outside. There was lots of moving which made it impractical to record conversations while working. I took photos of the activities during the workshops and noted things down in writing. I have some sound files from the breaks before or after the work was done. Afterwards, I made short narrative summaries of the workshops. The planning and conversations before the workshops were recorded on my phone as text threads. They were sadly lost when my phone broke in the middle of the thesis process. Thankfully it was not a great loss since the relevant information was written down to my notes. The outcomes of the workshops were many photographs, small on-location installations, light paintings and cabins made out of clay.

For my auto-ethnographic work, I also relied a lot on writing things down but used more sketchbooks to draw my thoughts. I did small artworks to elicit memories and used varied sensory methods to get closer to them, like visiting the location multiple times, swimming, walking the same routes, recording sounds that fit my memories. I also tested mimicry as a way of remembering, doing the same things as I had done in memories. The data from my work process consists of notes, short stories I wrote, photos taken by me and of me and multiple sketches and art experiments (FIGURE 8). I went through all the photographs I had taken of Vattaja myself. As with interviews I wanted to use old photos as a catalyst so I also went and looked at my family's photos albums. One part of the preparation was to scan my parents dia slide archives into digital form.



Figure 8:
Testing out different ways to visualise memories like simple sketching, carborundum and vinyl block printing, deconstructed watercolour paintings.



Some data were collected also from people outside this project, the public audience so to speak. As an artistic part for this thesis, I held an exhibition in a gallery space and the

last data was collected from the exhibition audience both in verbal and written form. The exhibition was used to test how art could be used to share the collected memories in ways that would make them accessible to a wider audience. To see if memories about Vattaja would matter to people who do not have any previous connection to the place themselves. I had some conversations during the opening evening and there were written comments left on the exhibition quest book. Although the sampling is quite narrow some observations can be made from it.

Consideration for the participants and my own role

Every researcher has to consider the ethical aspects of their research: what are their values and beliefs, how can they affect the research, how ethical considerations are translated into practice, how the researcher acts, what methods and actions are used (Leavy, 25–27). Seeing that this project was done in collaboration with a community, the principle of mutuality was met from the beginning: this research benefits the participants, not just me as a researcher. Cultural sustainability was an important consideration. A lot of the memories were collected from elderly persons. Many times during the interviews it came up that a person already passed would have been able remembered this or that detail. Now, all that knowledge was lost, there was no one to ask.

As a researcher, I come from the post-positivist worldview. I think that pure objectivity is impossible and researchers own person cannot be completely removed from the work. With this particular project, it was obvious from the start. Both because of my nearness to the issues and even more my familiarity with the community and the participants. Because of the size of the community, me being part of it, all the participants were already known to me and to each other. When working with such a small and what had been a tight-knit community, it was practically impossible to get away from. I feel it also necessary to disclose that many of the participants are related to me. This familiarity with the participants had to be considered thoroughly as a researcher, how to keep the research ethically sound when working with people so familiar to me. I was afraid that the familiarity with the subject and the participants would muddle my role as a researcher.

Undoubtedly me knowing the participants affected the process. On a practical point, it was easier to set up meetings and already had a baseline for communication. I had knowledge about the area, community and also whom I should interview. The familiarity also made me more prepared beforehand, for example, if I knew the person I interviewed had bad hearing. It meant I could better see if the participant was getting nervous or tired. That was valuable, especially with the more elderly participants. Knowing their patterns of normal life made it easier to find suitable times for us to speak. Some of the memories collected I had heard before in the passing conversations or short mentioning. Even all the new ones I collected shared the same baselines I could follow and understand better. For an outsider, this would have been much harder.

Knowing the participants altered my processes, maybe limited my work in some ways. The mediums of working based on the previous knowledge about the individual participants, if they were photographers or did ceramics as a hobby. Someone without these precognitions might have pushed the participants further, to try something different.

The first interviews made me notice my new role as a researcher. I was at the same time the familiar person to talk with while drinking coffee and also someone collecting information from them. Did they understand what I was doing? Was I using my familiarity to use them for my own needs? Based on Leavy's work the fact that I come from the same community, I am more versed in their language and terminology, which means I am more culturally competent and sensitive to their issues (Leavy, 2017, 25–27). This did not mean that there were no challenges with the language. I tried to find a way to balance the need for scientific transparency and not overwhelming the participants with too much science talk. All the participants are intelligent people but for most this was out of their knowledge base. Working with people who come outside the fields of science and art even the language I used was unfamiliar for them. The language of art and science can be far from the 'normal' everyday talk of rural Finland. Me doing my scientific work in English brought another hurdle. In a way, this was a good problem to solve. Having to explain my research goals and ideas in a very concrete way using layman terms made it more clear for me too.

One of the ways to make the process less cumbersome for the participants was opting to record their consent in speech rather than hand out a document for them to fill.

The risks in this study for the participants were minimal. There were still some moments where I needed to be considerate of the participant's wellbeing. Some of the memories that came up during the interviews were unhappy, even a little unsettling for the participants. For example, talking about people who had drowned in a storm or remembering an incident when their small child got lost and the following fear of losing them forever. These things had happened a long time ago, but there was still an echo of that stressful moment in their mind. Sometimes the participants felt sad remembering all the people now gone. When this type of emotional moment came, I let the participant talk without asking a lot of questions allowing them to freely decide if they wanted to talk more about it. Every time the participant was finished telling their darker memories we had a general conversation about them and how the participant was feeling. After that, we returned to more happy memories. No interviews were ended in negative feelings and the participants did not keep dwelling in those moments afterward. I did not bring up the memories in later conversations unless the person wanted to. The same consideration had to be made while presenting the memories.

How can art be used to collect and elicit place memories?

Enhanced interviews

Since I am trying to find out how art can be used to elicit and collect memories, the first part of the process was doing just that, collecting memories using different methods. The interview process went through several changes as I tried to perfect my methods. Simplifying things usually worked best. I did my first test interviews in the autumn of 2018 and noticed immediately that I needed to reconsider my plans. The amount of material and devices I had with me was too much. Before I started I had thought about bringing a proper scanner to scan the pictures from the albums of participants, but having more technical tools would have been detrimental for the actual interviews. Instead of having a laptop and a small scanner with me to document their old photos and other material, I opted on taking photos of them only with my smartphone. The slight loss of quality in the collected photos was less important than the spoken memories. Just having the sound recorder, smartphone and note-taking materials, as well as some art tools, were overwhelming enough. I had to choose a suitably small tool kit for the atmosphere to stay relaxed. Good quality phone picture was good enough. I also bared back the art supplies used during the interviews to elicit memories. Too much would only confuse and stress the participants. It worked better to have a few clear options, things that were easy to approach for the participants.

For some the term interview was problematic, it was understood as something serious and complicated. One of the first interviews I did one participant voiced her concerns saying: *'What if I answer incorrectly?'* Maybe she should I get her adult daughter to come and help with the questions. We had a good conversation where I explained the whole interview process and assured that there were no wrong answers. After that experience, I decided to use a different language when contacting with the participants. Instead of an interview, which made participant think more about newspapers or tests, I asked if I could come to talk with them, to record to their memories and stories about

Kämppävattaja. This more casual approach worked better. I could explain the project and my research without giving unnecessary concern. This was especially apparent with the elderly participants.

I streamlined my interview techniques overall. Instead of written confirmation, I asked permission to record them and to collect their memories on tape audible. I was recording the conversations anyway so it was much more convenient. No one refused to be recorded.

The interviews were done at the convenience of the participants. Usually, I went into their homes, few times we met at a public place like a cafe and sometimes we were able to schedule a meeting on location in Lahenkroopi (Kämppävattaja). I met with most of the participants multiple times. The conversations were slightly structured enhanced interviews.

To start the interview there was just small talk. This was an important part first to get everyone relaxed and also helping us stay on topic while doing the interview. If this part was skipped the current topics would pop up during the remembering and sidetrack the conversations. Having the sound recorder on made the participants first worry a little, especially in the beginning. What if they sounded stupid or say something silly. I explained that the recordings are mostly for me, so I did not have to write everything down while we are talking and if I forgot something I could go back and listen to what was said. I also said I might use some small parts of their voices as a part of my artistic work, but always make sure it was ok for them. Later on, the sound recording became natural to them.

There was a delicate balance needed to keep between firmly staying on topic and the nervousness of the participants if the interview felt too serious, to have the interview moment relaxed enough to be comfortable but still keep it within the parameters of the interview. Having a concrete starting point helped with that. Before we met I had asked the participants to collect some of the photographs and other material they had about the Kämppävattaja (FIGURE 9). This preparation for the conversations was very beneficial, people were already concentrated in Kämppävattajat. They had already done some memory work prior to our meeting. Looking at the pictures together was a good start and the memories build easily around it. Photographs were a natural way to get

participants talking when was this taken, who are the people in it, what was happening in them.



Figure 9: Memory elicitation material collected from the interviews

Using photographs to evoke memories and information has long been used in anthropology and fanned out to across the academia. Photo-elicitation is a now a common practise for through all scientific fields. Traditionally photo-elicitation is done by showing the participants images and then discuss them. Pink (2015) suggests a more sensorial approach, to have the participants interpret and imagine experiencing what is seen in the pictures (Pink 2015, 88). This worked well when participants were trying to catch unphotographed memories, unrelated pictures from the same place could be used to imagine the sensory experiences of that memory. Details, like the coarsens of a blanket or sand between your toes, helped the participant to submerge themselves into the memories. Photographs can wake hidden knowledge and memories from the research participant. Having a visual image makes it possible for the researcher to compare their own interpretations with those of the participants. Pink (2015) explains that 'photo-elicitation relies on the idea of the photograph becoming a visual text through which the subjectivities of research and research participant intersect' (Pink 2015, 112). This way the photographs can also act as a bridge for the researcher and participant.

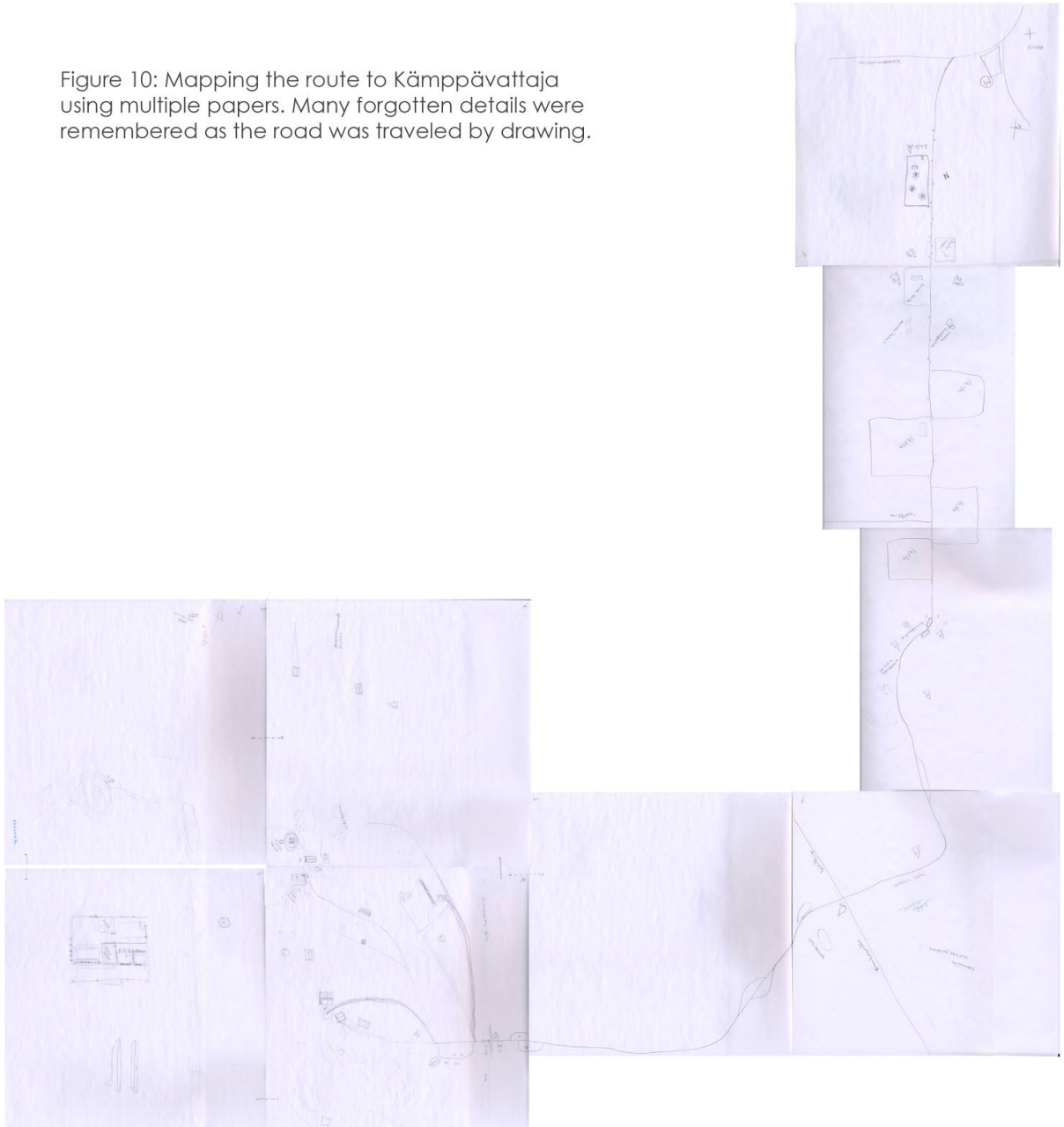
I documented their photographs and other shown materials for my research use, oral permission was asked for this too. Unexpectedly taking photos of the participants'

photographs yielded another good tool for elicitation. Many times the original photos were small. It was usual for the amateur photographers of that time to expose their photos straight from the film, as they did not own any specific darkroom equipment. When I took photos of the small black and white photographs, we could zoom in to make parts of the photo bigger on my phone's screen. It was easier to see whom a person in a group where or other details.

The actual art making during the interviews was minimal, more just conveying information visually. Just bringing drawing tools was worrying for the elderly participants. *'I don't know how to draw. My rheumatism is too bad for using a pen. I will just waste your paper.'* To get things going I started to draw as they told me what to do. Another useful way to start was to ask the participant to explain something with a drawing: what the windows looked like, what was the layout of the cabin. We used basic mark making skills to convey information. Steering away from any more artistic considerations, the art tools were simply used to remember. The result was not thought of, just the merit it held as explaining things better than just mere words. We did a layout for one of the cabins. One participant explained the specific horse carriage his father had designed and which they used to go to Vattaja. It was important to explain how it differed from the common versions and how his father used it.

Even simple results could hold a lot of emotions and experiences. One interviewed drew a map from the town to Vattaja (FIGURE 10). A long road with many landmarks; that exceptionally mended garden, weird looking house, potholes that made the car bounce funnily, that place where you would always see moose. This type of personal narrative cartography has been interesting for contemporary artist borrowing tools from the field of geography.

Figure 10: Mapping the route to Kämpävattaja using multiple papers. Many forgotten details were remembered as the road was traveled by drawing.



Maps and art have a long shared history, always equalising between the practices of art and science. Geographer Denis Cosgrove (2005) writes that these epistemological distinctions have begun to dissolve. He notes that as science has embraced the importance of aesthetic in presenting information, at the same time artists have stepped away from purely aesthetic work to more information based explorations. In a way, the players have stayed the same but just switched sides. The increase of mapping technologies in our contemporary life has likewise made mapping more interesting to the artist (Cosgrove, 2005. 50). Personal cartography has become a way to examine life and experiences. The ability to record one's routes with apps has been used as an

artistic tool. Artist duo plan b, Sophia New and Daniel Belasco Roger (2010), recorded their movements using GPS in a form of 'obsessive self-surveillance'. All movement data was compiled into drawings (FIGURE 11) as abstract maps of their lives (New & Roger, 2010, 24).

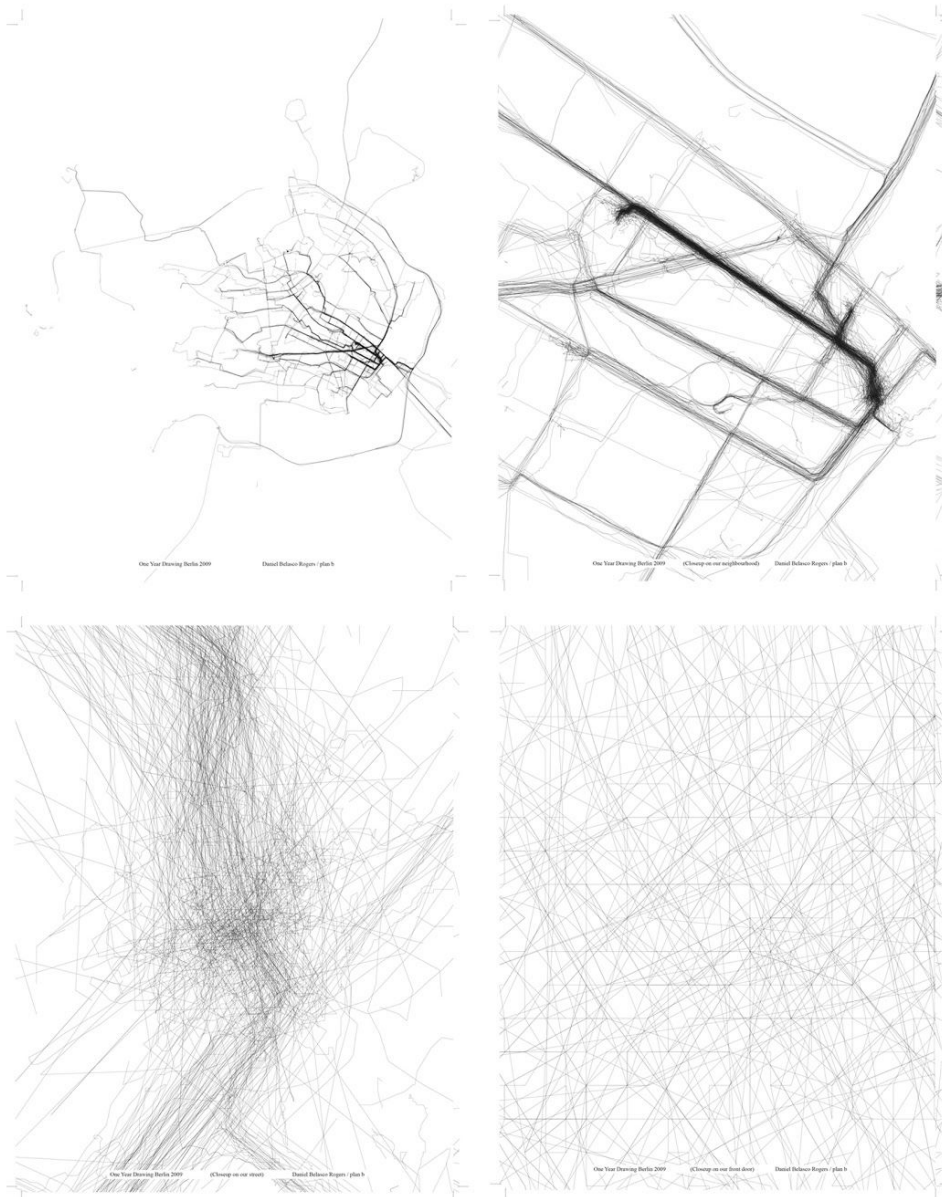


Figure 11: Me, You and Everywhere We Go: Plan b
Sophia New & Daniel Belasco Rogers (2010)

Selected pictures by Sophia New and Daniel Belasco Rogers from the
Performance Research - A Journal of the Performing Arts
Volume 15, 2010 - Issue 4: Fieldworks <https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2010.539876>

The participant did not have GBS to help her but did check afterward how correct her routes were, most of the roads still being in the same places. The process of map making was a way of going into the memories. Drawing the map turned the remembering into a journey, one part of memory leading to the next. Without walking the whole path, many of the sights would have been missed on the way. Mapping was also an accessible doing art, it came naturally to the participant. Maps are commonly accepted as information in visual form, not usually thought as art. The underlying thinking is that you do not need artistic skills to draw a map, just the information about the area. I suggest that the familiarity with linking maps to drawing can be used to encourage participation in artistic collaborations.

Adding up, sharing memories

Overall the interview process was cyclical. I spoke with the participants first to gather memories and later returned to clarify them. I used the materials gathered in one interview to elicit memories in some another. The drawings were good materials going further with my interview circles. For example, the cabin plan (FIGURE 12) we had done was used in next interview where the other participant could attach their memories on top of the ones already collected, maybe corroborate some or question some. Having a basis for conversation helped. Having multiple interviews kept the memory process active between the meetings and every subsequent conversation there was something more remembered from the previous time.

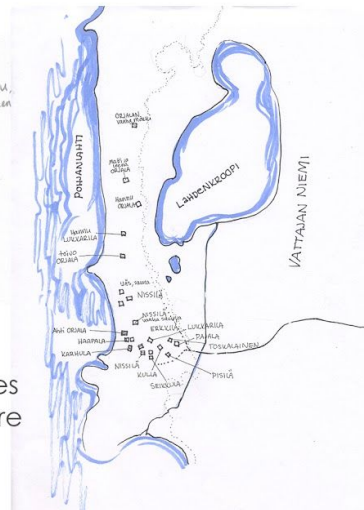
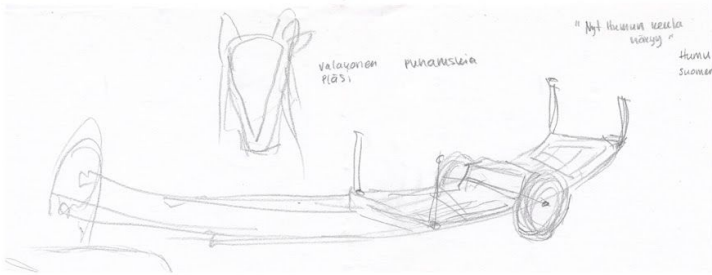
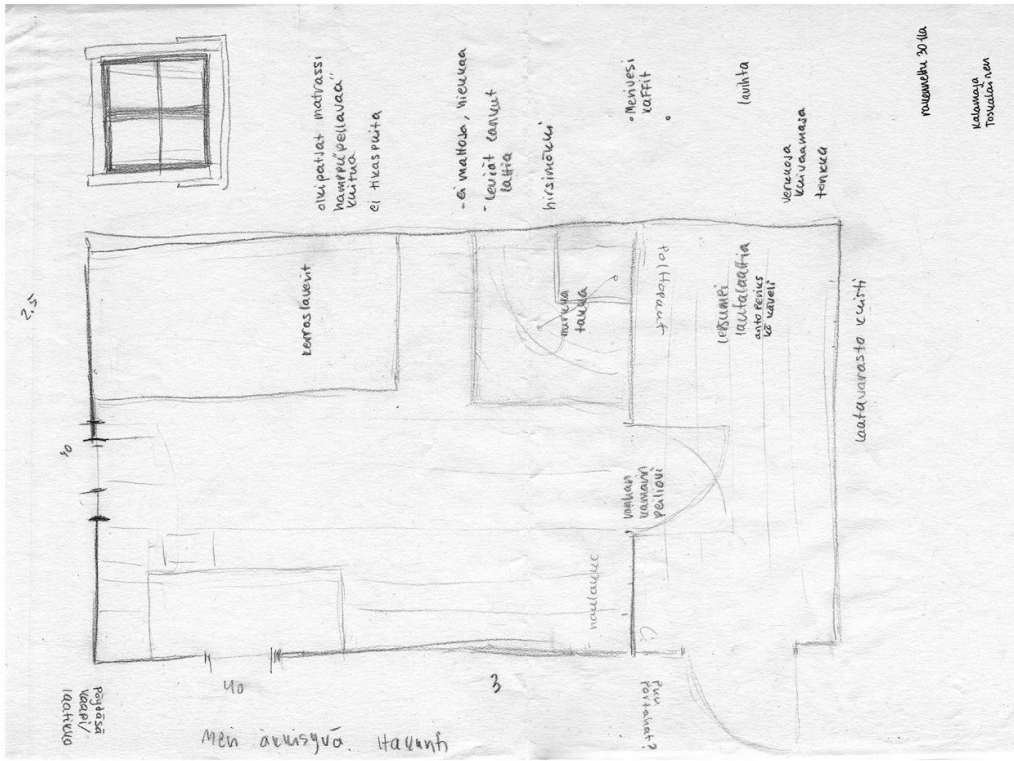


Figure 12: Ground plan of a cabin and other sketches done during the interviews to better explain and share information about the memories.

The communal aspects started to show in the interview process as well. Remembering became more active also outside the interviews. The participants talked to each other on the phone, and then to told me about some details they had remembered together. My first intention of interviewing everyone alone. I had thought being alone would make it easier for us to concentrate and keep on the topic. Also, there would be no pressure to succeed, that sometimes happens in groups. Whether with the art or the remembering. After a few test interviews, I had to rethink my initial ideas.

I was interviewing older of two sisters about a cabin she had been in as a child. All through the talk, she kept saying 'Oh, I wish my sister was here. She would remember that part.' We did the layout of the cabin and wrote in details she remembered and added questions where things were less clear. As I had scheduled an interview with the younger sister later, it seemed very natural that we both visited her. We used the layout made in the first interview as the basis for the next. Younger sister remembered some we had left as question marked in it the first time. Having both sisters together was interesting. They bounced memories back and forth helping each other with the remembering process. Of course, it was a lot more rambling interview. The sisters sometimes started on a memory trail that leads onto something else or jumped to talking about this weeks news, but even so, their combined efforts were beneficial. It was just harder for me as an interviewer to try to follow their conversation and gently try to keep them on the topic. Both sisters are over 80 and the other was almost housebound with a slowly healing hip. They usually spend time together only over the phone. To them meeting and remembering old times together was a lovely moment. It was more beneficial for memory work and also for the participants to work together.

We even took this further and later visited their brother to get even more missed details together. Again the participants loved the gathering. We got some good information. But with four people, the brother's wife making it five on and of, the conversation became too unruly. The brother was too self-conscious to do art. 'I used to be a good drawer but now my hands are too old for it.' He did draw some details about their special horse carriage designed by their father, that they always used to go to Vattaja. With so many people speaking together the focus turned from the memories to being together in the present. It had been a few years the last time they were all together, so there were a lot more pressing matters to attend. What all the children and children's children were doing, how was the house and health and what news they had heard from other relatives? It was a nice afternoon, even if not so effective for the memory project or the research. The participants were happy, especially the housebound sister, that they could all meet and it was all arranged so easily for them.

After this test, I decided to divide meetings into three types: The enhanced interviews, where I would talk with only a few people at a time, the small workshops and the more communal gatherings, where many Kämpävattaja goers spend time together and talked about their memories on and off amongst other things. Group conversations over

the photos were more freely done and added some new details to the shared memories. Gathering the community more actively together was one of the wishes at the start of the project, so the latter was just as important. I later found what felt like a direct recommendation from Lucy Lippard (1997) who writes about the importance of grandmothers and stories in sharing local history. She comments that 'the most valuable local cultural resources may be elderly relatives (Or younger ones with food memories, who took notes, or tape recorder, or identified the old pictures)' or other older people willing to share their stories or the stories they themselves have inherited. Lippard notes that 'the sense of place can outlast place itself' (Lippard, 1997, 50). Kämpövattaja still exist in the memories and stories of many.

Some of the Kämpövattaja memories were told by many participants and not everyone remembered things the same way. They all told their own versions. This was to be expected. Remembered moments are constructed from multiple views of everyone who experienced them, and even the individual memories are layered with reflections of different times they shared that memory. Trying to remember things exactly as they were is impossible, but we still strive for that. Oral histories can relate detailed information. Jonna Katajamäki has researched the history Korundi, an old post bus depot in Rovaniemi now turned into a culture center, by interviewing people used to live and work there. She explained that using only histories she was able to map the building quite accurately, even locating a forgotten underground oil deposit. Gathered memory information could be used by the builders to find and remove the possibly hazardous tank from the yard. (conversations during a lecture, February 7, 2018) Since this project was not historical research the veracity of any of the memories told was not an issue. Testing out the possibilities of art in memory work does not necessitate evaluating the memories collected by accuracy. All the remembered versions were equally important for me. Writing about reminiscing in psychology, John A. Meacham warns that the idea of accuracy can even be harmful. Remembering is so personal that having someone else question the validity of one's memories or judging them inaccurate, implicates that the person's capability of remembering is faulty. It can lead to a feeling that they are inadequate. I was trying to be mindful of this and steer the conversations away from any evaluation of the correctness of the memories. This was important, especially when more than one participant was gathered together to relate their memories. There is a right answer to 'what were the windows like the cabin' but it does not matter so much in

this concept. Better to share the overall memories and experiences than try to catch all the details.

Workshops and the textuality of remembering.

The small workshops were done with participants who wanted to collaborate and go further with the art making. During the interviews, we mostly draw, used old photos and newspaper clippings, cabin diary entries, and other material to elicit memories. The end results were more explanatory like maps and cabin interior layouts or details about them. During the workshops, we did more prior planning for the artistic part and so the end result was emphasised more.

The first workshop (FIGURE 13) was done already in fall 2017 on location at Vattaja, mostly to test out the possibilities of working there. The artwork grew from mimicking our old actions. We started to collect small gun shells that the army had left behind. This used to be a common thing. The army officially claims they gather all their trash and metals away, nothing is left in nature, but for years we cleaned buckets of them away from the beach. It was a common pastime when it was too cold to go for a swim. We decided to collect shells and do small installations on the sand by arranging the shells into chess boards or armies. It was fun trying to find different sizes and organising our regiments.



Figure 13: Autumn workshop experienced some stormy weather

The textuality of the place was important in this first workshop. Being actually in Vattaja helped to remember. You got the full surround sound effects and all the senses get activated. It still smelled the same, sound mostly the same. You could feel the sand, the sea, hear seagulls or the swishing of the sand ryegrass. The mimicry brought on memories that would otherwise be mostly forgotten. The feeling of the sand in different grain sizes. Again learning to notice the half-buried small metal shells. The sounds made by the wind in the small cylinders. The smell of rusty metal on your fingertips. As Trigg writes ‘the body activates place, place activates the body’ (Trigg, 2012. 40).

Drawing, painting or using photographs would not have worked as well to evoke that type of textual memories.

The same textuality was apparent in the other on-location workshop. Spending a night in Vattaja was perfect for our light cabin project. It was as it had been for as in our 're-created' memory. We stayed one night on the beach. Making fire from driftwood, admiring the milky way and all the stars as in our childhood. The whole evening was spent remembering a specific moment, 'Venetsialaiset', the end of summer fest. It was dark but still warm outside, a miracle in Finland. The small fire of driftwood sending sparks up to the stars. Drawing in the darkness with half-burned stick with the ember still glowing on one end. Being amazed at the endlessness of the stars, the lonely lighthouse winking in the horizon. We based our workshop art on that remembered experience doing light drawings of the cabins (FIGURE 14).

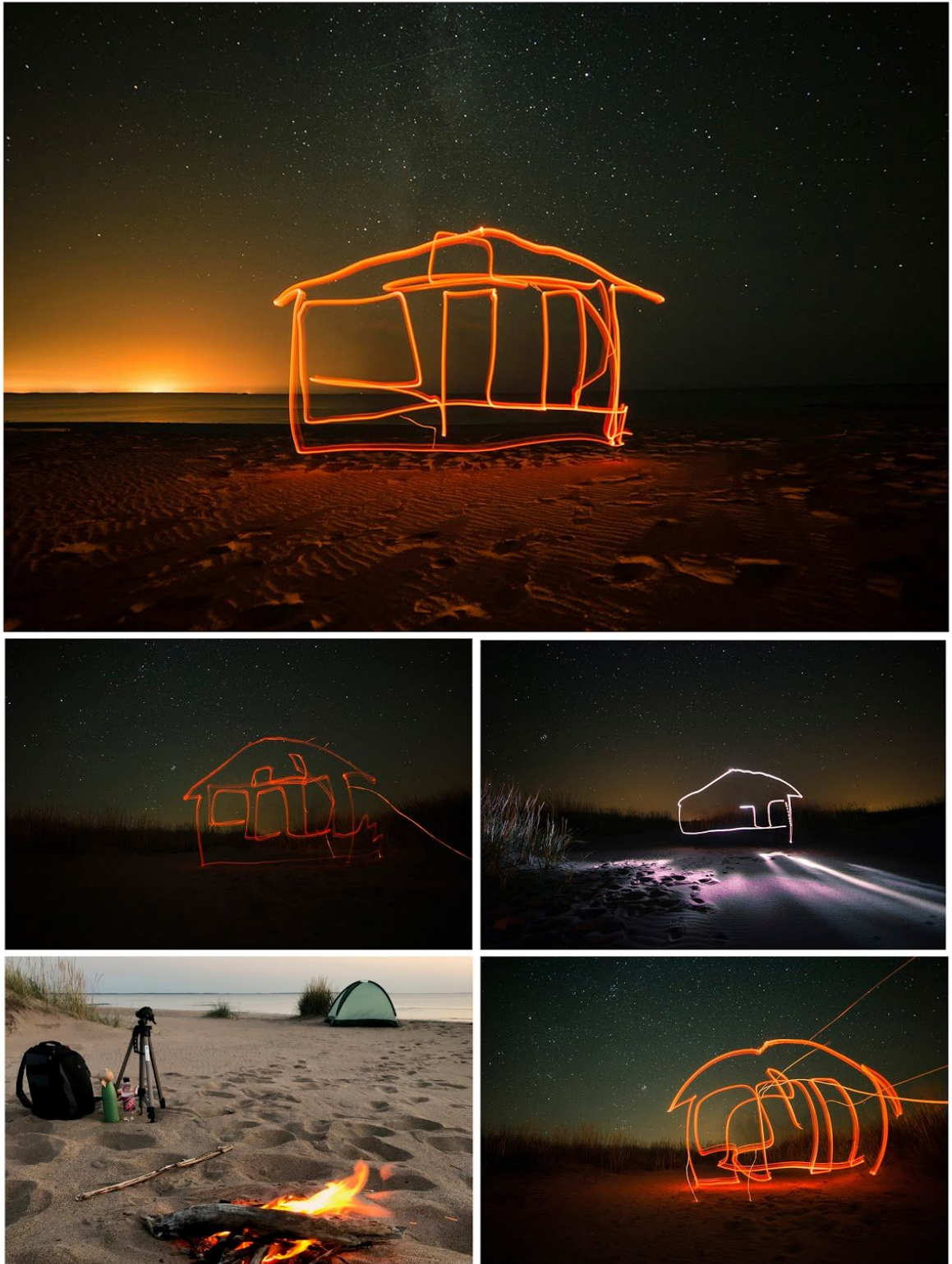


Figure 14: Overnight workshop and light painting.

Textuality could also be a challenge. If the memories were too deeply ingrained with sensory experiences they were difficult to express or collect. We did some other

mimicking activities with some participants, like going to swim in the night. That brought memories but too fragmented and numerable to share. 'You had to be there' does not explain anything to an outsider. This was even more evident in my own memory work. Many times I did not collect one coherent memory-story, just fragments of what it was like to be in Kämpävattaja.

Insider view from auto-ethnographic work

Memories are like small puddles. They reflect perfectly everything around them and feel complete. But when you touch them, try to study them, the more they get muddled. Working with my own memories made this more clear. When someone else tells their memory, you do not doubt it, especially if you were not there to experience it from another perspective. Using my memories felt like I was stirring that puddle with a stick. You start to question what part is actual memory, what is the memory of remembering that original memory. Different times and thoughts get layered on top of the original memory and change them. The word Palimpsest came to mind. It is a term used to describe old parchments with multiple layers of text. Parchments were so expensive, they were often reused, the older text somewhat scraped away and new written on top of it. The older writing still somewhat readable when concentrating on ignoring the newer letters. Trying to find my memories under all the stories I had been told by others about the moments, of me imagining them later based on family photographs or now again returning to them with the intentions of making art. I started to think how much of that person in the memories still existed, the filter of adulthood changing the moments and thoughts of me as a child.

My assumption, in the beginning, was that working on my own memories would be the most effortless part. They would be easiest to access without any preparation or social interaction. I could use as much time as I wanted without regard to the participant. In actuality delving into my memories was the hardest part. I was in a way too close. Instead of a steady trickle of memories, I was flooded with half the Baltic sea. I needed to find ways to limit the memories and to step outside of them.

I began by truly analysing my affinity to the place. To me, Vattaja has been the one constant in my life, an anchor point in the world. When I go to Lahenkroopi the place

gives me peace. For me Vattaja is sacred. From early childhood, I have thought the waves of the sea as a huge heartbeat. It makes you feel small and insignificant in comparison but it is not a bad feeling. Why worry about silly minuscule things if you are yourself one. This vast living thing existing so much longer than anything I know or am. We humans could try with all our powers to stop it and still the waves would still come.

Remembering Kämppävattaja brought with it acute sadness. I needed to work through the feelings of loss and injustice. The risk of losing Kämppävattaja has loomed over me for all my life. I remember in second grade we were asked to draw what we would wish for most in the world. I drew a kitten because one hour and my drawing skills were a bit too limited for drawing the army leaving Vattaja for good. But that was my first thought. Fighting to save Kämppävattaja was a constant thing. I have been trying to help with the efforts of Pro Vattaja ry, an association to advocate civilian rights in Vattaja, to keep the cabins and the local rights stand in Lahenkroopi. I have helped to organise a communal happening '*Auringonlaskunilta Vattajalla - Sunset evening in Vattaja*' almost every summer since we just couldn't do it anymore. I have lived through the ever-growing desperation when working against impossible odds and trying to oppose governmental agencies. There are still hurt and bitterness about losing Kämppävattaja. I didn't even have a working cabin there, only a few moulding timbers on the location where my ancestor had one. But they gave the place a frame and a logical way to justify our rights to be there to outsiders.

I would have so wished there could have been a balance between the needs of locals and Defence Forces and preserving nature. Lahenkroopi area is not even used for anything specific. They did some training exercises in the cabins before they were destroyed, shooting out windows and kicking in doors. To us it was sacrilege, defiling our loved places. Part of the area has been rented out as a sheep pasture and fenced. Now that the right of use has been abolished with the loss to the cabins the Finnish Defence Forces can keep the whole area inaccessible to civilians. It's more convenient for them. When people started to spend time there with their campers overnight camping was strictly forbidden. Many times the barrier booms are down on the roads to keep anyone away for no reason. After the demolishing, I didn't go to the area for many years. I needed to let the memories dim a little. Now I go to visit Lahenkroopi occasionally when I'm in Kokkola. It is still a lovely beach but not the Kämppävattaja anymore. It is a different place even if the location is the same. we were not activists

anymore, rising to the barricades to yell about the injustice. We tried that and it did not help. Part of the reasons behind this whole process was to help the community members heal from the loss. To get over the resentment and hold on to the good parts. To remember Kämpävattaja as it was, not as it ended.

When working with my memories I needed to find ways to limit them. I needed to build sluice gates to control how much memories would flow at any given moment. If everything came at the same time, the memories were unworkable.

When to remember

While observing all the collecting processes I found there is a correlation between the complexity of the artistic making and activity of the remembering (Table 3). The art making process changed the process of remembering depending on how much the end result was focused on.

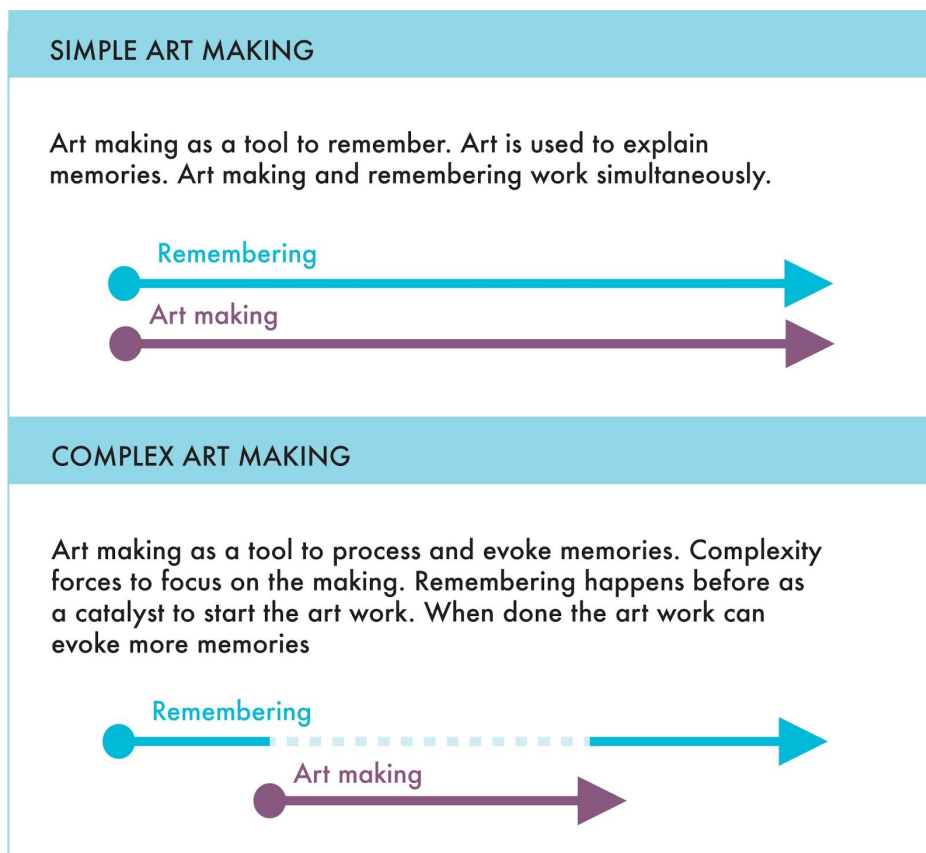


Table 3: How the complexity of art making affects the remembering process

When the art was done purely to explain, to convey information without thinking about the aesthetics of the end result, it was a direct tool for remembering. The participant was actively remembering things more by making or instructing the making of the art. This was apparent with the interviews. Drawing simple maps lead people to remember more as they were working.

With the small workshops, it was different. Doing art was not a direct conduit to memory anymore. Art was still used to remember but now in stages. When doing a more elaborate art the remembering was done before and after, not during the making. The memory work was more intense while planning an artwork. While making the actual artwork, the focus was fully on the construction. When the art making process was communicative and collaborative, everyone needed to talk. Concentrating on the moment and the dialogue stopped the flow of memories. They returned to the forefront after the artistic work was done, that art working as a stepping stone to remembering more.

With my auto-ethnographic work, I was curious to see whether the same was true. After all, when working alone there was no need to have a conversation or negotiate with others. No need to rise to the surface from the past. Could the artistic flow help the memories flow at the same time? What I noticed was that the social aspects of participation did not matter as much as the level of technical skill and the focus needed on the artwork. Sketching with familiar tools helped to remember things. The kinesthetic tactility of drawing gave the mind something to focus on and made it easier to keep the distracting thoughts away. At the same time, the work was simple enough to stay relaxed and not too concerned about the visual aspects of art making. Same happened when I was painting some details. When the task itself was monotonous enough, it became automated and left room to think something else, just like getting fresh ideas while driving a car or knitting. If the art making was more complicated, the construction took all the mental capacity from remembering. However, when working alone the jumps from working on the art and remembering things was much more frequent than during the workshops.

How can art be used to understand, present and share place memories?

Presenting memories

The second part of the research process was trying multiple ways to use art to understand and to present place memories so that they can be shared and hopefully understood more widely. After collecting memories from multiple participants, it was time to start to process them with art, to make the memories more understandable for a wider audience, people outside Kämpävattaja community.

Processing and presenting the collected memories made it necessary to analyse them loosely, not for the research itself but to better understand them to move the artistic work further. I did some thematic analysis of the memories told. Most of the participants had told memories about their childhood or youth. This was compatible with many studies done about the reminiscence bump, tendency for older people to remember more about their childhood and adolescent years (Rathbone, C.J., Moulin, C.J.A. & Conway, M.A. *Memory & Cognition*, 2008. 1403–1413). Our autobiographical memory does not store data consistently. Instead, it stores more in the times when there are changes in the self. That mostly occurs in early life, so the memories are more prevalent. Other aspects reinforce the volume of childhood memories. Most of the participants come from agricultural backgrounds. When you were old enough to work the summers were spent in haymaking and other farming works. There were no holidays from a dairy farm. Thematic division of the memories helped to understand the background of the memories and thus gave informational frame the memory processing work.

When I started to process the memories, I was faced with the same issue, both with my own and the ones collected, just from the complete opposite ends. With the shared memories I needed to find a way in to understand better. I was using art to get closer, trying to find ways to somehow experience the memories deeper. The inverse was needed for my own memories. With them, I needed to get perspective, see them from outside.

The collection of photographs from all the participants and myself was, again, a good starting point. According to Seija Ulkuniemi (2005), photographs can take on almost magical qualities, giving an illusion that life can be captured and kept still. The need to take photos can come from the need to preserve moments; what we see, what we remember. Ulkuniemi draws parallels between photographs and memories, both separated from their time and place of origin, still active in the one experiencing them. She writes that photographs can affect us strongly, even if they are less personal and more distant than a memory. Unlike memories, photographs can be used to experience just a specific moment, and then let go where memories would linger (Ulkuniemi, 2005, 49). Martha Langford agrees writing 'Photography, like memory, is precious to us because it lights the dusky corners of our minds and allows us to speculate, appropriate, empathize - whatever term you like - in relative mental safety' (Langford, 2007, 99). For more intense and maybe negative memories, safety and the ability to get away from the memory at will, would be a good thing.

The sound files were instrumental for my work. Being able to return to the conversations later refreshed my own memories of the moment. Almost every time I listened to the recordings I noticed some new detail I had previously missed. There is a performative aspect to looking at photographs and photo albums. They invite us to visit the past, hopefully with a guide. Langford (2007) writes that photo albums cannot be understood completely without someone talking about the pictures, or as she puts it 'the oral scaffolding of storytelling'. She notes that interestingly the way the photo albums are structured is similar to traditional oral recitation still used in non-literary societies where things have to be memorised to keep them. The inherent knowledge recounted orally 'makes the photographic album into an instrument of memory that is reactivated in performance' (Langford, 2007, 23). For me, it was important to have the photos and also the recorded interviews to return to. I had a guide with me whenever I needed them.

Because of the rarity of photos, it seemed all the participants who shared the same family albums knew the photographs by heart. Many stories related to the moment a picture had been taken; she was crying because there was no time to get her newly done rowan berry pearls for the photo. But this went further still. It was interesting to notice how the very old photographs had their own stories. How their grandmother had cut her head from the only photo of her to use it a passport. And now they had no proper images of her. Even more, the photos had been used to imagine stories to connect to

the past. One of the founders of Kämpävattaja nicknamed Matti of Vattaja, spend all his summers there. There is one picture of him outside his cabin (FIGURE 15), linked to many memories, true or imagined. *'I had this thought experiment about this photo, told one of them during group conversations. Of someone coming and asking Matti, did he not get bored just to sit there in Vattaja. And he would answer that after going to America three times to work and after outliving two wives, now being with the third, some quiet time was actually preferred'* (Group conversation, August 26, 2018). Everyone agreed that it would be so like Matti to say such a thing. This imagined conversation became part of whom this long past person was for all of us looking at the photograph.



Figure 15: Matti of Vattaja, with their third wife and visitors. The cabin had windows that slid open, distinct from all the other cabins. Matti had learned the style when working in the United States.

Photographs worked as a foundation to connect with the past, but most of the memories did not have any pictures attached to them. There is a value association connected to photographs. Before the digital era when we snap pictures of our breakfast, weirdly shaped clouds and a cat snoring photos were taken of important things. As Ulkuniemi words it, what was worth to remember (49). In some ways, the memory preservation

process can be seen to grow from this thought. From the start, the participants had been interested in having me illustrate their memories for the book. During the interviews and more casual conversations, many of the participants brought up things I should picture. It is such a waste it was never photographed, was a common comment, so I started to call the illustration work as 'Photos not taken' (FIGURE 16). From all the presenting methods this was probably the most important for the participants, even more to the elderly. The people with cameras did not see some of the everyday things in Kämpävattaja important enough to record. The participants back then were 'just' children. They did not get to say what was worthy of a photograph. They wanted to change that. To take the photos not taken before by having me illustrate their memories. To make them last and have 'value'.



Figure 16: Different sketches for the illustrations based on some collected memories about a spot on the road to Vattaja that was always flooded. The participants commented on details to change like that the girls had shorter hair and the trees were smaller.

The participants liked the more photorealistic illustrations, the likeness of things was important to them. Watercolour paintings are an easily approachable art form, they went naturally with the narrative aspects of the memories. The illustrations could also be used in the future for the book. There seems to be a divide in the art world about the value and place of illustration. Some view it as just another way of doing visual art, others feel it is more related to graphic design than contemporary art. The same argument can be had about weather illustrations are applied visual art. After all, they are far from the place-specific practices more familiar with AVA. Then again illustrations are in their core art done to serve a purpose, existing between design and art. Applied visual arts combines practices from both the art and the design world. The argument about illustration being either contemporary art or applied art is not necessary because both viewpoints make it AVA.

Personating the past

There is a very thin line between memory and a story. Langford raises an interesting point calling memory 'a system of belief'. We decide to trust and believe our memories. For me the question of accuracy was not so important, everyone told their own truths. The accuracy and correctness of the memories only become relevant when I started working with the told memories. I needed to find a balance with preserving the original memories and artistic interpretations. How much could one empathise, go into the memories to 'feel' them themselves, without changing them? Keeping them still true to their origin. I needed to burrow deeper into all the collected memories, not just my own. A good tool for working came from a rather surprising source, a documentary about Tove Jansson. The documentary '*Fånge i Mumindalen*', loosely translated *prisoner in Moominvalley*, was focusing on Jansson as an artist struggling with the public prejudices being both a 'high art' painter and also a popular children's book author and an illustrator (Aho & Airas-Ehrnrooth, 2014). People thought she should have chosen just one or the other. This balancing act interested me in itself but particularly I liked the versatility of her working. When painting or illustrating started to feel like she was forcing herself to work on it, she swapped to writing. Jansson saw the two types of working as different conduits of the same thing, the visual and the literal both refreshing each other. I adopted this idea and alternated with writing and more visual work. I adapted most of the memories into short stories, trying to move away from the actual persons and

towards more literary open form. I saw that as a way to make it possible for others to experience someone else's memories, trying to find concord between keeping the memory as true as possible and making it more generally understandable. It helped me to look at the memories from multiple angles, words and visual forms bringing up different things. Looking back, using narrative was the skeleton key for this whole process. It helped to open doors, both for the participants and me.

In addition to writing, I also wanted to connect more to the history of the place. And with that the memories from that era. Searching for ways to connect with the memories of the past is part of human nature. Looking from the point of view of an ethnographer, Pink (2015) writes that researcher should not only stay outsiders observing and taking notes about other people but to try finding ways to have a deeper 'experience-based empathetic understanding' of their experiences and knowing. (Pink, 2015, 98) Finding parallels between the experiences of the participants can give researcher access to memories and knowledge that would stay hidden with other means. Pink uses as an example to the work of Okely, who 'used her own contemporary sensory experiences as a way to understand other people's biographical experiences' Okely researched changes in the experiences of elderly people living in rural France. She was trying to link to the past by sensory experiences, to 'create correspondences' to the experiences of the elderly by having similar experiences herself. (Pink, 2015, 98) From early on I chose to adopt an everyday activity that was common for Vattaja: the cleaning, mending and making fishing nets. It was a never-ending chore for the fishermen. Every cabin had nets hanging on the outer walls. It was something to do when everything else was done and during the long winter evenings. I wanted to find a connection to that mundane repetition. Keeping with my ideas of using recycled materials as much as possible I decided to use old discarded books as my material. The net form gave interesting sand dune like visually pleasing shapes. I knew I could use them later as a part of an installation. These paper nets became part of my everyday life (FIGURE 17). For me Vattaja has been always the place to relax, to get away from chores but Vattaja was not a place of leisure for most of its history. There were memories were about fishing and preserving fish for the winter, washing rugs, herding cows, collecting the eggs the chickens had laid all over the beach. The mindset of sitting with the nets every free moment was interesting. The repetitive making of the nets gave me some link to a different time. Preparing the books to net material, making the nets and folding them to store better, maybe mending few broken loops here and there and always making more.

All the books had their own paper texture, slight variations of colour and font making the nets differ from one to another, just like shades and grains of sand. I also liked how the written words jumbled together were a hint of the multiple stories living in the place.



Figure 17: Paper nets during the process and as dunes in the exhibition.



The idea of mimicking old ways of doing things by hand, by yourself, continued into other works too. For example, I chose to do little figurines with real clothes, hand-sewn clothes being the norm at the time. Talking about the clothes they wore at Vattaja was

also a good way to ask something specific from the participants. Those could lead to more like stepping stones into a memory. Focusing on their grandmother's clothes lead from the colours their grandmother liked to the way they talked and to the way she made flapjacks in Vattaja.

Some good moments happen unplanned. I usually had some handiwork with me wherever I went. During an unrelated larger gathering, some of the participants who were there wanted to help sew with me. The extempore sewing circle of people making tiny clothes made me think that I should have included making handicraft with my methods. I think the threshold to participate would have been much lower than with the more 'artistic' making.

Exhibition

I wanted to do art that was accessible to the participants. It was their memories I was working with, after all, so I felt it was only right to work on their terms. At the same time, I also wanted to go further with the art, test out new ways of working. In their book *Themes of contemporary art*, Robertson and McDaniel have group different strategies that artist have adopted when using memories in art. Some present memories by displaying evidence, some reenact the past, some artists break the narratives of the memories and arrange the pieces into something new (Robertson & McDaniel, 2013, 162–169). Having these different approaches as a rough guide I tried to find multiple ways to present the memories and with the research and Vattaja itself.

Wanting to move further from the illustrations for the exhibition I chose to do installations. I made a photo installation of the many pictures collected from the participants and my own photographs. The net-dunes were used in an installation with the tower model (FIGURE 17). Huhmarniemi (2016) writes that the installations are seen and experienced from multiple viewpoints and distances, thus the materials used becomes relevant. She continues to comment that installations are attainable to audiences. There is no need to have a lot of knowledge about art to experience an installation, it can be experienced bodily (Huhmarniemi, 2016, 86). Installations are

multi-sensory experiences, bound to the space they are created for. This was important for keeping the art still familiar enough for the participants and accessible to the public.

Huhmarniemi, who has herself worked with everyday objects in her own art, notes that familiar objects can act as a link between the audience and the art (Huhmarniemi, 2016, 86). I used an old clock I had found as a rowboat for a small installation 'Past and present grandmothers' (FIGURE 18). Many people commented on it. They said 'my grandparents/parents used to have a clock just like that'. That common 50's wall clock gave a direct timeframe to the work. The cultural connotations from the object were filtered to the installation. For me personally, the connection was manifold, more than one of the elderly participants had a clock exactly like the that ticking on their walls as we were doing the interviews.



Figure 18: Process of using an old clock as an 'öykki' flat bottomed boat.



To make the exhibition more tactile I created a soundscape from the sounds I had gathered for my memory elicitation process. Hearing Vattaja as well as seeing it was important, the sensory experience was more full. Creating a soundscape of Vattaja was

technically challenging, me being more used to working with visual materials. The sounds were originally recorded to be used for phono-elicitation, mostly just for me, but sharing them in the exhibition also shared the sensory experiences both from the memory I was trying to catch with the sounds and the moments when I recorded them. I got positive feedback from the audience, they liked the 'summer sounds' and it made the place more real. One person had written 'I didn't know about the existence of this past community. I am happy that I got to experience it by using so many senses. Now I know and will remember. Thank you for a touching exhibition'. Some audience members liked to touch the sand I brought from Vattaja and used in one of the pieces (Figure 19). It was a concrete link to the place. On later thought I should have put a sign to give permission to touch the sand. Now it was done more surreptitiously. The paper netting used as dunes fascinated many. Every time I went to the gallery space, later on, they had moved and changed a bit. It was like an inside joke, referring to the beach itself being different every summer after the winter had shaped the sand.



Figure 19: Dimensional watercolour cabin with sand full of fingermarks.

Many people asked where Vattaja is and how to get there. This is not related to memories, but it shows that at least some of the appreciation of the place was coming through. I was surprised how many had taken time to write comments on the quest book, that in itself told me they had felt something. Before I had questioned how seeing someone else's personal photos and reading pieces of their memories would connect

someone to those memories. Imagination could bridge that divide. Langford (2007) comments that familiarity is necessary for remembering but not for imagining. She writes about the 'act of beholding', how we can look at a photo and use imagination to not only see it but to experience it as if we were there. Photographs encourage us to do these imaginary travels and doing so gives us slivers of memory from that trip (Langford, 2007, 101). The people seeing the photos will not have memories of Vattaja but they can imagine it and then remember it. There were comments left by the audience saying the exhibition gave took them away for a moment, 'it felt like taking a 5 minute holiday'.

Roles of the art making and the art maker

Can it be art to have a group of people watching old dia slides, sharing their memories of that past place and time? How about a conversation over photographs and doing some sketches together? What part of the process is art? I struggled with the question a lot until I started to think about the whole process as one larger piece. The community wanted to remember and collect their memories. I have facilitated that as best as I could. Every small part is a piece of a larger whole, stepping stones towards a complete art project. Without the conversation, there would not be the materials for the art. And the art would not have any purpose as mere pictured without the conversations. They were all intertwined cycles of information gathering. Jokela (2013) notes that in the concept of AVA the artist intention might not to create art, but instead 'bring art into people's lives and everyday life' (Jokela, 2013, 13)

There is much debate in the role of an artist. Is it to make things? To facilitates others to make things? Is an artist a craftsman, an organiser, a visual specialist, a person who looks at the world from another way? Is there aestheticism in dialogue? Robertson and McDaniel (2013) bring up the term relational aesthetics used by critics and curators when evaluating art that is based more on human relations than any art objects. The term was borrowed from a French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud, who used it to explain new ways a group of artists was doing participatory and socially-conscious art, where the essence was the human relations the artwork evoked. Relational art envelops a wide range of lived activities as art, social situations for the artist and the participants to interact, to share sensory experiences that are more important for the moment than any concrete

objects or images created (Robertson & McDaniel, 2013, 32). Similar ideas can be found in dialogical aesthetics, where aesthetics are based on dialogue. The aesthetic can be found through a sense of commonness, in bodily experiences, from a commitment to dialogue. Kester (2004) evaluates the differences between the conventional and dialogical models of aesthetic. The conventional approach uses discourse to communicate about a work of art, in dialogical models the discourse and the exchange are the subject, the work of art (Kester, 2004, 84–89; 112).

Over the years Kester (2004) has written much about the dialogical artistic practice, arguing that the can add to the existing understanding of art (Kester, 2004, 188). He (2013) argues that there is change happening in the ways of thinking in contemporary art, basic assumptions about the aesthetic experience are questioned and redefined (Kester 2013). It is needed because the conventional idea of an individual being touched and changed by a work of art does not stretch easily to the more social and communal art practices. Art is too easily divided into aesthetic art and social art, that sacrifices aesthetics to reach other goals. These types of art practices present many possibilities but from a purely pragmatic point of view, they also give the artist contradictory guidelines. For example, Päivi-Maria Jaatinen (2015) argues that although contemporary visual arts are increasingly interdisciplinary this is not reflected so much in higher art education. The differentiation begins with students having to specialize in a specific visual art form and continues when they enter the working world, as the professional artists' associations in Finland are very separate. Jaatinen sees these associations as gatekeepers who uphold the long-established divisions of visual arts instead of dissolving them. Still, when Jaatinen is considering ways to measure a professional visual artists' skills, she again turns to the traditional merits of an artist: the number of exhibitions, grants, commissioned and purchased artworks (Jaatinen, 2015. 56–60). The way artists are evaluated is still largely based on more traditional art. If applied visual artists are moving away from selling artworks and towards selling their artistic expertise (Jokela, 2013, 13) we need to find new ways to evaluate artists and their work. Kester (2010) has noticed similar constriction to the emergence of a more broadly understood artistic identity. He comments that many historians and critics seem to be attached to rather conservative definitions of artistic practices. Instead of daring to tackle the more integrative projects that question the conventional artist role they concentrate on examining collaborations done solely inside the art world (Kester, 2010). Changes don't happen without resistance. Arguments against the further amalgamation

of art with other fields rise from fear that art is exploited and suppressed into a mere tool to serve the social and economic fields and other disciplines (Huhmarniemi, 2013. 51).

Even though what I am doing is not practice-led research, some inescapable similarities, owing to the simple facts that an artist is doing the research and art is done as part of the research. Michael A. R. Biggs uses an interesting metaphor when illustrating the differences in process between research in art and within the more traditional science. An engineer might research different methods and materials in theory that they are later used when building a bridge. Research gives a theory that can later be translated into practice. Artworks the other way round. Art uses practical making to get ideas, to form theories (Biggs, 2006, 186). We start from the making to end up with theories. In my own thesis, I have bounced between theory and making, both giving new life to the other, and even more, both being fuelled by working with the community. I am bringing this up because it has given me some perspective on the importance of making. There are some aspects of AVA I have struggled with: the role of the artist, and related to that, the importance of the end artefact. From my core, I am a maker. I have been making and creating things from early childhood. Now in my career, I am slowly starting to call what I do art. To lose that making in favour of being a facilitator for others would undo me. With this project I have tried to find balance, to be both the artist that makes and the artist that facilitates. For me, the value of Applied Visual Art lies in the way it wants to harness the usefulness of art for more general purposes. On a very ideological moment, one could say that art should thrive to make the world a better place, not just more beautiful or interesting. It is a very grand and possibly unreachable goal but even the action of trying could be beneficial for many.

The questions about the role of the artist can lead us to think also about the value of aesthetics in research. Art-based research lives somewhere between art and science. This duality can sometimes cause a debate on how to balance the artistic merits of a project with the scientific ones. Does the end product have to be artistically and aesthetically of high value or the experience and making the process more important? Some researchers feel strongly about artistic professionalism. They think that to use art in research you need to possess the level artistic skills of an artist or get a real art professional to work with you. If the research can be art, it should be high quality enough that it speaks itself, not a piece of creative trying with a written explanation attached (Piiro, 2002. 444). The other end of the spectrum thinks that anyone can do arts and

making art should be for everyone. As is understandable the positions in this debate seem to reflect their backgrounds. For example, researchers coming from the field of education that working artistically does not belong purely to fine arts but that an 'artist' is a person who has developed ideas, sensibilities, skills, and imagination to create something that is well proportioned, skillfully executed and imaginative (Eisner, 2005, 208). The duality is also part of the peer review. As is common in scientific review the scientific community reads and reviews researchers work and its merits. Many times this happens by publishing an article in a scientific publication. But the peer review in ARB does not end there. There is also the art part that needs to be evaluated. As with the scientific part, the art should also be reviewed by professionals in that genre.

Usability (of chosen tools)

The research method was chosen quite early in the process, especially for its flexibility. An argument could be raised that artistic action research would have worked better. The cyclical nature of the process, the communal aspects of the research, to goal to find new approaches to using art, all this would work well together with artistic action research. The flexibility of ABR worked well to envelop both the communal aspects of the project as well as the more insular practices. It leaned closer to artistic action research with the cyclical process and then gave possibilities to do something closer to practice-led research when it was needed. ABR was wide enough to envelope all the different processes I used to collect data.

ARB methods are effective when disseminating research findings, eliciting emotional responses, making people feel about the topic. Art has done that or at least tried to do that from times immemorial. in ABR the power to move people is used to get knowledge and share it. To encourage people to see things from other perspectives and maybe rethink their own life accordingly. Using art can make visible things that are left in the margins, between the spoken words. Art-based research is very useful to bridge linguistic barriers. Language can also be a barrier when talking about things we might not want to put into words or have the vocabulary to explain. Emotions are easier to express nonverbally. Using art can give another way of explaining and telling things that does not involve so much the written word. Working without words can also be profitable when the research is dealing with sensitive difficult issues. For some using art comes

naturally. They may find it easier to draw a picture about the topic rather than speaking or writing down what they think about it. Not every participant is as open to making art. A researcher doing ABR have to be sensitive to the needs of the participants. Art should not be forced upon anyone.

ABR is still an emerging research methodology. It needs to reassure academia of its value and scientific merits (Knowles & Cole, 2008). The systematic use of arts can sometimes feel like an oxymoron. This process was aiming to collect memories for multiple reasons. The memories were collected for the participants, as a way to process a part of their life stories, similar to the psychological uses of reminiscence. They were for the community to commemorate a place of shared memories and to create a tribute for the now lost place. And the memories were for the public to give information or elicit emotions about an unfamiliar place they should find about. Working towards all the uses for all the different stakeholders at points I was spread too thin. A more selective approach might be more efficient.

This project might have benefitted from having another person working with me, someone outside the community, without the limits of preconditioned roles. They could have encouraged me to push further with complexity if the art making. Having an outsider might have nudged the participants out of their comfort zone out of courtesy to a stranger. It would be interesting to conduct similar work with a more diverse group of researchers.

That said, I think my familiarity with the subject and the participants was still an asset and invaluable for the success of this process. Walking two parallel paths at the same time, towards both the thesis and a book, made things difficult at times. Many times I needed to stop and focus my time better, to keep the spotlight of the research in the methods of using art in memory work, not the memories themselves. To remember what I was doing, what I needed to focus on.

Not to say working towards binary goals has not had its benefits also. The mutually beneficial connection was needed and it was important for the study. The idea of the book made the people interested to be part of the project. They were eager to share their knowledge. There was a natural pool of subjects for me to work with. Whenever I felt stuck with my thesis I could start working with the material solely focusing on the

book. It gave me a new perspective and gave me new avenues to explore. For example, the goal of using them in the future for the book encouraged me to turn memories from the interviews into stories. Writing prose forced me to go into the memories and try to experience them myself. Periodically writing prose became a part of my research process. It opened up new ideas also because I had to swap between languages, research was done in English, stories in Finnish.

Tools for future collected memories

USE PLACE	<p>There is no comparison to actual location for bringing up memories. Place memories are strongly connected to bodily sensory experiences. Use that to your advantage. If possible take the participants to the location or somewhere similar. Let the sounds, smells and atmosphere work for you.</p> <p>Sensory elicitation comes naturally on location, but you can also emulate it. Projecting large photos or videos of the place, playing sounds from there, maybe even having some materials connect to the place to touch. Use as many senses as possible to create the place experience.</p>
USE COMMUNITY	<p>Community, where people feel safe and free to reminisce and share their memories, can multiply the remembering process. Bouncing memories from one person to another can increase and amplify them. The memories turn from individual accounts into communal, more unanimous in their detail. Individual memories are more independent. To get a wide scope work both with individuals and with groups.</p> <p>Be ready for surprises. Memories are distilled emotions and hold the full spectrum of human experiences. When searching through them for one topic, something else might be found with it.</p>
USE NARRATIVE	<p>One of the finest tools I can offer is narrative. Use stories to remember, to connect and to share memories. Creating a narrative makes people remember things better. It makes the memories easier to relate to and share. Whatever method you use, drawing, writing, podcasting, utilise the power of</p>

	<p>storytelling. The narrative gives you a lighthouse, blinking friendly in the horizon to show the route ahead.</p>
USE TIME	<p>Take your time. It is such a good overall advise on anything that it borders on being a cliché. Nevertheless, the benefits of having time became so apparent during the process it cannot be overlooked. When working with the elderly, not every day is the same. On some days the remembering does not come as easily. Relying on only one meeting or having limited time is a risk. Hurrying takes away from the moment with the participant and does not work.</p> <p>Give yourself and the participants time. Don't overwhelm people. Do something simple and unimportant before starting the real work. Take a walk, make some coffee.</p> <p>Don't try to do everything in one go. Return to the memories later to find more information. You will not be able to process everything in one go. Write everything down, all the thoughts, ideas and questions. If not documented then, they are gone.</p>
CHOOSE WHAT TO DO	<p>Before you start the project think who are you collecting the memories for. Who are the memories for. Have a well-defined topic. The same works when doing art. Give yourself boundaries. The more you limit the possibilities the harder your imagination works to fill the missing pieces.</p> <p>Limit your tools and get to know them. Technical things are the most useless thing to spend time on while working with participants.</p>
GET TO KNOW THE TOPIC	<p>Have good background knowledge to understand better what you have been told. Good general knowledge about the topic, both the history of the people participating and of the place remembered helps you to keep up with the participants. The</p>

remembered memories are rarely told as coherent stories but come in bursts and fragmented pieces. Knowing even the basics of the place gives you the needed yarn to stitch them together as you go on

**ANCHOR THE
WORK**

Find an anchor point for the art. Choose a starting point, one thing to build the art around. It can be a detail from the memory, a moment, an idea, an object.

Use anchors to ground the work with the participants.
Concrete starting points help to get the work going.

Returning to the shore

Applied visual art can work as an excellent support structure when doing memory work. The importance given to the community, location, and experiences is beneficial to the remembering process. The openness and versatility of AVA agree with memory work. The recognition of the more ephemeral art practices reflects the ephemeral nature of memories, while the more practical applications of art make it approachable to people. As this research was limited to the more common tools and practices, exploring the possibilities of applied visual art in the context of memory work could merit further research.

What is the value of holding on to place memories? Why should we try to preserve the memory of Kämpävattaja instead of just finding a new place? This process showed the many ways our identities, social connections and values are connected to places we care for. Removing Vattaja would remove pieces of who we are. This project worked to alleviate the sadness still lingering inside the community from the loss of Kämpävattaja. Even when working with the memories sometimes brought up the negative feelings the overall atmosphere with the participants and the community, in general, was positive. The activities done within the research project gave new avenues for the community members to come together again. The conversations were about the good old times, appreciating the importance of Kämpävattaja without much bitterness. Memory work brings the past closer but it also makes it possible to look at it from outside. To see further ahead. The location is still there. We could create a new connection with it and tame it again as our place.

The appreciation of collecting and sharing memories spread inside the community. Many were activated to continue their own memory work. We had multiple gatherings just to watch old photos together as a group, a good reason to dig up the old slide projectors and the albums. Some participants started to fill memory journals together with their families about their personal history in general. Working with multiple generations showed how the place memories were passed down. The customs of the community included intrinsically the recognition of the worth of the place. As children were taught how to be in Vattaja, they

also learned to care about it. Seagulls had their place and their nests were left to be. The especially smooth and silvery driftwood pieces were too beautiful soul woods to burn so they were used to do camps and visual arrangements on the beach, long before anyone talked about place-specific art installations.

We all have inherited memories, stories that are passed on to us. For good or bad they shape us, our worldviews and our daily lives. Memories passed on to us can be beneficial, anchor us to our families and our community, or we may inherit our ancestors' prejudices and fears. Memories play a part in our social inheritance, a term from sociology on how the same problems in families are passed on from one generation to the next. By bringing the inherited collective memories to light we can see them better and decide what to do with them. Seeing and experiencing someone's memories can help us understand that person better. Working and presenting memories can thus create an emphatic dialogue between people.

On an individual level, there was a lot of positive feedback from the participants, especially from the aged. They liked that someone was interested in their past and their knowledge, being interviewed gave a sense of importance. Their memories and experiences were valued and important. Another aspect they appreciated was being able to be useful and help, not only being the recipients of help. All the elderly participants had been, and many still were, hard working busy people, to be reduced by age to someone needing help had not been the easiest transition. Being returned to the role of the one helping someone else gave some of that efficiency back to them.

During this process, I tried to preserve the authenticity of the collected memories. To be mindful of the original memories through all the artistic explorations. How well I succeeded in this is difficult to measure. A positive indicator is how the participants accepted, even appropriated, some of the artworks. They felt connected to them. Part of this might be connected to the cyclical process, they saw the work gradually emerge. There are plans to arrange another exhibition in Keski-Pohjanmaa so that more of the participants could see it. Now, most have seen the exhibition only digitally through photos or video calls.

Vattaja has been the heart of this process so it is only natural to return to the place.

One thing that came up with almost every participant was the idea of the freedom of wide open spaces. The Finnish word for it - aava - was used a lot. The fascination of Vattaja could be its dual nature, a boundary between space and place, here and outthere. We need breathing space, space from other people. Space can be thought of as room to live and grow, freedom from society and its norms to be who you truly are. Kämpävattaja has been that for many generations. A place to escape to, to be free. Space has an element of adventure in it, of exploration. The unhindered movement towards the horizon, the unknown frontier, the great wide open of the land, sea. The Kämpävattaja part of the beach is 'tamed', well known and well loved. Right next to it is the unknown, the sea. On Vattaja you are standing safely at the edge of the unknown, looking at the tantalising horizon of the unfamiliar. The comfort of the home and freedom of the uncharted in one perfect place.

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