



*Fig 1. Saku Kämäräinen installing KIVIKASA in Helsinki, Autumn 2014*

## **What Lies Beneath KIVIKASA and What Is Sound Art?**

KIVIKASA As a Step to Understand Sound Art

and

Sound Art As a Way to Understand KIVIKASA

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### **Abstract**

In the Spring of 2014 my colleague, Saku Kämäräinen, and I created a sound artwork for the Media Lab students' group-exhibition in Tokyo. In the aftermath of the exhibition I started to ponder how our artwork relates to the context of sound art and my personal uncertainty about the whole field of sound art in general. I started reading literature about sound art and the ideas that I was exposed to and the beginning of a collaboration through internship with sound artist Ariel Bustamante, made me ask the question from myself – “What is sound art and what kind of sound art KIVIKASA is?”

My master thesis walks through this aforementioned chain of events utilizing the method of practice based research in which the subject of inquiry is the artwork, its creator and the whole process.

I will reflect my personal background motivations and attitudes, review events and ideas that have influenced the creative process. Through these intentions and believes I will review and reflect the creative process – both design and construction process by revealing what lies beneath KIVIKASA until the moment when the first question was asked that ignited this writing process.

Then I will be transported into the world of sound art literature to explore what sound art is, or what it could be. This is done by reviewing history of sound art and some of the ideas that are expressed in the literature, for example listening and the habit of sound art sticking with its own materiality of sound. In the end I will be brought back to analyse and inspect the artwork in the light of new acquired understanding from the literature. I am trying to find understanding to the question: “What kind of sound art KIVIKASA is?”

In the conclusion I try to search understanding about how the writing process, literature and the whole process affected me. Underneath this process lies a will to understand something that I don't yet understand.

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**Keywords** sound art, sonic art, sound, listening, practice based research

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**Tekijä** Ari-Pekka Leinonen

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KIVIKASA As a Step to Understand Sound Art and Sound Art As a Way to Understand KIVIKASA

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**Kieli** Englanti

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### **Tiivistelmä**

Keväällä 2014 tein yhdessä opiskelijakaverini Saku Kämäräisen kanssa äänitaideteoksen Media Labin opiskelijoiden yhteisnäyttelyyn Tokioon. Näyttelyn jälkimainingeissa aloin pohtimaan teoksen sijoittumista äänitaiteen kontekstiin ja omaa epätietoisuuttani aiheesta. Aloin lukemaan äänitaidetta käsittelevää kirjallisuutta ja sen esiin nostamat ajatukset, sekä tutustumiseni äänitaiteilija Ariel Bustamanteen työharjoittelun kautta saivat minut kysymään – mitä on äänitaide ja millaista äänitaidetta tekemäni teos KIVIKASA on?

Lopputyöni kirjoitelmaosio käy läpi tämän yllämainitun tapahtumaketjun tekijälähtöisen tutkimustavan kautta, jossa tutkimuksen kohteena on teos, sen tekijä ja koko prosessi.

Käyn läpi asennehistoriaani ja taiteelliseen ilmaisuuni vaikuttaneita tapahtumia ja ilmiöitä. Niiden kautta peilaan teoksen suunnittelu- ja tekoprosessia nostoen taikurin mustaa kangasta ja kertoen mitä KIVIKASAN alla piilee, aina kysymyksen asettamishetkeen saakka, joka sai tämän kirjoitusprosessin alulle.

Sitten tapahtumat vievät minut äänitaidekirjallisuuden maailmaan selvittämään mitä äänitaide on tai mitä se voisi olla käyden läpi äänitaiteen historiaa ja siihen liittyvää pohdintaa mm. kuuntelusta ja äänitaiteen äänikeskeisyydestä. Lopulta saattaen minut uuden ymmärryksen kautta tutkimaan teosta kirjallisuudesta esiin nousseiden ajatusten valossa. Yrittäen löytää ymmärrystä kysymykseen millaista äänitaidetta KIVIKASA on.

Loppupäätelmissäni etsin ymmärrystä kirjoitelmastani, äänitaiteesta ja prosessin vaikutuksista minuun. Kaiken taustalla ollessa halu ymmärtää sellaista mistä minulla ei ole vielä ymmärrystä.

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**Avainsanat** äänitaide, ääni, kuuntelu, tekijälähtöinen tutkimus

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The urge to question my own believes and ways of working was heavily ignited by sound artist Ariel Bustamante, who asked me a question: “Why do you do the things you do?” The moment when I didn’t know the answer, forced me to face this unknown and really ask this question “Why do I do the things I do?” Thank you Ariel for your infectious courage to face and question the unquestioned!

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# 1. Introduction

I have worked with my projects, made works of art, mainly trusting an inner feeling, simplicity, and little explanations, even mysticism — as way to reach other dimensions, transcendence. In Tokyo May 2014, while exhibiting a sound sculpture KIVIKASA that was created together with Saku Kämäräinen I truly started to ponder if it is possible to lay foundation on one's own artistic work with this kinds of statements.

At the same time I realized that I'm working in the field of sound art without any real deeper understanding of the field, and claiming that the sculpture that I had worked with was sound art. As much it could be claimed to be an experience machine, or a ride in amusement park. I felt that I had built my house on quick sand.

This wake up call while in Tokyo and the start of collaboration with sound artist Ariel Bustamante made me explore, and understand more deeply the discussions dealing with sound art. It also made me question my own ways of working and ask — if love towards sound, skill to pour emotions, and skill to use the medium of sound is enough to constitute an object as a piece of sound art? It really pushed me try to understand more.

Especially, after reading two thought provoking books from sound artist and theorists, Seth Kim-Cohen, where he is opening up a discussion how sound art could expand towards more self-aware and conceptually critical expression while considering taking steps out from the formalistic sound art that embraces the phenomenon of sound-in-itself. On the other hand for example sound theorists Salome Voegelin approaches the sound as great material for building fictional possible worlds within actual worlds, where the spectator can wander and experience in the flux of time, always being surprised by immediate moment. And many other ideas from various thinkers and artists began to confuse me, and generate understanding. Everybody who addressed their personal believes and values what sound and sound art could be. The truth must be somewhere there, and I have to find my own.

This exploration pushed me to ask myself, what kind of sound art KIVIKASA is, and how it relates to the field of contemporary sound art? What is it about, and what does it manifest? Why all the conceptual thoughts, working methods and selections, are left unexplained with the work? Or could little explanation be better than revealing everything?

In this thesis, I am going to describe this personal before and after KIVIKASA – thought process, starting from a brief exploration of presumptions and inspirations that I believe have had impact on the final outcome. Then I will move to the actual creative process, and inspect it from conceptual viewpoint from materialization to the exhibition. From there I jump to the world of literature as it happened in my actual life. From literature I try to find personally inspiring notions about sound art, and in the same time clarify briefly what I should know or consider knowing about sound art as a distinguish practice. My intention is not to define sound art or to say what it is, but to understand more what it could be. Also the discussion hopefully could open up ways to understand more about KIVIKASA as a work of sound art. And could reveal something I have not previously considered. In the end, I will try conclude everything into thoughts what I have learned during the process.

This thesis is most of all a description of a learning process, a personal inspection to the ways I create, and the way I value art. What I have learned from creating a sound artwork,

and about questioning its existence. I am not conducting a quasi-research about some phenomenon that I create for the necessity of creation, but instead I offer my personal thoughts and memories as a material for others to gain more understanding for common good. I might not reveal anything new, or find any objective definite information. In the case of art, I believe, everything is subjective speculation, and this process of self-reflection works as communication for others to understand more about the possibilities of a subjective point of view. This thesis is about the KIVIKASA, and the world around it including me as a creator, and the context of the kind of art where it is located. This subjectivity is hopefully transparent and truthful throughout the text.

## 1.1 About Practice Based Research

This paper is a memory-based case study. The object of enquiry has been created, then it has been occupying mind through me asking questions about its meaning and its existence. These questions are about to be answered. The results of this enquiry are unclear beforehand, as was the diversity of the process and its final outcome, the artwork. Through this kind of approach, the enquiry becomes my personal application of practice-based research, which according to Estelle Barrett has huge potential for producing “personally situated knowledge”. It also produces new ways to express that knowledge and this becomes critical as the expression reveals how this knowledge was acquired and revealed.<sup>1</sup> Through this process artists, and the maker of objects transforms into a researcher, who values and inspects the artistic process and the production of knowledge. The process becomes the target of research.<sup>2</sup> This does not neglect the subjective voice but rather, as Barrett argues, this subjective voice based on lived experience can present alternative marginalized realities and knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

With this subjective approach I face, and also faced during the process, constantly emerging new methodologies, and they are constantly adjusted according the situation. According to Pierre Bordieu the researcher must place oneself in the relation with “the other fields”, as I understand it – with the world, and reveal his or hers sources of inspiration and interests. In the context of research, this means that I must place myself into same position as I place the object of enquiry, and that is a reflexive process.<sup>4</sup> Barrett continues that this reflexivity and personally situated aspect of artistic research makes it relational, even having reinventing social relations, making it interdisciplinary and creating new ideas how acquire knowledge.<sup>5</sup>

Barrett notes that creative processes and research are “motivated by emotional, personal and subjective concerns”. It also includes tacit knowledge along with clearly stated and exact knowledge, which according to Bordieu is foundation for new discoveries.<sup>6</sup> Experimental approach of a learner-researcher facing real problem solving situations and then reflecting them, reconnects the situation where the knowledge was learned and where it was used, making the question, context and solution united. Also this personal approach can motivate

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<sup>1</sup> Barrett, E. & Bolt, B., 2007, *Practice as research : approaches to creative arts enquiry*, I. B. Tauris, London., p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

more profound learning, and produce new understanding outside the pre-determined curriculum of studies.<sup>7</sup>

Barrett has listed ways how artist as researcher can have critical distance from to the research process based on Michael Foucault's writing about "dispersed selves". She starts her list by reminding that the researcher recognizes and evaluates methodological, conceptual and all the possible links to previous artistic processes, and traces origin of the ideas, and how other works have influenced the current process creating inter-relations. The work is evaluated in a new perspective to extend the knowledge. Researcher places oneself in the field of theory and practice by doing the literature review. Researcher clearly speaks with subjective voice and locates the discussed work in the context: personal lived experience, other works, results, contributes to the discussion, addressing problems and encounters, and imagining possibilities for future.<sup>8</sup>

I will write the research material, my personal subjective memories of thoughts, while filling the gaps between with few notes, and proposal documents of sound artwork KIVIKASA.<sup>9</sup> Through opening up the creative process I believe I can find new forgotten understanding about the work, and inspect it through contemplation. Being honest to every aspect thus demystifying the cloud of romance that has appeared to cover the mundane aspects of the process. The revelations are reflected with the new understanding from the literature, and this hopefully brings even more understanding about the KIVIKASA. As a result, I will have the context — field of sound art, and understanding how to talk about KIVIKASA within that context.

## 1.2 About KIVIKASA<sup>10</sup>

Before going revealing the creative process I want briefly to introduce the exhibition where KIVIKASA was made for, and briefly describe KIVIKASA. It is easier to follow and evaluate the creative process as one can refer to the final outcome. KIVIKASA was part of group exhibition organized at Spiral building gallery, in the Omotesando business district, Tokyo Japan. The exhibition was organized and curated by composer and sound artists Shinji Kanki in collaboration with Spiral building and Media Lab Helsinki. KIVIKASA was one the four works that constituted the exhibition SOUNDS FROM FINLAND. The following description is from the official documentation webpage of the exhibition:

SOUNDS FROM FINLAND – IN TOKYO, JAPAN<sup>11</sup>

Media Lab Helsinki Student Exhibition  
May 1-6, 2014 at Spiral Building, Tokyo, Japan

The Sounds from Finland exhibition consists of four installations representing different aspects of Finnish nature and culture. Visitors are exposed to sensorial and playful experiences through audiovisual technology.

The Luonto (nature) installation is a representation of an atmospheric experience of Finnish nature where visuals and sounds conflate. It combines unique and vibrating Finnish wood with Finnish forest

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 140-141.

<sup>9</sup> Appendix A-C, p. 80-88.

<sup>10</sup> <https://vimeo.com/121078918>

<sup>11</sup> <http://mlab.taik.fi/tokyoproject/>

frequency sounds together with photographs. Photographs are combination of yeastograms and other investigations made in petridishes. Touch the wood to experience the installation to the fullest!

Polku (path) is an interactive interpretation of a path that lets the visitors explore various soundscapes, one step at a time. Kivikasa (sauna stoves) is spread throughout the Spiral Hall Atrium and introduces the mystical and subtle sounds of sauna. It presents moving sounds of fire, water and steam through a custom-made loudspeaker surface. Finally the Leija (kite) multimedia simulator recreates the experience of flying a kite and demonstrates a set of natural forces.

Together these reinterpretations form a sensory experience that goes beyond the exhibited objects. Sonic experiences open up new perspectives on the traditional elements of Finnishness and Finnish life and enable us to see nature differently.

The exhibition's digital technology installations are created by seven Aalto University New Media master (MA) students from the Media Lab Helsinki, a unit of the department of Media at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. The students are; Jairo Acosta, Juan Duarte, Kirsi Ihalainen, Saku Kämäräinen, Ari-Pekka Leinonen, Johanna Rotko and Valtteri Wikström. The visual identity of the Exhibition is designed by Kiia Beilinson from the Media Department's Graphic Design bachelor (BA) program.



*Fig 2. KIVIKASA in Tokyo*

KIVIKASA has also been exhibited in Helsinki, Autumn 2014. It was part of Media Lab Helsinki 20<sup>th</sup> year anniversary exhibition. First I include brief public and “official” descriptions of the both exhibitions, and then describe the more detailed content of KIVIKASA.

## Description in Tokyo<sup>12</sup>

Kivikasa (pile of stones) spreads over the Atrium and introduces the mystical and subtle sounds of sauna. It presents moving sounds of fire, water and steam on a custom-made loudspeaker surface.

## Description in Helsinki<sup>13</sup>

Kivikasa is a sound sculpture utilizing sound spatialization techniques to diffuse sounds of the sauna that are spread and moved around a custom made loudspeaker setup distributed within the exhibition space.

The sculpture was designed especially for the Sounds from Finland exhibition held in May 2014 at Spiral building, Tokyo, Japan. It is a mutual revelation of the two co-existing cultures, zen and sauna – both gateways for inner resonance and harmony. Now it is re-installed and modified for the Media Lab 20th anniversary exhibition.

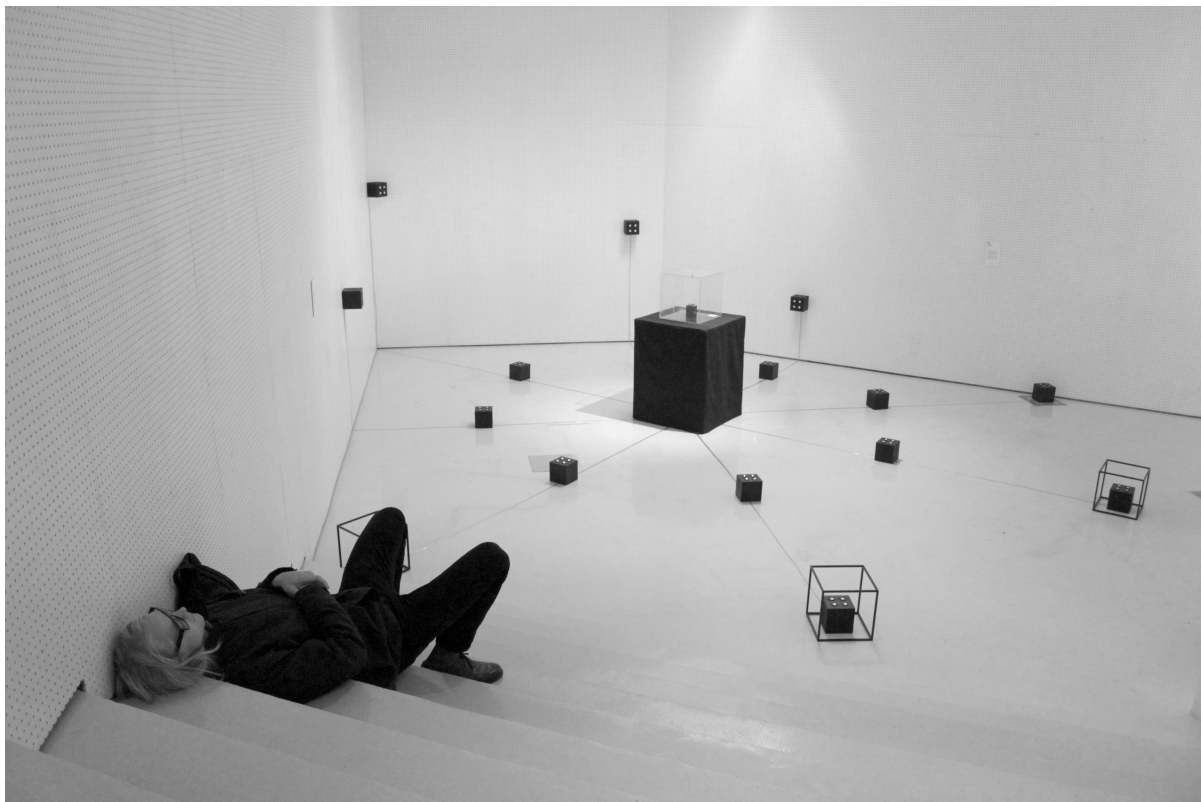


Fig 3. KIVIKASA in Helsinki

## Physical Appearance

Sixteen small black loudspeaker boxes are spread on the floor. They form eight lines that are connected with audio cables to the center structure. The center structure consists of wooden frame that is covered by black fabric, on top of which sits a transparent, acrylic box. Beneath the black fabric, inside the wooden frame, is the technology that powers the sculpture. Inside the acrylic box is a small, black colored, metal tea container loaded with small stones gathered by the sea of Helsinki, resembling miniature kiuas (sauna stove). Attached to the

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.spiral.co.jp/e\\_schedule/detail\\_1088.html](http://www.spiral.co.jp/e_schedule/detail_1088.html)

<sup>13</sup> <http://medialab.aalto.fi/20th-anniversary-exhibitions/20th-anniversary-exhibition-in-design-forum-showroom/>

ceiling of the acrylic box is fountain made from sponge, a windshield wiper hose; a water pump feeds the fountain from below, inside the wooden frame. A water container is connected, via funnel, to the miniature kiuas above.

### **Working Mechanism**

The sculpture has two modes “inactive” and “active”. While “inactive” the sculpture diffuses a continuous soundscape. The hidden water system activates after randomly selected hiatus between 1-2 minutes, and drops a burst of water to the miniature stove. The water recycles, and goes back to the hidden water container. The burst of water “activates” the sculpture, and randomly selected burst of white noise starts traveling through pre-designed paths from loudspeaker to another.

### **Content of the Sound<sup>14</sup>**

KIVIKASA is a 20-channel sound sculpture. The channels can be separated into two setups by two modes of activity. Inner setup uses four channels using four Genelec 6010a loudspeakers that are hidden within the sculpture. While “inactive”, the inner loudspeakers setup diffuses six 16-minute loops, circulating through these four loudspeakers. Each loop has own circulatory speed. This creates a 16-minute evolving soundscape that is composed in digital audio software. The audio material is processed recording of the sauna stove (kiuas).

The outer loudspeaker setup consists from 16 self-made small loudspeaker cabinets that are spread on the floor of gallery arranging a custom multi-channel loudspeaker system. While “inactive”, the outer setup diffuses generatively appearing and disappearing sound of crackling fire, and steady pulse of filtered, breathing white noise.

When “active” the sculpture diffuses a quick burst of white noise from the inner setup. The noise moves to the outer setup, and starts moving according the pre-designed sound movement pattern that is randomly selected among over 30 variations. When the pattern is finished the white noise moves back to the center and decays slowly.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://soundcloud.com/sakukamarainen/sets/kivikasa>

## 2. Before KIVIKASA

In this section I am going to open up the creative process towards installed and exhibited sound sculpture KIVIKASA. The creative process is not a single line in a historical chronology, but instead, it is a complex set of events and inspirations that are distilled through mentally demanding, long period of time as a present being – exhibited artwork KIVIKASA. The inspirations from previous artworks, the personal views about art and life, and study history, all constitute the final outcome. Human beings are in constant flux of experiences, and rational reasoning that mutate the being. If I look back to the year 2011 when I wrote my BA thesis, not much have changed, but still a lot have changed, in the way I think.

### 2.1 Personal Background

The immersion, virtual reality, multisensory experience, total artwork, and transcendence were some of the topics that I was exposed during my BA studies, and I became know that new media could work as a gateway for immersive art experience, drawing from mental visions. Media science as my major subject, I swam in the thoughts about other possible worlds, and art as way to grasp them. My BA thesis was about synesthesia as an artistic method in 1960s rock-performance. In introduction I explain, “How I consider psychedelic music having a power to capture its listener into an audative journey” and how this journey transforms into mental visions. Not only pursuing for mental visions, psychedelic art and visual music of the 1960s also tried to cross the border of everyday reality, to reach mystical connection to the “other side”; This “other side” was chased by trying to trigger psychic mental processes through artworks. Artwork would set people in harmony, as did eastern philosophies and their practices.<sup>15</sup> In the chaos of information overload, and efficiency-based society, I was strongly resonating with these ideas. I wanted harmony. I wanted peace. And my art should explore these ideas.

These ideas were in prominent use, while trying to make music with friends. These jamming sessions were “as a sound wave that washed the earthly pains”, and granted a moment of beautiful ignorance in a process of creation. The music was improvisational, non-structured, simple, chaotic, and thus never really organized as complete works. In the flow of improvisation I was vulnerable, exposing my weaknesses when playing wrong notes and mistakes creating dissonance, noise that was returning back to harmony before its apparent destruction. This shamanistic rock, as we called it, was a gateway to harmony with the furiously spinning world. It was mental therapy; it was musical medication, and meditation. This was the faith we had. And part of the faith, was the acceptance of mistakes and incompetence, because the truth seeking towards pure emotion, and mental images was liberating. This floating in intuition cannot be put into words. It just is, and comes from somewhere. And in the process of practicing, it becomes a habit, a method, and even a way to create art.

It was the truth, personal subjective truth. Staying honest to the personal sensations, in the age of superficial rationality and over-intellectualism. I wanted to become a caveman, shaman. But still I was functioning actively part of world, and learning, but into the darkness I would retreat. Fantasies about audiovisual immersive art were one promising answer.

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<sup>15</sup> Huhtamo, Erkki 1995: Taidetta koneesta : Media, taide, teknologia., p. 62.



As a student of art and design, I started to have stronger opinions about art. The above-mentioned pursuit for truth, and honesty of emotion, was many times in conflict with the art that I was exposed. I admired abstract paintings, surrealism, music, and works that offered impulses for psyche and imagination – to go there, beyond everyday life. Also the works that would constitute its meaning from its substance as it is – itself as art, was successful in my opinion. No explanations were needed to experience the art. Only the encounter between artwork and spectator, and the imaginations it provoked through contemplation. The conceptual thoughts behind, worked as interesting surplus. The conflicts arose when I witnessed overly intellectual works that included catalogues, paper sheets to solve mystery of meaning of artwork that artwork could not present by itself. I felt that contemporary art was occasionally too clever in its own marvelousness, sometimes farfetched and vaguely conceptual, playing games inside its own institution. Art for the art fans. I resisted, and maybe did not even want to understand.

I felt bored of the explanations and conceptual A4-sheets. I wanted to do something different, something simple, but complex enough to invite spectator's imagination to run wild. Music as form of art was the answer. Although I had no real skill, no musical education, I started to explain myself that "you don't need to know theory particularly well, just trust your inner feelings". There is soul within: "don't search for it, it will come." Put all your energies in to the moment of creation and let it take you within, take over and control you. Like in the Taoistic story about Bo Ya, who surrendered to the great harp, and played what the harp wanted him to play, and becoming one with the harp.<sup>16</sup> That was my aesthetics for art, how I want to do it. I imagined creation of art, and art experience, to be mystical, bigger than life, something that words could not explain thoroughly. When confronting questions about meaning of some the small projects done during the studies, I felt uncomfortable of course, and arrogantly withdrew from the explanations, or made up something vague or poetic.

The idea was manifested very clearly in my first personal art exhibition. I had a photography exhibition made under the influence of Henri Cartier-Bresson, where the displayed photographs were taken in the streets of Helsinki, following the idea of his decisive moment – the photograph has to be taken in the moment when it wants to be taken. And in the artistic statement I withdraw arrogantly from all the explanations of meanings, and leave it to the responsibility of the viewer. Trusting to the aesthetics of the black and white photography.<sup>17</sup>

## 2.2 Finding Sound

Through experiments with music, the world of sound began to ask more and more of my attention, and provided a perfect reservoir for soul seeking. Sound's immateriality, immersiveness, difficulty of rationalization, and magic, was perfect medium for continuing the project of trusting the inner feeling. I just need to learn the techniques, devices, and let my soul step in to the pilot seat, and rest is pure representation of emotion. The idea of creating sound worlds through sound design, creation of experimental instruments, and noise machines, and idea of doing sound performances not in the parameters of music, offered a great direction where to aim. Sound sounded like a perfect medium. This is when I started my MA studies in Media Lab Helsinki.

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<sup>16</sup> Okakura, K., 2011, Kirja teestä, trans. Törmä, M., Kustannusosakeyhtiö taide, Helsinki, p. 72.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.ulapland.fi/Suomeksi/Ajankohtaista/Uutisarkisto/2012?showmodul=149&newsid=d8921c47-992f-4e45-a6cf-028a499a6b04>



While in Media Lab, my first personal encounter with the world of sound art, was when I started working with my friend Ville Koski on a course project in Sibelius Academy Centre of Music and Technology. It combined interaction, field recordings of mass transportation and the city, generative sound playback system, random objects, and stories gathered from the streets. Ville is down to earth guy, and has huge interest in small details of everyday life that I also share, but my aspirations were more sublime. We found common ground in the meaningless spectacle of everyday life. Ideas of overhearing, and mishearing worked as our mental reference for visual peeping. Overheard misunderstood meanings and gaps, had to be filled with imagination. The emphasis was on the stories itself, in the mundane everyday life of the silent individual, who sinks in the noise of the life. We thought that we should not explain too much, although we included vague description of the work, and how the stories were collected, and a hidden advice how to experience the work: "If one stops and listens, the stories will be told." Installation was a creation of a system that is different from normal story listening situation. Although satisfied with the simplicity of the narration, the calling of using only sounds, and its possibilities was shadowing the aftermath. How could I express complex ideas, stories, and injustices in society, and everyday life without problem of language with just sounds in the manner of my ideals of art as universal understanding, in simple ways? Still I have not been able to answer the question.<sup>18</sup>

The question about sounds possibility mediate understandable meaning, was left aside for a while, in the constant flow of time, since new ideas constantly enter the field of perception. The idea of site and sound, earlier as blurry image for a possible context for artistic work, was now exposed into full realization by electro-acoustic composer Roland Cahen. His workshop was hands on experimentation how by means of sound, and sound diffusion, one can modify the acoustic environment.

The theoretical background of the workshop was based on idea of aural architecture that expands the idea of architecture as a visual practice to include the aural aspects, the properties we perceive through hearing. According to Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter, the aural architecture of the space can be specifically identified in spaces like churches, and alleys of the cities. But often it has been neglected in design, and rather has formed in the passing of time as "an incidental consequence of unrelated sociocultural forces".<sup>19</sup> Through aural architecture design, it is possible to influence social meaning and behavior, as some places support social cohesion, some isolation, some places authority and some equality. Also it has influence on the moods, and associations of the occupied environment, and also it supports or distracts the visual dimension of the space. They mention that aural aspect of the space is also important navigational tool, as sound reflects and bounces from the materials within the environment, and can be perceived by careful listening, and becoming aware of the spatial aspects of the environment. Also the space can reinforce the vocal or musical performance thus giving a possibility for the space becoming of an extension of performance as aural properties of the space start to resonate with performer. The space and performance transforms into one. The aural properties of the space can become considerable aspect in

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<sup>18</sup> <https://nodegallery.wordpress.com/2013/12/15/interview-9-ari-pekka-leinonen-ville-koski/> & <https://nodegallery.wordpress.com/2013/11/22/ari-pekka-leinonen-ville-koski-kadun-aania-25-11-20-12-2013/>

<sup>19</sup> Blesser, B. & Salter, L. 2007, *Spaces speak, are you listening? : experiencing aural architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., p. 5.

creation of artwork.<sup>20</sup> The idea of space we inhabit, full of hidden aural possibilities, was exciting.

The sound diffusion experiments were site located within interior of building, therefore the idea for the project, was supposed to be in relation with space. The use of “kinetic sounds”<sup>21</sup>, sounds that are in motion, and use of spatialization techniques made possible to “wake up” the hidden possibilities of sound, as a way to enrich the already settled, “normal” acoustic environment. Especially the sound spatialization, sound movement, was for me a new technique to expand the sonic expression from stereo field, or from standardized loudspeaker setups towards more spatial. This would enable me to make sound rooms, rooms that are full of that sound that inhabits my soul. Instead of having one sweet spot for listening, there would be multiple, and they all would be different, and they would have to be explored without knowing them beforehand.

I experimented with soothing white noises of rain, and waves with a tower of four loudspeakers in high agora of Music Centre building in Helsinki. I also distracted the space with rhythmic and chaotic saw waves creating “music” that sounded like the multiple fax machines were printing paper up and down the tower. The sound spatialization, as a way to modify the acoustical environment became something that I wanted to explore more. No longer was only sound inviting to the audative journey, but also the physical space. The direction was turning from mental dimension to physical, and from the physical experience back to mental.

### **2.3 Invitation to Make a Sound Installation to Tokyo**

In the end of the August of 2013, producer of Media Lab Helsinki, Pipsa Asiala posted a message into school’s internal discussion forum, informing that Shinji Kanki, Japanese sound artist and composer based in Helsinki, invited Media Lab students to propose a site-specific new media or sound installations, in the Spiral Building gallery in Tokyo, Japan. More information was presented in the beginning of October and students were asked to propose something particularly designed for the exhibition space. The space was huge, and in the beginning of the project, we were uncertain which space we will eventually use.

For the proposal, I wanted to collaborate, based on earlier discussions, and mutual participation previously mentioned Roland Cahen workshop, with Saku Kämäräinen. He is a talented musician, composer and sound designer. A soul brother from same small village from North of Finland, who I happened to meet for the first time in Media Lab. We shared mutual interest towards sound spatialization, ambient and noise music, immersive media art, and sound as a gateway to other worlds.

Our first concept proposal presented in the middle of November, a mixed media installation INARI, was dealing with transformation, journey, and arrival to the place of holiness. First, the soundscape, and the street view of Tokyo would be transformed to the “equivalent” of Helsinki, and that would be augmented with video projection to the window, and with four-channel sound system into the gallery space. The work would continue in the corridor, as a journey through the Finnish landscape via time-lapse projections that would work as gates

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Cahen’s lecture sheet

that were inspired by Shinto temple gates. Eventually leading to the “temple”, or on this case to a mountain. It was conceptual mash-up on word that both Finnish, Japanese language share. INARI is a village in North of Finland, and name of one Shinto spirit, a fox.

The concept wasn't that successful or particularly good, and was quickly forgotten, but the idea about Finnish-Japanese cultural connections eventually ended up to become the foundation for our future iterations. However, we were selected together with five other people to continue developing our project. At this point, and after a couple of poor mixed media ideas, we decided to focus on proposing a sound artwork – a sound sculpture. The theme for the next proposals was now “Finnish-ness”. Although the first proposal was fitting the theme, I would have still preferred to deal with some other theme without the tag of “Finnish-ness”. I was pondering, what is sound art about Finland? How to approach a topic that is too familiar, and not the first concept that would inspire to do art? I was interested in sound spatialization, and in otherly world things, not in Finland. Why something so personal, embodied as culture, is resilient as starting point for artistic work?

From this decisive moment of setting foundations, the “true” creative process begins, and now I consider important to open up the inspirational background of KIVIKASA. Reveal the hopes and dreams. By revealing the ideas that inspired the work, and the dreams, I can loosely return to the state where I was in, and through this perspective, later return to the unveiling of the creative process.

## **2.4 Inspiration from Sound Design, Media art, and Music**

Before and during the creative process, while conceptualizing, and brainstorming ideas, one is influenced by the surrounding world, and everything one has heard and seen, is somehow shaping the possible outcome. How I am going jump into the world of “Finnish-ness”, when my interests lay somewhere else? In this paper I can only speak about my interests, and that only tells half of the story since the full story is from two unified minds. My interests were somewhere in the technological experimentation, minimalism, and immersion through sound.

My earlier interest in the phenomenon of synesthesia also was turning my interests towards art that unifies senses. “Gesamtkunstwerk”, a total work of art, a 19<sup>th</sup> century utopian idea for future of art in which all arts are combined into one work of art, explains well the world I was in.<sup>22</sup> The idea of sound producing visual material, as a creation of unified sensorial experience, was a perfect illusion that I was interested while studying historical line of visual music. This idea of total work of art also got transformed into aspirations to create unified field of sound, total sound experience by diffusing sound from multiple loudspeakers, and from every direction. The end result would be a sound room. The workshop with Roland Cahen inspired me to explore the idea of sound spatialization. I started to believe that through unified spatial soundfield, I could reach the similar mental worlds as with music. I considered that sound spatialization could obscure previous hearing into an extended hearing situation by adding layers on top of layers, and changing their order, and position from multiple sound sources.

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.see-this-sound.at/compendium/abstract/41>

One influencing historical example was “Philips Pavilion” by Iannis Xenakis, Le Corbusier, and Edgar Varese. It was an architectural multimedia installation exhibited at the Brussels World’s Fair in 1958, where music compositions by Xenakis, and Varese were played from custom made extensive loudspeaker system together with Le Corbusier’s image, and color projections. Sound, architecture, visuals, and light were unified inside one space. For example, interior architectural design was inspired by sweeping glissandi of musical expression, and the space worked simultaneously as a container, and expression for media.<sup>23</sup> Varese’s composition “Poème électronique” was distributed via around 350 loudspeakers installed around the interior of the space forming “sound paths”. Audio material was played back from three tape recorders, and the extensive amount of loudspeakers allowed him to try his concept of “spatial music”, where spatial aspects become one important parameter of composition.<sup>24</sup> Here the interest lies in the custom made, and vast loudspeaker system that is installed along the architecture thus allowing, and creating moving field of sound. I was imagining that the spectator could experience a total, unified, sensorial experience within a space. As my personal interest moved away from standardized stereo, or surround-listening situations, “Philips Pavillion” worked as inspiring example from the past, and of which ideas were possible to imitate with contemporary technology, and with enough resources.

In Spring 2012, I visited Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma in Helsinki, while they exhibited a sound installation by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller “Murder of Crows”. The entire 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the museum had huge amount of different loudspeakers installed within the space, and was turned into unified sound environment. I could hear a loud train passing, birds flying above me, located sounds all around me, and occasionally moving to one loudspeaker in the middle. Soundscapes were appearing, and turning into other soundscapes creating a cohesive stream of sound. I could sit down, sit still, and experience it from one point, or I could move around, and listen it from different locations. Back then, I did not know anything about audio programming, so I was amazed about the extensive amount of used loudspeakers, 98 pieces, and how the sound traveled around the space through them. With the sound installation, artists were expressing illogical structure of events that happen in the dream world. The piece was very dreamy, and engaging. It was waking up my imagination.<sup>25</sup>

Saku once showed me a video from YouTube called “Sound of Honda”<sup>26</sup>, where Formula 1 team Honda had commissioned group of designers to install loudspeakers and led-lights around the length of racetrack of Suzuka.<sup>27</sup> The loudspeakers were diffusing a sound reconstruction of a lap driven by Ayrton Senna in 1988. When Saku showed this to me, we were both like “this is something so amazing that it would be so great to do similar experiments with sound movement.” A combination of moving light, and sound makes the Formula 1 experience to be something totally different – like visual music. It opened a new perspective, and encouraged the possibilities of sound movement seem to be infinite by taking over such a huge area, like Suzuka track, by means of sound.

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<sup>23</sup> LaBelle, B. 2006, Background noise perspectives on sound art, Continuum International, London., p. 187.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.see-this-sound.at/works/756>

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/inst/murder\\_of\\_crows.html](http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/inst/murder_of_crows.html)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKBxLX7bZZQ>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7W-hC2HC5Sk>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.creativeapplications.net/maxmsp/sound-of-honda-ayrton-sennas-fastest-f1-lap-1989-in-light-and-sound/>

And through Saku, I met his good friend, Juuso Patrikainen, who introduced me to huge amount of noise and experimental music, and audiovisual art like Ryoji Ikeda's huge audiovisual installation "Test Pattern"<sup>28</sup> that fill up whole warehouse with video projections, and electronic music. In this way, he is creating a space of immersion and contemplation, a spectacle where one could step in, and explore the unified sound, and video composition. All of these impression, and admirations arose from just seeing videos from YouTube, and by imagining what it might be, and how it might feel, and same time they were giving inspiration for what I could do. I was imagining creating worlds of sound and image in the essence and tradition of visual music, and expanded cinema, and with psychic effects of sound movement. Eventually I thought, I could diminish the visual aspect to the minimum, and play only with the immersive power of spatial sound.

As I earlier mentioned, it was the music that got me more excited about sound as its own world to play with. Through new learned techniques, and ideas in Media Lab, I started experimenting more with sound, by using electro-acoustic instruments, or virtual self-made synthesizers in Pure Data utilizing generative approaches enabled by programming, and of course using regular DAW environment to compose music. These experiments allowed me to realize the possibilities of sound as material for music, instead of usual pitches and harmonies. By admiring, and imitating the styles of krautrock, and cosmic music of German bands like Tangerine Dream, Ash Ra Tempel, or Can, or more sophisticated approaches of Brian Eno's ambient music compositions, had lot of impact on my personal aesthetics about the sound worlds that I admire, and would strive for.

Composer Steve Reich's minimalistic compositions, and his idea of music as gradual process had big impact on the way I want my sounds to be in independent motion. Sounds are charged with various energies, and they progress by their varying times, thus creating cycles of sync and out of sync, polyrhythmic variety, which can be perceived by careful, contemplative, and focused listening as Steve Reich suggest: "To facilitate closely detailed listening a musical process should happen extremely gradually." I understood gradual process, as a way to create a world, and apply some rules into it, and when it is created, I can release the control and let the sounds live in the world I have provided for them, and step back, and listen the process.<sup>29</sup>

"Performing and listening to a gradual musical process resembles: pulling back a swing, releasing it, and observing it gradually come to rest; turning over an hour glass and watching the sand slowly run through the bottom; placing your feet in the sand by the ocean's edge and watching, feeling, and listening to the waves gradually bury them." - Steve Reich

The joy of gradual change is in the concentration of senses. The gradual processes of Steve Reich's music, open a field where to wander in with imagination that is influenced by the constant "now" of the listening. Until I finally realize to have been moved by the delicate gradual change to another field. The transformation is delicate, but the waking up is sudden, like a flash of light.

Similar contemplative, and fascinating sound worlds that has influenced me, is the drone music by La Monte Young. The long sustained notes outside of standardized A440 tuning system, offered a new register of harmonies, and phasing sounds where to surrender, and

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XwjLYpICBgk>

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.bussigel.com/systemsforplay/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Reich\\_Gradual-Process.pdf](http://www.bussigel.com/systemsforplay/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Reich_Gradual-Process.pdf)

attend for deep immersive listening. The constant drone feels like nothing is happening; still somewhere there, inside the harmonies, is a key for a sensation that radically lot is happening on the canvas of sound. I was also interested in his works that turned spaces into sound houses, as extended instruments, and allowed listeners to wander inside the rooms, and be part of composition process of the piece with their movement.<sup>30</sup> All of these musical styles, and their aesthetical solutions were influencing my ideas, what I would like to have from music, and from sound design, and art. These influences constituted my understanding about sound art.

While sound was becoming more and more the primary tool for self-expression, the previous interest towards visual music, was again revived as I learned about the phenomenon of cymatics.<sup>31</sup> The sound vibrates a membrane or plane, and according its frequency, matter that is on the membrane, for example water in a bowl starts to react, and form visual patterns of the physical event. This finding was inspiring to support, and expand the idea of sound as a producer of mental visual images interpreted in virtual domain, as cymatics was physical reactions in the real life. The concept of cymatics has been explored in the context of art already, but by being aware of it, I had yet another influence, or world which to explore inside my toolbox of expression.

In the January of 2013 Shinji Kanki held one-week intensive workshop under the title “Tea & Musical Experiments” where we drank green tea, and made musical experiments. One of the workshop readings “The Book of Tea” was a concrete step toward eastern philosophies, and eastern aesthetics. Although I am not a follower of Zen Buddhism, or commit my life to regular meditation, or constant harmony, this and some other books worked as a guide to understand life, and aesthetics. My life is chaos, ups and downs, and everyday steps towards harmony with self, and the world balance it. The already mentioned story about harp player, who played what the harp wanted him to play, and the idea about the masterpiece, as something that is done with our most delicate emotions, and engagement, had influence on the way I think. By surrendering to magical powers of beauty, the secret strings of existence are revealed. “The masterpiece is of ourselves, as we are of the masterpiece”. The paradoxical and mystical nature of Zen, and its admiration of mundane everyday life, had strong resonance in me. Do not pursue – just be.<sup>32</sup>

## 2.5 Aspects of Design

Reality aspect of process seems to blur underneath the nostalgic memories. The process, when looking back, constitutes from couple of simplified events – complex and long period of conceptualizing, designing, building, and short moment of finished and exhibited work. In my memories, I seem to reduce the process in these two events, thus creating a myth for myself of sudden flash of creation, and existence of artwork that is materialized from that enlightenment. Instead, when I look back, and wipe dust away from the chambers of images, I start to realize that how much it actually consisted of everyday work, and commitment. There were days when nothing happening, bad ideas, desperate inspiration seeking, calculations, compromises, and banal reality.

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<sup>30</sup> LaBelle, B., p. 73, 75.

<sup>31</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cymatics>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uENITui5\\_jU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uENITui5_jU)

<sup>32</sup> Okakura, K., 2011, Kirja teestä, trans. Törmä, M., Kustannusosakeyhtiö taide, Helsinki., p. 71.

It seems that behind everything is the design process and planning. Although we are talking about creation of artwork, it also involves careful design aspect. Design theorists Klaus Krippendorff writes about design process going through “complex network of stakeholders”, the people who are involved in the design process by sharing interest, their expertise, support, resources like money, time, and spaces.<sup>33</sup> Also he talks about second order understanding – understanding of how other people understand. We need to understand the culture around us, the habits of the people, and the context in which we inhabit. This also could be called the background research.<sup>34</sup> Krippendorff sees design as language. Instead of designing objects, designers design affordances, trying to highlight the best possible aspects so that people would naturally understand the meaning, and use of the object, and by noticing all undesired aspects, constraints that diminish the desired meaning.<sup>35</sup> Meanings cannot be designed, but desired meaning can be instructed by designing affordances.

In the case of an artwork, and of this project, the process was to find the best possible compromise between one’s own artistic desires, and the somewhat clear mediating of the meaning that we understood as the meaning of the artwork. This careful, and long process of calculating, and polishing the concept, easily gets lost into the shelves of personal history, and memories. What is left, is the idea of masterwork popping out of nowhere. To truly understand what lies behind KIVIKASA, this reality needs to be presented in broad daylight. These realities had important role of how KIVIKASA ended up being what it is.

### **2.5.1 Context: Learning Process, Not a Professional Artistic Work**

The first important thing to understand with KIVIKASA, is the context where it was produced. KIVIKASA comes from the institution, well backed-up Art and Design School, through the critical evaluation of the various “stakeholders”. KIVIKASA should be understood as an aftermath of a learning process, not a professional work of art. The learning process might produce professional end results, but professional artists lack the similar support that educational institution provided for this project.

As a combination of a commissioned, pre-themed work and the freedom of artists, the idea we presented went through steps of critical evaluation that had impacts to the outcome. The first external input is the opinions, taste, and viewpoints of the curator, whose feedback cannot be excluded from the final work. He worked as connecting link between the students and the gallery, and was reflecting their feedback. In the same breath I could mention the external critique in the process by the supervising teacher, and other professionals, other students, and of course the colleague you are working with. The collaboration is already a huge compromise, but on the other hand huge benefit. The producer was a link to the reality. We as creators ask from reality: what is possible, and in what time. Always reminding about the earthly constraints. All of these people had made their mark on the final work.

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<sup>33</sup> Krippendorff, K. 2006, *The semantic turn : a new foundation for design*, CRC/Taylor & Francis, Boca Raton., p. 63-65.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43, 108.



## 2.5.2 Finland — The Given Theme

E-mail excerpt from curator Shinji Kanki, December 8 2013 1:27 PM:

“I brought you the "Finnish-ness" as one of the themes you have to consider, because I thought that is what they are looking for in Tokyo and at Spiral. Of course this is my thought, thinking about who are coming and see your works \_at the same time\_ when 100 young Japanese creators are presenting their works. I simply wanted to have strong difference than theirs. But as I said at the last meeting, this Finish-ness could be an old fashion idea and you or Spiral might think differently.

Remember, even we were offered the great spaces which were booked for us currently, it is the SPIRAL who finally decides if they take your works and to which space. If they think your works do not interest them, or not suitable for their spaces, they could reject the works unfortunately.”

Constraints for the artistic freedom arrive when the work is commissioned under a certain theme. Theme of “Finnish-ness”, and sound is already a framework into which we have to commit our ideas. As a group we tried to get rid of the tag “Finnish-ness” by trying to hide it with a concept exploring soothing experiences in nature, called “Sees-Serene”, which had connection to Finnish nature, but it was not emphasized as the main thing. As everything too superficial, or too made-up is hard to understand, I guess, the producer and curator decided to simplify it under the title of “Sounds from Finland”. This is the theme where KIVIKASA is coming from, and as much we try to hide it, the sounds are from Finland.

The work was going to be exhibited in Japan, and of course I have to admit that this fact had influence on the design. The Japanese people would be experiencing the work. So I started to think what they would like to see, and what they like in general. Japanese people seem to like Finland, Moomins and Marimekko for example. So as an insecure social being, I started to consider what elements the masterpiece that they would get crazy about could be build from. I had once before visited Tokyo, so I could work from that first hand knowledge, and from cultural prejudices that I have created from media entertainment, and from various fragments of information. To me Japan was about crazy future technology, robots, and weird pervert habits beneath the social cohesion through personal emotional silencing. On the other hand there is appreciation for funny, and cute things like Pokemons, Hello Kitty, and school girls shouting “kawaii!” Then at the same time, there is this deep layer of cool, and controlled zen-mentality, and mind control until it is erupted into furious final kamikaze. Japan seemed profound, weird, and funny at the same time through these superficial cultural prejudices.

## 2.5.3 Realities of Design

The spectacle, Gesamtkunstwerk, has its financial limitations. The influencing artworks have had much more capital behind them than our work would have. This fact frames the conceptualization. What can we do, and what can we afford? And how to do it as cheap as possible, as efficient as possibly, like a true efficient gear in the capitalistic system, when dreams and aspirations are high. How to make gold out of piece of shit, like in Jodorowsky’s movie Holy Mountain? The luck, and advantage for this project that is spurs out of institution with financial backup, so there was promise for money, but the question was how much. When the budget was somewhat fixed around 1000€ for materialization, the clearer the scope, and possibilities of the design becomes.



All along the design process the ideas and the possibility of materialization of certain idea walked hand in hand, or maybe one-step behind. First there is a concept, and then you test it through material design, asking is it possible to actualize it. Do we skills to manufacture certain things. And of course, material possibilities are influenced by the budget, as I mentioned earlier. As much as money causes uncertainty, the uncertainty of the whole thing happening at all, is a huge constraint. The curator is asking to propose the best works, works that get accepted to the gallery. He was either just pulling our leg to keep us working harder, or the uncertainty was reality. First this uncertainty might pursue artist to sharpen the design, and iterate the best possible version, but it also might restrict the artistic freedom, to design the work to be just what the people would expect. Here emerges the conflict between personal motivations and making a compromise in pleasing others.

Also, site-specificity was part of the constraints when designing. First we were wondering, how are we going divide the gallery space between groups. Who gets which place, and which work suits best each location? When this uncertainty is somehow solved with decision-making, and by just considering various options, appears the aspect of site-specificity of artwork. We were thinking how this work relates, and aligns into the place visually, and especially acoustically. It should look good in the space, and sound good. The group exhibition works should somehow communicate with each other, and form a continuous thematically unified whole. Then questions arrive how to design artworks that work together, still being able to stand out alone, as an individual artwork? It means working together, being aware what others are doing, and adjusting personal ideas for greater whole. This is especially crucial when dealing with multiple sound sources with varying audio material. Sound doesn't ask questions when penetrating spaces. It leaks, and if it is not considered, it easily leads to cacophony.

As we were planning the group exhibition to Japan, the reality of distance is evident. We are asked to design a work of sound art inside the specific space, and we are a 10-hour flight away from the place. And the idea of traveling to see the gallery seems farfetched when the budget for whole exhibition is already tight. So we have to work without our personal first hand experience, from the details told by curator, by the pictures and floor plan of the gallery. Working from vacuum from the other side of the world, calls for imagination. One imagines how it could look like, or especially in the case of sound, imagine how it might sound. Hear the unheard, and imagine acoustical details through visual material. Working in the site without being present at the site.

As the distance is relatively vast, the question about logistics appears as a relevant factor, and as a constraint. The questions like: How are we going to transport the work? How we are going to design it so it is possible to transport within the budget, and within size constraints? As galleries have certain ways of function, in Spiral Tokyo it was all about efficiency. There were around 12 hours for installing and 2 hours for uninstalling the artworks. All these aspects were somewhat clear beforehand. So the design had to consider mobility of the work, ease of assembly and disassembly.

#### 2.5.4 Personal biases

As I have earlier explained my interests and background to understand what kind of position I stand up, and what aspirations and believes I have. This can also help to see, and understand what kind of presumptions might have constrained the creative process. These presumptions might have been limiting other possibilities, and same time, have been framing the foundation for the work. In this case, sound spatialization is one big constraint that could not have been compromised. The selected technique, and form allowed us freedom to find content within it, and same time limited it. Realization of this fact, also frames the understanding of the end result. Sound spatialization was part of the design process in every step. Every parameter was adjusted in relation with that frame. It also enabled the possibility to start ignoring the world around us, and start focusing on the form, and work freely within the form.

Meanwhile when the ideas are poor, and inspiration is lost, my personal presumption of artist as a mixing bowl of unique ideas and inspiration, started to cultivate the mentality of “anti-reference” that didn’t allow me to be corrupted by the other artworks. I remember once saying very clearly “NO!” to Saku, who suggested spending time exploring Internet for inspiration from artworks to boost the creative process that was stuck. I guess I thought that when WE create, it has to be OUR ideas that we create from.

Although I said “NO” in that instance, it does not mean that I would have prevented myself from finding references of other artworks. Searching was always part of the process, and it operated silently when I was not “creating”. It is there, but I don’t admit its presence, because of the rules that I create for myself. The “final” personal idea should pop-up from the soul, not from the world through copying the others. I am inspired by others, I know it, but when I have to come up with an idea, it has to be pure me. Sounds like a dogma for the search of originality, or truth. I simultaneously know it, but also ignore it that the canvas is already full of silent references. To conclude this weird dogma I have to mention that when eventually the greatest idea strikes like lightning, I go and check, if similar projects exist.

### 3. While KIVIKASA — From an Idea to an Installed Artwork

Before mentioned inspirations, and design problem-solving aspects, all will have an impact for the following steps towards finalized artwork. The demystification of glorified memories seems to reveal very basic frame for creative process. The “mundane” design plays huge role for setting up a plan which to follow. Plan is the form, where one can jump in, and start to play and create. This process of designing, and planning lasted around four months including intensive dead ends, and returns.

#### 3.1 First Proposal — The Discovery of a Relationship Between Zen Gardens and Sauna<sup>36</sup>

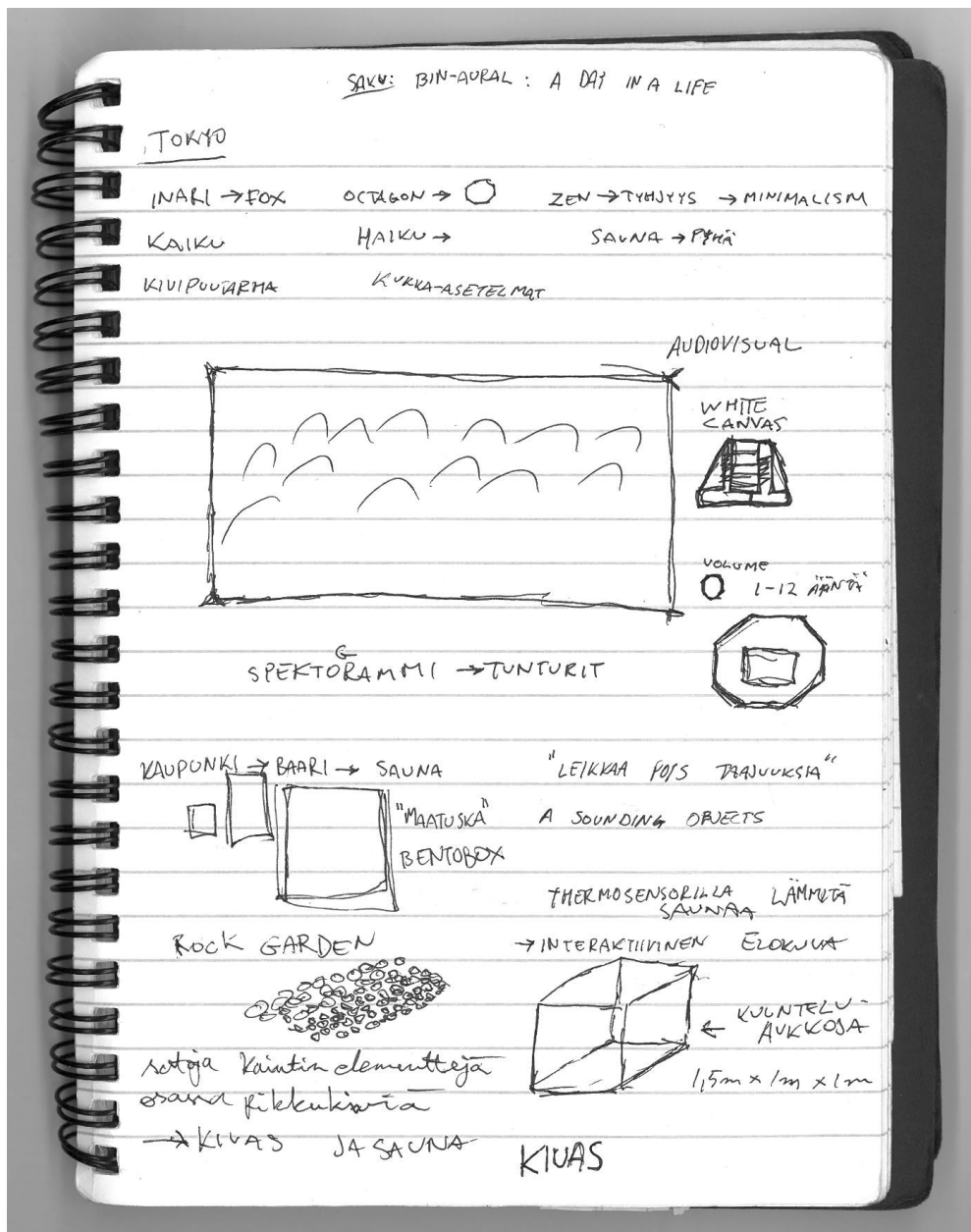


Fig 4. First sketches about Finland-Japan connection

<sup>36</sup> See Appendix A at pages 82-84

The conceptual foundation for this artwork was in the sound spatialization, and a possible cultural connection between Finland and Japan. The name-based connection between Finnish village “Inari” in the Lapland, and the Japanese shinto-spirit, also called as “Inari”. From this foundation we started to elaborate new ideas. Unavailable from my memory, are the phases how the foundation got twisted before the “artistic moment”, or the “inner revolution” when the idea penetrated its way into struggling consciousness.

This is mainly from the memory, so I should not put too much weight on it. I was sitting in a bar, waiting for Saku to arrive to one of our brainstorming meetings. I was drinking beer, and drafting to my notepad. My mind was possessed by mental images, and ideas about Japanese and Finnish traditions. Suddenly appears an image of Japanese rock garden to my mind. I enter the garden, and there I now happen to sit. I contemplate the very unexplainable on the spiritual desert of emptiness, in a place that I have never actually visited! Maybe a random anecdote that I have heard or read from somewhere, or an image or video footage that I have seen, and I can imagine all this.

A couple of moments later this organized field of stones transforms into a pile of rocks on top of Finnish sauna stove. There is the connection. It is truly speculative whether it was revelation itself, or outcome of self-suggestive thinking process — thinking about connections, and endlessly thinking, and rethinking after a while of not thinking! Finding answer for that question is not relevant, but instead, it feels relevant to realize the context from where this “revelation” might have popped up — from a mind that is surrendered to the process, and its parameters. The parameters being the conceptual foundation that searches content that fits the frame.

Anyway, realization of this connection based on the usage of stones made personally sense. What I have had heard, and later read about rock gardens mostly from documentaries, videos, and internet, considered them as places of contemplation by reinterpreting the essence of nature according to certain rules how stones were organized in the garden. And from my personal first hand knowledge about sauna experience as a place for purification, and contemplation, the combination of these two concepts was a perfect match for solving the problem of design task.

I believe that the name has a big part of the works of art. It sets the first references how to understand the piece. So in this case it should be self-evident, simple, and reveal some aspects of the work. We were looking for something Japanese sounding, but in Finnish. To me Japanese and Finnish languages have phonetic connection due to the way they are pronounced similarly as written. Of course this effect is best acquired by making up pseudo-Japanese shouting. Shout this loud, and you might understand what I mean: ARIGATO-ARIPPEKKA! So this low-level, a bit racist, and questionable humor made out of prejudices of nationality, and culture, worked as way to find a proper pun, something funny but something concrete. Pile of stones is apparent in sauna, and at the rock garden, and after head scratching it turned to be KIVI+KASA (stone + pile). Realizing this, the name KIVIKASA became a new foundation concept along sound spatialization, and zen-sauna connection.

Although we wanted to make a sound sculpture we were still fascinated by the idea of the visual element. Particularly, the idea of sound movement triggering visual reactions was considered. A synesthesia based idea of sound triggering mental images was tightly involved in the essence of total work of art. Following inspirations that arose from the connection

between zen-sauna, and the stones, came along scientific, and artistic phenomena of cy-matics. We imagined that the sound we diffuse could trigger the physical vibration on a plane that carries small pebble stones, and eventually we imagined of having multiple planes that would form a canvas of vibrating sound pixels. The original phenomenon of cy-matics, was working only as a reference. The sound pixels would work as visual signal of the sound movement that would be accomplished with multiple loudspeakers.

This idea of visually representing the sound movement was also partly considered because of the space, where the sculpture was supposed to be installed. The space was not huge, a noisy entrance hall of the gallery. So we needed to consider the size of the sculpture to be logistically reasonable, and fit the place. As the concept was rather mystical — zen and spirit of sauna; the idea of curiosity cabinet appeared to freeze, and display this mystical spirit of sauna. In a manner of museum display aesthetics, something that has curiosity value is captured inside the aquarium box for spectators to wonder and experience — see and hear. The visual dimension was developed to resemble a miniature rock garden that could also be understood as a sauna stove — “kivas” in Finnish. We wanted the sculpture to be very simplistic in its appearance, piles of stones next to each other inside an acrylic box.

When the visual domain remains simple, the sound was considered to be more complex, and varying. The idea of a mystical box that makes sound, could hide the original sources of sound, and create a new sound being, “the spirit of Löyly”, that would be generative and autonomous. In this case the sound source was not considered too important. We thought that we don’t need underline that this is the sound of sauna, but it would work as material for the birth of this new being. We thought that as mystical sound box it would transform original connotations into new understanding with the help of visual simplicity. In this sense we were loosely talking about acousmatic sound that is listened to without seeing the cause of the sound, when proposing this version.<sup>37</sup> The sound design of the sculpture was considered to be breathing and murmuring “being” producing drone sounds of continuously humming and sustained low frequencies. It would every now and then get furious, and spit the sound of steam (löyly) to travel through the sound pixel surface.

We both considered the soundscape to be a crucial part of the sauna experience, but it might be left unnoticed when all the other senses are also occupied. Therefore we wanted to emphasize the soundscape of sauna by loosening it from the context of sauna, and presenting it as an individual element in a form of sound art that resonates in frequencies of Finnish kivas.

### **3.2 Recording Kivas at 64°21' 53.859", 27°34' 39.0252"**

It was December around Christmas time when we both were visiting our parents in the north of Finland in the village of Paltamo. Saku had already started recording some different sauna stoves (kivas). The soundscape of fire burning inside the stove, the temperature shifts in the materials of the stove, and the sound of steam when thrown to the stones. We met one afternoon at my father’s cottage to do some test recordings with sauna stove located there. The purpose was to test with just using his Zoom H2 recorder, in order to hear how the sauna stove, and especially the sound of steam sounds when recorded. We considered doing

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<sup>37</sup> Chion, M., ‘The Three Listening Modes’, in Sterne, J. (ed.) 2012, Sound studies reader, Routledge, London., p. 52.

some better recordings later with proper microphone somewhere else, after getting the knowledge what would be the best way to capture sound of steam.



*Fig 5. Saku discovering the hidden spirit of Löyly*

We lit fire to oven, and Saku started recording the oven. Burning wood cracking, and popping. The fire heated a water container, which started making weird drones, rhythms, and pitches as the water started boiling. The cold metal started to warm up, and changed temperature, and expanded from heat producing loud sounds — bangs and cracks. Also the heat, and smoke escaping from the chimney pipe probably added its own influence to the soundscape. Later the sauna warmed up to a proper temperature, we got undressed, I climbed on the elevated sauna bench and Saku went underneath it. Because the heat, and steam rise toward the ceiling in sauna, the recorder would not be exposed to the moisture that much on floor level. I threw multiple times, each time different amounts of water to stones, trying to produce different sounding bursts of löyly (steam), and Saku recorded. Later he went out of the room, and recorded behind the door. After the recording session, we took good löyllys (steam), and relaxed in sauna.

### **3.3 Second Proposal Period – Getting Bigger and Lost<sup>38</sup>**

We proposed the first version of KIVIKASA, and quite soon after the proposal, overall plans changed. The personnel of the gallery were insisting that our artworks would work better in the real gallery spaces, instead of the noisy entrance hall. The uncertainty arose whether the project has enough money for the gallery spaces, but we were still encouraged to propose new versions from our works. This time period is interesting in a sense that it is heavily

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<sup>38</sup> See Appendix B at page 85-86

constrained by the ideas of the first version of KIVIKASA leading into various bad iterations, and head hitting against the wall.

The concepts of sound movement, sound pixel, zen-sauna was transformed from miniature curiosity to the size of the spectacle. The size of the main gallery space was too big for our little sound box. So our first plan was to go big, and that caused problems.

Researching previous works exhibited in the space made us think how we could propose something that would match the level of “spectacle” of previous exhibitions that we came across in the Internet. The pursuit towards spectacle made the visual aspects of the sculpture control our design process. We started planning bigger structures, we considered the need for more stones, bigger loudspeakers, more audio cable. At the same time all the time limitations of the budget and the logistics were pulling us back to earth.

When the realities start to be more relevant, and more demanding than the dreams, the act of reduction, and reconsideration of the foundations appear as a compromise. The first thing we had to let go was the idea of sound pixels. We realized that we actually want to focus on the sound movement, and that in this spatial scale the possibility to aurally experience the sound movement without visual signal would be possible. This was the first relief but we were still struggling with the idea of a spectacle. After the first proposal, we received some feedback about the lack of trigger for the sound of steam. We were asked what is the motivation behind it, and why does it happens? Does sound events of the sculpture become understandable for the spectator just like that, or would it be confusing without having any motivating trigger behind them? I remember arrogantly defending the idea of not having a trigger — KIVIKASA is mystical, it is intriguing and better without being too obvious, believing that the confusion would raise questions, and feed the imagination. But during the second proposal phase these preconceptions started to decay.

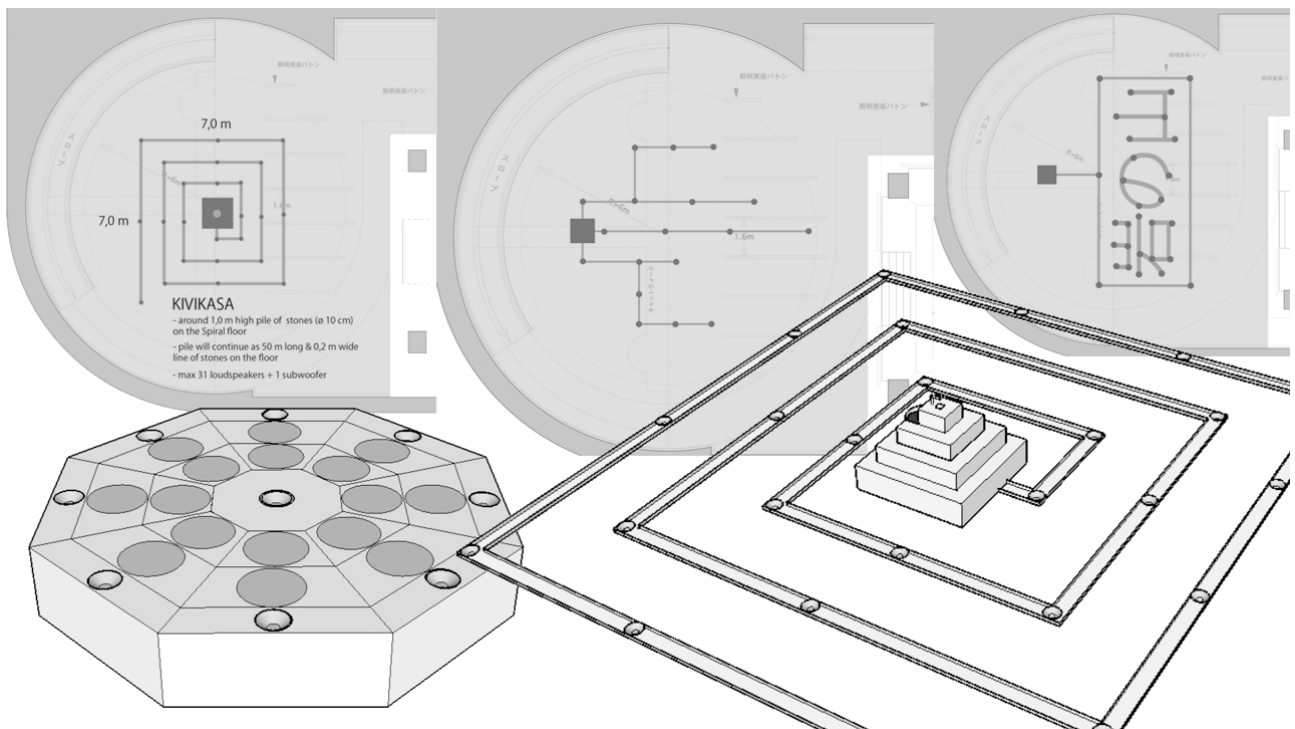


Fig 6. Second proposal iterations

Why? Probably because the visual activity of sound pixel was forgotten, and we started to think that there should be something to motivate the sound of steam. There was sound and there was a huge amount of stones, but there was not action that triggers anything. Sound is a product of a clash of energies, and we felt that we needed something to cause that clash. In sauna, steam is produced by throwing water on hot stones. We began exploring clever applications for that event. Will the water system be interactive, or be automatically working as in the first version? We ended up including an interactive element to the work, so that there would be a button or a ladle, or something that the spectator could use to trigger the sound event of steam. Another new element for the work was included.

After bad ideas, desperate designs, iterations, and slow pace of creative process, we managed to invent the next version of KIVIKASA for the proposal. The sculpture was now an arrangement of center structure that is a huge pile of stones, a water dispenser with a trigger, and a floor level maze made out of stone and loudspeakers around a center structure. The problem was: how to hell are we going to solve the logistics and transport the stones, because our plan demanded a huge amount of stones! And stones were essential because it is KIVIKASA. The curator Shinji Kanki was not still impressed whether this version would be good enough for the gallery space, and were still left pondering the next iteration with his feedback in e-mail:

Group E-mail excerpt From Shinji January 15, 2014 5:05 pm

“- AP and Saku: I love simplicity. Your work is exactly that. But there are two different kind of simplicities: one is that there are nothing but one single idea right from the beginning, and you start to elaborate it. A simplicity that has somewhat developed. Another one is, after many many stuffs, many ideas and you cut most of decorated ideas out, then finally the simple core idea being left and appears with lots of inner thoughts.

I think the latter one is the right one for you guys. You seem to have already one single thing. But I think you should still throw many other things, many another ideas, onto your, or surrounding your core idea. Then after that you should cut all shits(sorry) out, and find what it really the thing that gets there in the Atorium.”

### 3.4 Final Proposal – Back to Basics<sup>39</sup>

Sometimes creative process seems to be a constant re-evaluation of ideas, values, presumptions, and I had to face this reality. Shinji’s comment about throwing shit away was inevitable, and we needed to reawake, and return to the fundamentals of the work. We had to go back where it started: sound spatialization and zen-sauna connection. What was earlier excluded was the idea of sound pixels, and we realized that the stones were crucial part of the first version. Now it had just turned into a neurotic burden of visual decoration causing logistical and monetary problems, and occupying the mental space of the essential: the sound, and its movement in the space, changing the atmosphere of the acoustic space with sound.

So what happened was the simple act of letting go, and returning to the world of first KIVIKASA proposal — to the world of curiosity cabinet, and into a funny miniature microcosmos of spirit of sauna. *We realized that the loudspeakers are the stones in the rock garden.* We don’t need huge amount decoration from stones, because the moving sound is the material,

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<sup>39</sup> See Appendix C at page 87-90



the “decoration”, and the essence of KIVIKASA. Using the idea of the display box of the first proposal, we got an idea for a miniature rock garden in which a small drop of water would work as a trigger for a bigger event outside the miniature world. We wanted to create sound sculpture that sounds good, and would have simple visual meaning, but beneath it would be complex and rich in variations.

E-mail to curator and producer February 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 4:15pm

“Hey Shinji and Pipsa

Together with Saku we have iterated our work into a final stage, at least it feels so. Also we are prepared to iterate our work into a yet another version if all the works go to Atrium. Then we re-design our loudspeaker surface to occupy the vertical axis of the space.

But to wrap everything together we have solved the stone problem and material problems and minimized everything into essentials - minimal and beautiful. Our main goal is the sound movement in the space and therefore we use loudspeakers instead of stones. Read the pdf and I hope you get better picture.

Best Regards,  
A-P & Saku”

Curators response in February 5<sup>th</sup> 2014 6:32

“Got it! I will send it to the SPIRAL. Yes! No visual decorations.  
All stuffs have real meaning/function. I like this way.

CU,  
- shinji”

Throughout the pre-described creative process, sound design of the work has been somewhat consistent already from the first proposal. But as I will later explore, the implementation of sound design will have its final form through experimentation, and materialization process. The foundation for sound design consists from two events: the background soundscape that is “inactive”, and the interrupting peak of sound of steam that is “active” as it moves throughout the loudspeaker grid on predesigned paths. The background soundscape was considered to be evolving constant ambience that establishes the mood of the work. Altering ambience would be attempted to accomplish by using circular moving sound through four loudspeakers, and by variations in timeline of composed audio.

The interrupting sound event would occur between selected timeframe that is every time generated randomly. The appearing sound pattern is randomly selected from predesigned patterns. This generative approach was considered to bring variation to the sound design, and provide always-differing sound diffusion to the space. Of course, in this case I am talking about details, because the overall tone of KIVIKASA is coherent, and somewhat unchangeable, but the random processes make its inner world to transform in the flux of time. This was considered in a pursuit to create every encounter with sound material, and listening experience different for every visitor. This was something that I desired from the sculpture.

In the final proposal document we explain our intentions:

“We want to explore sound movement and spatial sound. We don’t want to make illusion of sauna, but instead use the sound of sauna as a material for our artistic desires in sound movement. The sound of löyly is naturally active element in the soundscape of sauna, and can be felt, and heard moving, and therefore it is good material for our purposes.”

### 3.5 Building the Sculpture For One Month



*Fig 7. Testing sound equipment for the first time, March 2014*

After five months of planning and designing, one month, March of 2014 was used for the materialization of the project in Lume studio and workshop. During the month KIVIKASA was supposed to be built according to the plan, tested, adjusted, disassembled, and packed for a cargo plane. This period film consisted of actual problem solving concrete decision-making about sound and visual aspects of KIVIKASA. All we had before this were concepts of what we would like to have, and to do. Now we were facing this illusion in the concrete engagement in hands-on constructing of KIVIKASA. Still we could only imagine, how it would sound and appear in its final destination in Tokyo.

Basically KIVIKASA is material mixture of DIY-electronics, DIY-woodwork, computer based technology, audio equipment, and inventions made on spot and using the junk that was available. The desire to spatialize sound requires multiple loudspeakers, in our case 20. The constraints of budget and logistics made us build our own sound system. This includes 16

loudspeakers boxes and two 8-channel amplifiers. Building the sculpture took the whole month, the sound design becoming more and more relevant in the last weeks.

### 3.5.1 Sound Design While Constructing

When the audio equipment and the frame for the center structure was built; everything was connected and found somewhat functioning, it was time to start writing the narration of sound. When the sound system was ready the sound design actualized to its final form during the process of its making. There were some preconceptions and desires, but the final outcome got its shape after constant creation of new supporting ideas, reconsiderations, testing, listening, and making conclusions based on what is heard. The sound design got its inspiration from the shape of gallery space. The circular sound movement in the center structure was considered to resemble the circular form of the space, and the spiral ramp. The sound patterns were drawn on the paper, and then produced in sound programming platform Pure Data.

I programmed an interface where different sound elements could be controlled by hand, and later be automatized. The principle idea was the constant soundscape of sauna stove, and the sound of löyly (steam). The roles were divided so that Saku focused on composing the circulating soundscape, and I would do the programming of the sound. The sound patterns of löyly were designed together, and everything was mixed together by using four ears. Everything was discussed and made in collaboration, which was a huge aid when creativity was not flowing. The other would come and help and inspire other back to the right track.

This is totally speculative, because I have a hard time remembering when we did the decision to use the recordings, which we did in Paltamo at the sauna of my father's cottage. But anyhow, we never did proper recording sessions as was planned. The material we got that day was good enough. I can only briefly explain what Saku did to the material. He extracted certain frequency bands from the material, playing with the dynamics of the material, processed and did his magic, and used them as building blocks for a 16-minute evolving composition that has six separate tracks. One of the tracks is the original recording, and appears for a couple of minutes in the composition, while processed tracks disappear.

The tracks were programmed to start simultaneously, and to loop infinitely. The tracks move in circular motion around four loudspeakers, each having their own circulation speed to create a sense of "inner motion". Although atmospherically the soundscape remains rather similar during the 16-minute loop, we imagined that constantly varying sound diffusion creates it to be more alive and in motion, less static and stable. Inspiration comes from Steve Reich's gradual process.



Fig 8. Sketches of movement patterns

When our self-made, cheap loudspeakers were assembled, and the assumed sound quality was as lo-fi as we thought it would be, using the recordings of “real” löyly (steam) did not sound as satisfactory as we imagined, we decided to synthesize the sound ourselves using white noise. When sound of löyly ruptures, the basic sound movement is from the center loudspeakers to the exterior loudspeakers, where it follows a pattern, and then goes back to the center. First from center loudspeakers, a loud rupture of white noise is diffused, reminding the sound of water hitting the hot stones in sauna. The patterns are imaginary sound movements that we made up, getting inspiration from the feeling how I can feel steam moving towards, and around me as a tactile bodily sensation in sauna. After the pattern is done, occurs “after steam”, where the most exterior loudspeakers diffuse a constant gentle filtered white noise, which moves towards the interior circle, and finally to the center. This was not considered beforehand, but was invented during the process following an idea “what else do we need, and how things would sound better”. Again solution appeared through experimenting, trial and error.

The patterns were created one after another, and in the end we had around 30 different patterns. One of us has an idea “hey could we try to move sound that it makes an figure of S” for example, and then draws it on the paper, or explains it by using voice, and vocal expressions. After that I would sit down in front of the Pure Data and start scratching my head. The operating principle of patterns was based on a simple idea: we have a constant source of white noise that is connected to various “pattern-mixers” that open, and close desired channel envelope, adjusted every occasion according to the pattern. It was a lot of work, but we got what we wanted, when we adjusted every envelope by hand.

“Open channel-1 in 50ms, sustain channel-1 for 100ms, open channel-2 in 50ms, close channel-1 in 100ms, sustain channel-2 for 100ms, open channel-3 in 50ms, close channel-2 in 100ms... etc”

This is not very smart programming, but it was done according to our skills. The more and more we got patterns done, the more we started using timers that would accelerate the movement and filter noise automatically to create a more fluent and spinning motion.

While doing the main sounds (center & löyly), and now that we had the 20-channel sound system, new supporting ideas started to appear how to enrich the overall soundscape. As we were imagining this sculpture being “a spirit of löyly”, we wanted it to become alive by making it breath. A steady pulse of quietly appearing and disappearing filtered white noise is diffused from all the floor loudspeakers with small delay between the inner, and exterior circle. This element came along quite early during the sound design process. Also at some point we included randomly appearing and disappearing sounds of crackling fire to the floor loudspeakers to make the soundscape more alive. Saku extracted 17 different short samples from the recording of crackling burning wood, which are constantly and randomly triggered to a randomly selected loudspeaker, thus living life of their own. The last extra sound element came along quite incidentally, when the sculpture was ready and already functioning. The water pump didn’t blend underneath the soundscape, and was easily perceived as loud electric buzz, when it was turned on. So we added a masking sound, a loud low rumble that would fade in 10-seconds before the water shower, and be at its loudest when the water drops to the stones, thus masking the buzzing sound, and quickly disappearing when the pump is turned off. By this we incidentally added a narrative element that in our imagination worked as sonic anticipation, and clue for the peak of löyly (steam).

During this phase probably the only criterion for the sound design was that it sounded good, meditatively soothing, and alive with generative variation. We were like mixing a song. Using our ears and our preferences for good sound. By listening, adjusting, listening, and readjusting — eventually becoming better with process as we learn our working method by simply doing. It was not easy, or straightforward, but rather trial and error while searching for the right answer. It was compromises between imagination, and skills to produce the imagined. Is it something that appears intuitively, or is it something that is based on knowledge of what is considered generally good? The answer is somewhere between those two realms. It is in the realm where I enter by engaging with the process and learning the desired method through my earlier knowledge, and allowing it to be readjusted by the needs of the situation.

The more we learned, and more intuitively we started producing the material, the more meditative the listening became. We would lie down on the floor, and listen with our eyes closed, and follow how the sounds moved along the loudspeaker grid. The more we focused on the creation of sound, the more meditative it became. The more meditative it became, the more time I spent adjusting it to be as we desired. Some of the sounds were adjusted quickly, like they were finding their place instantly, and some after a long period of listening. This was simultaneously a fun revelation of incidental sounds, and a careful contemplative search for desired and presupposed sounds. I was like asking questions “what do you think” from the material by listening, and when there was no resistance, and the material was settled in its place, it agreed, and sounded like it should.

### **3.5.2 Final Adjustments to the Visual Appearance**

Some aspects of the work that were unclear during the conceptualization process, maybe left unsolved on purpose, got their form during the building process, when it was finally time to make the decisions. The final adjustments happened simultaneously with the sound design. One unclear aspect was the interior of the acrylic box. Also the water system was unclear how it would function, and look. We had some hints how it could be done, and function, but the actual system of the finished work, got materialized through experimenting. We bought a windshield wiper liquid container with a pump from a hardware store, and started from that. The idea was to produce a small drop of water that would drop on its own time pulled by the gravity. The water would be pumped on a container above the stone garden, and would drip water occasionally. Piezo-element would work as a sensor, and detect the drop of water, and send a signal to Arduino, and which would send it to the computer that runs the sound events. Inaccuracy of the sensor, and the difficulty to produce controllable dripping made us to compromise with our dreams due to the fact that the time was running out. It forced us to make a rougher “fountain” version. The pump produced a quick water shower, and the tip of the water hose installed on the ceiling of the acrylic box, was covered with sponge to make the shower more dispersed.

The conceptually carefully thought, and pre-considered stone garden changed into a small tea container after some messing around with stones, funnels, and chicken wire, and ending up looking a bit dull. The tea container was dyed black, and looked like a miniature kivas (sauna stove), after piling stones in it. The thing looked so absurd, and funny in our opinion that it started to make the sculpture even funnier than before. To me it was like a weird anti-aesthetic joke. A way to destroy the carefully thought idea of the zen garden by the sudden appearance of disruptive creativity that turns everything upside down. This change of plan

might even conflict the whole conceptual foundation. I thought it was also funny how we were playing with the size of the events, as this miniature stove creates bigger sound illusion than it physically is.

First we considered covering the center structure with plywood that has holes cut in it, and covered with loudspeaker fabric for loudspeakers. All the technology, and four loudspeakers are inside the structure, and the need to for easy maintenance access, made us think of just covering the whole thing with black fabric. Sound diffusion would not lose too much its fidelity, and the solution would be lightweight, easy and fast.

Around the same time it was decided that the color scheme would be black. Black loudspeakers, black center structure, and black miniature stove. Simplified minimal visual design, as I don't consider myself very talented with visual design as I work with sound. Of course we did some superficial research from the internet, from Wikipedia<sup>40</sup> about the meaning of black color in Japanese culture. Black is associated with mystery, the night, the unknown, the supernatural, the invisible and death — in some occasions dark, evil, and color of misfortune, but also manifesting experience. We were wondering whether this would be the best choice, especially as we did not consider our work to be evil or dark, but rather mystical, and funny. But as we were somewhat clumsy with colors, black was the color we felt would work best with the sculpture. We were hoping that these color connotations would not turn against us, and after all we were making sculpture that produces sound as its main element. That was our primary concern after all, and we were still not making too many sounds.

Now it started to make visually sense, now it was cohesive. We considered these small black loudspeakers to be small sauna stoves that are connected to a black, big center sauna stove, and on top of that, inside the display box lies a black, miniature sauna stove — the unreachable humorous art object. Every dot was connected, organized, and should make some sense.

### **3.6 Installing the Sculpture**

When arriving in the gallery, our preconceptions and visions, and the reality clashed. Something I have only imagined through images, and stories, is now in front of me, or actually around me — I am there. An alignment with the space begins. I listen, I inspect it from various viewpoints, feel it and try to notice every possible detail that there might be, which would affect the work. KIVIKASA will become KIVIKASA in this space, it was designed for this space, and now it is time to fit these two together. This moment will be a test for all the effort.

The assembling of the sculpture was mentally well prepared and practiced during the month of construction, and it was quite straightforward. The aspect that we paid most careful attention to was the placement of stones in the miniature stove inside the acrylic box. Wearing white gloves of specialists, and following the zen mentality, and Shinji's words "every stone must be carefully placed, every stone has its reason", Saku was doing this important gesture to master the work. One impulsive on-a-spot decision was when added a "do not touch" sign inside the acrylic box together with Shinji. I think it added even funnier authoritative ele-

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<sup>40</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black#Asian\\_culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black#Asian_culture)

ment to the sculpture. The miniature stove was already excluded from touching with acrylic box, and was now extended with a sign underlining the importance of the displayed object, a mystical miniature kiuas. The audio cables for the loudspeakers on the floor caused some on-a-spot improvisation, as they might cause people falling as they get tangled to their feet. It was considered beforehand that we will use masking tape to fasten the cables to the floor, but now we were wondering what color we should use, how to tape it, or could we use be transparent tape. We decided to use semitransparent tape because it looked best and was suitable for the material of the carpet. Fastening audio cables with masking tape was actually the most time consuming part of the assembling.



*Fig 9. Assembling acrylic box in Tokyo with Saku and Shinji Kanki is inspecting whether the work is done properly*

When everything was set up it was time for the spatial mixing that I considered the most crucial aspect of spatial sound sculpture. Adjusting the sound balance according to the acoustics of the space by listening the combination of room and diffused soundscape. It is like tuning an instrument, when finding the proper volume levels for each layer of the sound material, and the overall volume of the whole sculpture in a relation to the other works, and the café that is next to the gallery spaces. After this listening based on lots of doubt, and re-adjustment, process is decided to be finished, and KIVIKASA is prepared for the spectators.

### **3.7 What Happened When the Work Was Done?**

The sculpture is now installed, and it feels amazing. Creation of the myth can begin. From that moment everything is about the finished artwork. The everyday details of the process diminish beneath the glory of KIVIKASA itself. Just like it would have appeared into this world out of nowhere. In this moment of catharsis when all the effort is relieved, and all the effort is paid with birth of myth that relativity of time supports. Seven months of effort dis-



appears in this moment. Me as a one of the two creators, designers, and laborers, now turn myself into an artist, who speaks in beautiful concepts revealing only the essential ideas of KIVIKASA. By this decorated language, the myth start to a take stronger hold in my mind. The relativity of time has distilled several months into one object that has the label of art. Being there at the location, and witnessing people experiencing, perceiving, admiring, and wondering KIVIKASA, reveals the huge emotional connection I have with the work. I have invested hundreds of hours of time focusing on creating this sculpture, at same time rejecting attention from many other aspects of life. The joy in people's face, and physical presence, makes all that effort worthwhile.

But these moments of happy contemplation also have their counterpart in the profound self-seeking, which raises doubts. As our work is experience based, utilizing senses, and not really manifesting clear meaning or message, and does not provide textual explanation, or artistic statement, I started to wonder what is the difference between media art that creates experiences and an amusement park ride? For example we introduce "mystical subtle sounds of sauna" to reinterpret the sensation of sauna experience, which we consider somewhat spiritual. Well I didn't know too much about art history or theory, although I should have done that through my education. I have been too busy doing things, and not reading about things. I guess KIVIKASA must be art. To me art has always been something mystical, creations of emotional sensitivity where too much rationality diminishes its essence. According to that explanation, I call it art and especially sound art due it is suggesting the act of listening, and the wonders of moving sound for contemplation, and imagination to wander. But actually besides that preconception, I really don't know too much about sound art, what sound art actually is?

And while drinking beer near the Koenji train station in Tokyo in May 2014, I decided to write my thesis, the one you are reading now, about KIVIKASA, and its conceptual aspects, and its relevance to the field of sound art. Months later back in Finland after reading few books, and writings about sound art I started to include a question for myself about the mysticism, and my consideration about art — is the mysticism, contemplation, spiritual other world seeking enough for explaining art? As I personally meditate, travel between imaginary worlds, and sink through listening into a world of sound, and find the unexplainable pleasure of it — it is justified to put this assumption under suspicion whether others assume in a similar way. And the question goes on if these personal artistic gestures, aesthetical decisions, or mediation work as a gateway for others? By asking these questions, I motivate myself to seek more information, and understanding about art and sound art. This motivates me to find a new understanding about KIVIKASA.



*Fig 10. Disassembling for two hours*



*Fig 11. KIVIKASA ready to be delivered back to Finland*

## 4. Understanding What Is Sound Art

To understand what kind of field I am locating KIVIKASA, when calling it as a work of sound art, or sound sculpture, I have to define the category of sound art, also called as sonic arts. I start with vague, and overall definitions, categorizations by exploring thoughts of various writers. Starting from simple categorizations, proceeding to more profound ideas I try to understand more. I am trying to find a common red thread, and possible points of divisions, proposing possibilities what sound art could be. The definition is not going to be finite. Rather it is a collection of opinions, and artistic gestures that I can relate to — aiding me to understand more about KIVIKASA as a work of sound art. The aim is not to open the whole history, or jump deeply into the philosophy of the theories, but rather highlight the artistic aspects, because the literature that I refer to has already extensively done that.

### 4.1 Sound Art Is Overlapping Boundaries

Before this moment, I have learned from various fragments of information, from here and there, what sound art might be. But as everybody in academic field expects the information one handles should be transparent, and based on peer-reviewed research, books, journals, and so on. The first reference outside of the Internet, or Wikipedia, was Tony Gibbs's subjective consideration what he thinks sonic art is. He uses the word sonic art for describing the ambiguity, rejecting it being just one category, instead finding its place, for example from the fields of fine arts, music, performance, and ecological issues as acoustic ecology. For him the work of sound art seeks to communicate with sound, or is informed by the ideas that are based on sound. He excludes works from this categorization the works that produce sound as a by-product, for example kinetic sculptures, or works that don't have a conceptual reference to sound.<sup>41</sup> For him the sound is conceptually a center element, internally and externally.

As the categorization of sonic art can span to various fields, I need to limit the scope of my focus to the field of gallery arts, as KIVIKASA is located in that world, and because of the limitations of this paper. For now on my reading will focus on theorization about sound sculptures, sound installations, and world of visual arts, and not in performance art or music. But as Caleb Kelly reminds that sound art has close ties to music, it impossible to talk about it without considering music.<sup>42</sup> So I will travel in the blurry lines of experimental music, and history of visual arts, where the sound art seems to be located.

Kelly mentions that increased theoretical interest towards sound culture at the beginning of the 21st century, due to an increasing amount of everyday life becoming influenced by multitude of mechanically reproduced sounds, and noisier cities, and an increasing awareness of this change has influenced many artists to work on these issues asking people to rethink the way we understand world through listening. This momentum was termed by Jim Drobnic as "sonic turn", and that has also raised attention towards sound art, and given impulse to increasing amount of writings that try to conceptualize, categorize, and understand sound art. Kelly reads these texts in the manner that writers have understood sound art as a movement or, a genre, distinct from other forms of art. He also points out the difficulty of the term, because it is used in different contexts of the gallery-based works and experimental

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<sup>41</sup> Gibbs, T. 2007, *The fundamentals of sonic art and sound design*, AVA, Lausanne., p. 11.

<sup>42</sup> Kelly, C. in *Sound*, 2011, Whitechapel Gallery, London., p. 15.

music. He suggest that “sound art” should be understood as a description of used medium, like “oil painting”, describing what it is made from and how, instead of informing its content.<sup>43</sup>

Kelly states in his anthology about sound art that sound is immanent to contemporary art, and has always been part of it, as people attend artworks perceiving with both eyes and ears. This presence is often neglected due to lack of sonic understanding, and from the difficulty of representing sound as a medium. “One cannot look at the sound in a book, the sound of particular installation cannot be photographed and retained as a document.”<sup>44</sup> This makes listening prominent part of understanding the medium of sound.

In 1994 written text, William Furlong finds positivity of this impossibility to categorize sound art as distinct category, as he sees the categories become restrictive, and limiting if sound art should be done according to some rules, thus marginalized in to a genre.<sup>45</sup> This overlapping between different boundaries is seen valuable, escaping the easy, and straightforward linear analysis, and categorization.<sup>46</sup> This can be read as gesture of trying to evolve new ways of working with sound, escaping the pre-considered ways, what sound is in art. Instead artists, experimental musicians are constantly re-evaluating established conventions related to sound, and are producing works that are extending beyond these conventions.<sup>47</sup>

In 2000 artist, Max Neuhaus, known from his public space sound installations, asks a question: sound art? He sees an increasing interest of visual art institutions towards sound from 1980’s, and in the 1995 becoming almost an art phenomenon with various exhibitions including sound in various forms. “Music, kinetic sculpture, instruments activated by the wind or played by the public, conceptual art, sound effects, recorded readings of prose or poetry, visual artworks which also make sound, paintings of musical instruments, musical automata, film, video, technological demonstrations, acoustic re-enactments, interactive computer programs which produce sound etc.”<sup>48</sup>

And the category of “sound art” to him seems to be something that can include anything which has, or makes sound, or sometimes not at all. But in his opinion often the selection under the category of “sound art” is done loosely, many times selecting simply music with new names. He pinpoints that new music, experimental music, should not be categorized as something else than music. Not as sound art, he argues. He goes even further asking whether “Sound Art” can work as foundation for new art, when many of these things already have names, but new name “sound art” would unite them with previously unnoticed “shared commonality”, sound, he argues.<sup>49</sup>

Neuhaus breaks the term in two words “sound” and “art”. Many works, he says, have sound, but the sound aspect is not the most important part of what they are. He adds, “almost every

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., London., p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>45</sup> Furlong, W., (1994) ‘Sound in Recent Art’, in Sound, 2011, Whitechapel Gallery, London., p. 67.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>48</sup> Neuhaus, M., (2000) ‘Sound Art?’, in Sound, 2011, Whitechapel Gallery, London., p. 72.

<http://www.max-neuhaus.info/soundworks/soundart/>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

activity in the world has aural component.” The word “art” refers to fine art, and many of his examples has little do with the context of art. He points that in art the medium is not often the message. The problem he sees in the loose categorization of sound art, “is the destruction of distinctions for promoting activities with their least common denominator, sound”. The emphasis on the activity itself seems to overshadow “the fine distinctions that lie behind the aesthetic experience”. He proposes that whenever we are developing our skills, and the potential of the medium to go beyond the “limits of music” thus creating new forms of art, we should invent new words for them, because to him — “sound art has been already used.”<sup>50</sup>

But still 14 years later, I still seem to be using term sound art describing the practice. So does Brandon Labelle when exploring sound art as distinguished practice, and category in the loose borders of experimental music and 20<sup>th</sup> century visual arts, in his 2006 published historical review of sound art. LaBelle sees sound art as a practice that “harnesses, describes, analyzes, performs, and interrogates the condition of sound, and the process by which it operates” meaning that the artist controls, and is aware of the material of sound, and the context where it is located. He states that sound art can work as an activator between existing relations of sound and place. He proposes without doubt that this dynamic relationship between space and sound is in the core of the practice of sound art.<sup>51</sup>

#### **4.2 Phenomenon of Sound As Way to Understand Sound Art**

LaBelle writes that to understand sound art one needs to understand the phenomena of sound. He has three points to explain sound as relational phenomena. First he addresses that every time sound is more than in one place, it cannot be reduced to a single sound, and sound source, but instead it is spatial, happening in multiple points, describing the place from various perspectives, and locations. Secondly this movement within place happens among bodies, through materiality of the space and other people. People create multiple acoustical viewpoints to understand sound. Thus acoustical event becomes an operation of sociality, because sound happens in the context of acoustical space. As the last point, he argues that sound is never a private affair. It starts from single source, and is instantaneously arriving to multiple destinations. For example voice — when someone is speaking, the sound is moving and emanating in the air, filling the space and other people’s hearing — is more than a voice in one head, through the act of listening it goes beyond individual understanding.<sup>52</sup>

Sound as relational phenomenon helps to understand the immediate presence, and transmission of sound — as now being here, and soon being somewhere else, now, and then — “performing with, and through space”. Being boundless, finding ways to escape the space, and same time it is tied to the space, and by listening the sound and space, we locate ourselves in this “sonorous world”. LaBelle proposes that this relational aspect of sound allows sound art to find sociality, and engage with it, through being site-specific. By understanding harmonies, and dissonances between site, people, and their interaction, sound has potential to activate existing spaces of sociality.<sup>53</sup> (xvi, LaBelle)

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>51</sup> LaBelle, B. 2006, Background noise perspectives on sound art, Continuum International, London., p. ix

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. xi.

<sup>53</sup> LaBelle, B., p. xvi

### 4.3 Site-specificity in Art

Seth Kim-Cohen<sup>54</sup> presents three models for site-specificity based on Miwon Kwon's book. First consideration is the "phenomenological or experiential", referring to the physical realities of the space where the work is located. The artwork is done along with the architecture. The second is "social/institutional", where the site of art is more than physical place, but a complicated system of social, economical, and political processes, and through employing them tries to also question the conventions of insulated art institutions. The third is "discursive" considering site "as a product of various intersecting narratives and practices" thus becoming more public, and expanding the idea what art is — being more like movement than a static site.<sup>55</sup> Kim-Cohen writes that Kwon finds this discursivity, as a way for art to reconnect with the world, out of the subjectivity and isolation. Kim-Cohen elaborates Lytle Shaws idea that artwork should also be aware of the context where it is located – history of art. Kim-Cohen underlines importance of transparency with relation to the various structures, art history, and society from where the artwork operates.<sup>56</sup>

LaBelle finds that current sound art practices have developed along mid-1960's site-specific practices of sculpture, installation, and performance art of visual arts. Attention of visual arts moved away from single specific objects to environments, context, ideas and events, actions, temporality, becoming self-consciously critical to its own structures, and institutions, and language, to happen more and more in relation to the space. The immateriality and temporality of sound was one way to develop site-specific visual art practice.<sup>57</sup>

When talking about traces what might have influenced site-specific practices, the spotlight turns to the works of the composer John Cage. Especially his composition "4'33'" is regarded as a highly important work in to understanding the history of sound art. The work comes from the tradition of Western classical music, and from the mind that wants to explore new ways of composing. He composed a silent composition, where the performer sits in front of piano for 4 minutes and 33 seconds without playing a single note.<sup>58</sup> The work allows thus the non-intentional sounds of the concert situation to become the composition. The noises outside of the usual musical performance are now in the spotlight due to the authoritative silence of the concert situation. This makes the noises that were previously unheard to become audible.<sup>59</sup> Through listening the audience becomes the composer of the piece within a time frame of 4 minutes and 33 seconds.<sup>60</sup> Cage was releasing the control of the author in musical performance, and allowing the work complete itself. LaBelle considers that by leading the audience to a performative play with the ear through listening and becoming aware of the situation, Cage's composition is "about the social space". (LaBelle, 20)<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Kim-Cohen, S. 2013, *Against Ambience*, Bloomsbury Academic; 1 edition., 49-50%.

<sup>55</sup> Kwon, M. 2004, *One Place after Another Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, MIT Press, Cambridge, p. 3-4.

<sup>56</sup> Kim-Cohen, S., 52%.

<sup>57</sup> LaBelle, B., p. xii.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>61</sup> Labelle, B., p. 20.

#### 4.4 John Cage's Influence on Site-Specificity and Sound Installation

In end of 1950's Cage was teaching composition according to his values and introducing new possibilities to approach creative work with earlier unrelated material, and ways — including chance-operations, ways to activate spontaneity, usage of found objects, combining media, and proposing mixed-media aesthetics, and the possibilities of everyday life. According to Labelle, Cage was interested in shifting the idea of artist as maker of objects into an individual, a decision maker concerning the questions “what, how, and where the art takes place”, and which ways the production takes place. In other words he was interested in the process.<sup>62</sup>

Cage's influence is visible in the art movement Fluxus, which was precisely conceptual, and interested in insignificant everyday, small details that are by artistic gestures isolated from the real life, and presented at the center of attention. Tactics of fluxus were motivated by “humorousness of gags”, and introduced “the spirit of play into the arts”.<sup>63</sup> LaBelle mentions for example, the works of composer George Brecht's “Drip Music” where the performer drips water to the container below, and asks with this gesture the audience to listen the insignificant, almost inaudible sound event. Brecht continued John Cage's idea of “all sound can function as music” by adding “everything that happens is music”, by proposing his “event score”.<sup>64</sup> The composition “Incidental Music” from 1961, the “event score” explains the instructions as text, how to perform with piano, but does not reveal the sound material. Instead it twists our understanding about piano as a musical instrument into an object with an “universe of potential sound” that is hidden under the ordinary use of instrument. Brecht is exploring this potential with accidental sound events, like dropping dried peas on the keyboards, or piling wood blocks inside the piano until they fall on the strings of the piano.<sup>65</sup>

As I mentioned earlier, I was interested in minimalist composer La Monte Young's ideas about drone music, and his sound rooms, Dream House, as my inspiration for music, and sound art. Young expanded Cage's idea by removing the social aspects of sounds, and instead focused on the “perceptual and detailed world of sound” emphasizing the idea of “music as pure concept, as a sonic image to be completed within the listener's ear” inspecting “palette of sonic frequencies”. For Young “the music was nothing but collection of sound defined by frequency, amplitude, duration, and overtone spectrum.”<sup>66</sup> This inspection was performed by sustaining the sound for a very long time so that ears could adjust to the tone, and start to hear the little details of the frequency.<sup>67</sup> The listening situation of these performances suggests the spatiality created by the listener, by moving inside the loud sonic field within acoustics. Dream House was Young's home that he constructed, and modified for his long durational performances in the 1960s. The space was working as extended instrument, as frequencies were influenced by the architectural properties of the room, and by listener's position in the room. The project continued later in the 1970's as Young installed in each

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 59, 65.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 68-69.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 72.

room tone generators, and made each room to work as chord environment, where spectator would wander, and compose.<sup>68</sup>

Not only playing with space, sound was also playing with time. Robert Morris's "Box with the sound of its own making" from 1961, is a sculpture where a small wooden box is exhibited. Inside the box is a small loudspeaker diffusing an audio recording of the artist constructing the box. What is interesting in the piece according LaBelle is the realization that there are three boxes — a physical constructed box, and the immaterial construction process of the box presented using sound. The third box is the hidden sound reproduction equipment that creates a sense of unreal, and alters the presence of the work when everything that reminds about real is hidden.<sup>69</sup> Labelle notes that at the same time the sculpture is "here and there, present and past".<sup>70</sup> For LaBelle the sound of the work is rather textual than sound object, and it shows how sound, not only appeals to physical senses, but also can be read.

Another expander of Cage's ideas, Max Neuhaus, who according to LaBelle, moves from music to sounds, and from the galleries, or concert halls to the public space.<sup>71</sup> LaBelle writes: "Sound installation moves from "time of music" to the "space of sound", Neuhaus's work suggest that it does so by *temporalizing* space." LaBelle continues: "To encounter sound installation, one spends time within space, immersed in a listening that brings one to space through an acoustical unfolding wedded to movement and duration."<sup>72</sup> Neuhaus emphasizes the joy of discovery. His sounds are installed as aligning part of the public soundscape, and people reveal the work in their own time, as their own discovery through their own curiosity for listening. In his public sound installation "Times Square" (1977), a large loudspeaker is installed underneath the ventilation grill on the street and it diffuses a deep drone sound mixing with the heavy noise of the traffic. By this, according to LaBelle, he adds an extra layer of sound, nearly impossible to hear, and raises the questions about the soundscape of the specific site. The installation could work as a wake-up call to hear the environment, open up the ears, and as Neuhaus writes "accept the sounds impossibility" as part of the city.<sup>73</sup> LaBelle notices that with "Times Square", the added sound element does not only make space more noticeable, but also brings life to it, animating it, depending on the time of day as the people pass by, inhabiting it temporarily by hearing.<sup>74</sup>

As Labelle draws the history sound installation emerged as a practice along with movements of visual arts. Movements like Fluxus, and Minimalism, which were gaining inspiration from experimental music practices were interested in situation, space, sound, and performance elevated attention, and possibilities of sound as a medium for artistic creation. Artists were exploring sound as a material, and its conceptual possibilities. Taking steps out of music culture, or durational concert situations, working with spatiality of sound, and with space, and uniting the space and sound. Sound installation works with, already complex, space of "found and constructed" sound. Combining the sound of the site, and the added lay-

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<sup>68</sup> Labelle, B., p. 73-74.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 157. & <http://www.max-neuhaus.info/images/TimesSquare.gif>

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 164-165.



er of an artist. LaBelle is summarizing that artists who worked with sound installations, took their part in the argument that “sound, and place are inherently conversational”, both working as mediators, and having potential to unite as “sounding instrument”.<sup>75</sup>

Early practitioner of “sound sculpture” Michael Brewster, according to LaBelle, considers sound sculpture to be a “form to create interaction of sound in the space” by tuning the amplified sounds, and frequencies according to the architecture to create “sculptural presence”. This opens up a possibility to adjust acoustics with sounds to create a room within a room. This immaterial idea of sound sculpture was possible with materiality of sound.<sup>76</sup> Bernhard Leitner was experimenting in the 1970’s with spatial sound. With sound movement he was activating existing architectural spaces, in a pursuit of transforming the architectural feel of the space. LaBelle notes that his work raises possibilities for aesthetical, scientific, medical, and social opportunities for using sound. He also considers moving sounds of Leitner to activate the space, being sound ornaments, thus making cold, and dull spaces more alive, even more humanized.<sup>77</sup>

#### 4.5 Sonic Object

As I have been following Brandon LaBelle’s book to understand the historical development of sound art as practice, the emphasis has been very much on raising interest towards the materiality of sound, perception of sound itself, and the sense of hearing. Artists have focused on the phenomenon of sound, but also on the social surroundings where sound is located — the architecture, public space, thus becoming aware and raising public awareness of our sonic world. Not only John Cage has been influential to this development, but also Pierre Schaeffer. In the end of the 1940’s, he worked as an engineer in the “French Radio and Television Company”, and had possibility to start experimenting with new audio technology, for example with phonographs, and magnetic tape. The experiments produced possibilities to create new imaginary sounds, which could work as material for new kind of musical expression, the music concrete.<sup>78</sup>

These new “concrete” sounds could be treated outside the earlier musical parameters — they had the character of their own. Schaeffer called these new sounds “sound objects”. Sound objects are listened acousmatically without seeing its cause, referring to Greek philosopher Pythagoras, who lectured from behind the curtain.<sup>79</sup> When not seeing the source, listener can instead focus on the sound itself — to the sonic, and acoustic properties of the sound. Kim-Cohen reminds that acousmatic listening was possible with help of a “curtain of technology”.<sup>80</sup> Acousmatic listening is possible through “reduced listening”, where the listener finds those traits of the sound itself which are independent from its cause and meaning — sound not being a vehicle for something else.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Labelle, B., p. 151-152.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 167, 170

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>78</sup> Kim-Cohen, S. 2009, *In the blink of an ear towards a non-cochlear sonic art*, Continuum, New York., p. 8.

<sup>79</sup> Chion, M., ‘The Three Listening Modes’, in Sterne, J. (ed.) 2012, *Sound studies reader*, Routledge, London., p. 52.

<sup>80</sup> Kim-Cohen, S., p. 9-10.

<sup>81</sup> Chion, M., p. 50.

According to Kim-Cohen, the ideal of this reduced listening “is to get rid of semiotic activity of listening” by simply allowing the sounds to be perceived without any thinking process.<sup>82</sup> He sees that sound object has no obligations to the actual world, because there is no point of reference to the sound, or anything that helps to locate its factuality.<sup>83</sup> Michael Chion notes that reduced listening requires practice — listening the same sound over and over again, and this means that sound needs to be fixed, it needs to be recorded. Also the problem of describing sounds without reference is difficult and ambiguous, when we have to explain them to other people with the language we use.<sup>84</sup> Even Schaeffer had problems to locate his concrete sounds outside the context of musical language in a reasonable way after 40-years of trying to construct ways to discuss them.<sup>85</sup> But Chion still finds positivity in the practice of reduced listening as it can work as “ear opener” improving the skill of listening, if it is done repetitively, and as it tries to find new understanding of sound only by its sonic properties.<sup>86</sup>

#### 4.6 Listening

As listening is a crucial part of understanding sound and its aesthetic practice, I feel obligated to explore the ideas of listening. Michael Chion mentions “causal listening” which looks at the traits of information of the source, or the cause of the sound. When the source is visible it works as additional information, and when we do not see the source, the sound works as primary information of the source. Another is “semantic listening” by which we interpret codes and understand messages, as we understand human voice as speech with message. This mode of listening often ignores the sonic details of the voice.<sup>87</sup> Paulino Olivero’s way of “deep listening” is “listening in every possible way to everything to hear no matter what one is doing.” It is both an inclusive and exclusive way of listening as one moves the focus of listening within the sound environment, and becomes aware the act of listening.<sup>88</sup> LaBelle notes that it is a way of attending to the sound world and being conscious about the act of listening following the idea of Roland Barthes about the difference between hearing, and listening. For Barthes hearing is “psychological condition”, and listening is “psychological act”. As a “psychological act”, LaBelle elaborates; it seeks attentively understanding from the surrounding environment, thus aligning and connecting with the environment, by locating sound sources and their meaning and causes. This does not mean total awareness of everything that happens around, but rather can provide information about the conditions of certain environment.<sup>89</sup> By listening not only the space but also our listening allows us to “attend to sound” and temporally live the flow of sound.

“To listen attentively then is to become a part of thing, and to lessen the human agency of will, for listening is about receiving through an intense passivity all that is surrounding — the subtle sounds, the far and the near, the voices of persons and insects alike, the shifting wind.” (245, LaBelle)

Salome Voegelin takes the act of listening as a starting point for her philosophy of sound art. It is based on the phenomenological philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, which shortly

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<sup>82</sup> Kim-Cohen, S., p. 12-13.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 15

<sup>84</sup> Chion, M., p. 50-51.

<sup>85</sup> Kim-Cohen, S., p. 11.

<sup>86</sup> Chion, M., p. 51

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 48-50

<sup>88</sup> <http://deeplisting.org/site/content/about>

<sup>89</sup> Labelle, B., p. 158.

expressed talks about perceptions role in understanding, and engaging with the world. For Voegelin's philosophy the driving force is the will to know. Will to know something that cannot be known beforehand in the unfolding situation of listening. For her, listening to a work of sound art is not just passive receiving, but a method of exploration. What is presented through sound is relational, because what is heard is subjective discovery, creation of personal fantasies that are always different, and always happening in the instant of listening.<sup>90</sup> She notes that listening cannot contemplate the heard material without being present to audition of the sound work, because the sound material doesn't appear before the listening, it appears in the moment of listening.<sup>91</sup> She continues that to understand the sound work engagement for the time of its audition is demanded, whether she is prepared to spend time to listen to it or not. In her way of listening the sound artwork, she produces the work in her temporal presence with the work, and she is aware that duration of the work might prevent her judgments to be definite, or later communicable.<sup>92</sup>

She argues that the criticality of the sound art arises from the rejection of getting "total meaning". The critical engagement with sound artwork requires listening with doubt, and astonishment. Critical commentaries are not transparent totalities, but are built from "emotional pull of the sound" as passing possibilities that are later communicated.<sup>93</sup> The meaning for heard, is in the listener's own effort for production, not in the ideas that are produced beforehand. The listener's participation in the sound artwork is, according to her, a dynamic production of culture. The listener as a critic does not conclude the work but rather keeps narrating the work and enters into the cultural production by producing personal "sonic fantasies".<sup>94</sup> The listeners own will to realize "the sonic fantasies" and will to share them rather than shared order of how to speak about them works as shared communication about the work. Shared subjective experience, creates objectivity.<sup>95</sup> The "sonic subjectives", listeners do not meet for reasoning, but affection, producing "simultaneity and coincidence" escaping from single truth or ideal, but rather it is a playful exchange that activates, and generates possibilities.<sup>96</sup>

She argues that in her philosophy of sound art, any grouping or identifications that are made before actual perceiving, "a priori knowledge", are sonically impossible, because the listener does not assume the work, but rather practices it in the always-surprising moment of now.<sup>97</sup> If the work is not listened it becomes "a mute archive", mainly talking through photos, and texts about its "concept and processes, its form, and structure".<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Voegelin, S. 2010, *Listening to noise and silence toward a philosophy of sound art*, Continuum, New York., p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39, 172.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27, 118.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72, 74.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29

#### 4.7 Away from Listening — Towards Conceptual Sound Art

Alongside with the emphasis on perception, the act of listening, and the medium of sound itself, there are also other approaches what sound art could be. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, avant-garde movements, and for example Marcel Duchamp twisted the idea of art object, and the foundation of art institution by bringing the “ready-made” into the gallery. Thus liberating the eye from the solitude, and turning from “era of the taste [to] era of meaning”.<sup>99</sup> And later in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, post avant-garde movements were expanding the field of art from single viewpoint, from single art object to the space, time, and event; visual artists were rejecting the formalism of the abstract painting, and the essentialism of the modernism.

Seth Kim-Cohen finds the contemporary sound art resistant of expanding outside of its medium centrality. It is not renewing, and it is lacking in taking conceptual approaches, and not being critical of its own materiality. He finds sound art lacking in being connected to the real world, rather seeking shelter for itself from works of the past, spawning a second-generation of minimalism, and the formalism of sound-in-itself. Producing sound artworks that are focused on the form, and technique over meaning, and emphasizing perception of hearing, and the essence of sound. Manifesting material, and perceptual properties of sound like vibrations, resonance, immersion, and affect.<sup>100</sup>

*“Both in practice and in theory, the sonic arts have more often listened at sound, like a window drawn on a wall, than listened out or through sound to the broader worldly implications of sound’s expanded situation.”<sup>101</sup>*

He argues a necessity of shift from perception towards meaning, and takes a critical perspective when thinking, and talking about sound art. This lead to a question whether sound alone is enough to constitute the practice of sound art. For him it is the critical question of where to focus attention of art making: “problem which culture attempts to resolve... in relation of to man in language, in knowledge, in society, and religion”, or the primordially of perceptual experience”.<sup>102</sup>

To find reasons why he wants to rethink theory and practice of sound art, we have to look again back to the history. He draws attention to the shift from eye-centered art towards more than perceptual, rather more conceptual approach in the history of visual arts, and wants to demystify and rehear the history of sound art as it is — “a practice irreducibly to singularity or instantaneity” — something that cannot be simplified as an exclusive mystical thing happening in the moment. By this demystification, and taking steps out of formalism, he argues that we can connect sound art to deal broader topics than just phenomenon of sound, including textual, conceptual, social and political concerns.<sup>103</sup>

He opens his conceptual sound theory as “non-cochlear” which means literally “not-hearing” as cochlea is a organ inside inner ear that produces nerve impulses according to the sound

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<sup>99</sup> Kim-Cohen, S., p. xvii.

<sup>100</sup> Kim-Cohen, S. 2013, *Against Ambience*, Bloomsbury Academic; 1 edition., 5%.

<sup>101</sup> Kim-Cohen, S. 2009, *In the blink of an ear towards a non-cochlear sonic art*, Continuum, New York., p. 217.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xix.

vibrations. He explains that the “non” is not negation, or something that would stop us producing or hearing sound, but instead would expand outside the practices that have constituted sound art. “The non-cochlear sonic art responds to demands, conventions, forms, and content not restricted to the realm of the sonic. A non-cochlear sonic art maintains a healthy skepticism toward the notion of sound-in-itself.”<sup>104</sup> And this is accomplished by the act of questioning.

“If a non-retinal visual art is liberated to ask questions that the eye alone cannot answer, then a non-cochlear sonic art appeals to exigencies out of earshot. But the eye and the ear not denied or discarded. A conceptual sonic art would necessarily engage both the non-cochlear and the cochlear, and the constituting trace of each in the other”<sup>105</sup>

Non-cochlear sound art is seeking “expanded situation” of sound that doesn’t stick in the center of its own materiality, but rather tries to find away out towards the world, in a discursive sonic art practice.<sup>106</sup> Non-cochlear sonic practice is organized through “the universe of terms that are felt to be in opposition within cultural situation”. His idea is based on the art theorist Rosalind Krauss’s theory of “Sculpture in the Expanded Field”, which sees artistic practice not dependent on the precise material. The definition of sculpture does not depend on certain accepted ways of perceiving by given material. For her sculpture is a “discursive construct” based on how it is talked, and thought about. In every occasion the definition, and the base terms of sculpture are re-evaluated, making sculpture a dynamic “cultural situation”.<sup>107</sup>

“Just as each work of art engages a certain conceptual concerns, every sound work cannot help but signify. But certain artworks foreground their conceptual aspects, and certain instances of sonic art engage the materiality of sound as a means to a semiotic end.”<sup>108</sup> He sees that this formalistic approach ends the discussion, by laying a set of rules by which the work is seen. For Kim-Cohen the “non-cochlear” sound art locates between the universal terms of noise and speech. I read it to be somewhere between clear communication of ideas, and miscommunication by disruptions within the context where mediating happens. Non-cochlear sound art can present itself in any medium: “ photography, books, lines on walls, mirrors, sculpture, ...performance, speech, choreography, social practice”, and also sound might be used. He sees that “con-cochlear” sound art is neither music, neither gallery arts, nor in the direction of sound-in-itself, and sound art cannot be a reservoir for experimental music.<sup>109</sup>

#### **4.8 Non-Cochlear Examples From History of Sound Art**

As non-cochlear sound art should expand the situation of sound, Kim-Cohen sees John Cage’s work as an example for “con-cochlear” sound art, particularly referring to Cage’s work “4”33”. Kim-Cohen is following Douglas Kahn’s idea, when rehearing “4”33”. He writes that when John Cage “liberated” sounds to be themselves, it was “anti-essentialist non-phenomenological realization”, which was an “illusionary side-effect” of self-discussion of

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. xxii.

<sup>105</sup> Kim-Cohen, S., p. xxi.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 151-153

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 107, 156.

critical consciousness asking “is it happening”, or “what are these sounds”, and this discursiveness is the base of Cage’s experience. It was not passive perception surrounding sounds themselves, but also critically asking, “what I am hearing”.<sup>110</sup>

The composition expands the situation of music, by breaking the preconception of concert situation. By not performing any sound, and allowing noises of surroundings to be the material for the composition. When there is no music, the situation is in constant discussion, and is constantly redefined.<sup>111</sup> But according to him, this expanded situation is just only not about the perception of the “new sounds”, but about the “cut” or interruption of audience’s thinking process that composes the piece, through listener’s expectations, memory, and knowledge. Kim-Cohen introduces that the work can be understood, not only as sound-in-itself, but as sound-as-text. Listener as reader is constantly comparing each moment, or second to another and anticipating what is going to happen.<sup>112</sup>

Morris’s “Box with the sound of its own making”, according to Kim-Cohen, expands the situation of time, and space. The work shows how sound as immersive medium can be ideal for creating a temporary environment that is a product of the sound source, spectator, and the situation, and the situation is product of time context, expectations and the memory.<sup>113</sup> “The sound suggest itself as an already dematerialized medium in which issues of time, process, and reception are unavoidably in play.”<sup>114</sup> The Morris’s box is one reference for Kim-Cohen where the expanded sonic practice could lay its foundations. The work reveals the process how the work was made, and is reconstructing the time of listening situation by mixing past and now.<sup>115</sup>

Kim-Cohen rehearses George Brecht’s “Incidental music” as a work, which questions the conventional, and proper use of materials, as piano, in a musical context.<sup>116</sup> In the concert setting, the piano on the stage creates a set of rules how to behave, what to expect from the performance, corrupts history, and relies on technique, all of which Kim-Cohen notes are generated cultural habits, not natural ways of dealing with life. As conceptual art work, the work does not ask questions, but creates situation where “questions can be asked” about the whole concept of music itself, and these cultural habits.<sup>117</sup>

Luc Ferrari’s sound works, for example “Presque Rien No.1” that creates sonic documentary of small Yugoslavian fishing village, are according to Kim-Cohen good examples of the attitude towards the sound as a reader, where the reader understand what sounds represent, how they are in relation among each others, and how they communicate and to who.<sup>118</sup> Ferrari sound worlds are transparent where meaning can flow freely between the actual recorded world, and the world that this recording creates. Ferrari is aware that the act of re-

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 222. Kim-Cohen, S. 2013, *Against Ambience*, Bloomsbury Academic; 1 edition., 59%.

<sup>111</sup> Kim-Cohen, S., p. 167.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 140-141.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

ording alters what it records, and does not suggest that the material he has would be “real”.<sup>119</sup>

Kim-Cohen also finds, Alvin Lucier sound work “I am sitting in the room” interesting in the context of non-cochlear sound art. He lists that the title of the work describes the situation. The text is both content, and instruction for the work, and the process it describes is the subject of the work, instead of just being a form it constructs. The text is created in the materialization process. He argues that to “perform the work requires no interpretation, no translation, no manipulation on the part of the performer”.<sup>120</sup> But what Kim-Cohen rehears is the reductive reading of the work in the history of sound art, just as an “exploration of physical phenomena”, which the text already neglects. Instead he points out how the piece locates itself between multi-disciplinary fields of “music, literature, the gallery arts, plain speech, psychology, speech pathology, ontology, and epistemology”. Going so far arguing that the piece is best engaged without listening to it!<sup>121</sup>

#### 4.9 Against Ambience and Sound-In-Itself

What is sound-in-itself? According to Kim-Cohen, it is based on the anecdotes of John Cage’s realization of “all sounds being music”, or “there is no silence”, or “let sounds be themselves”, and Pierre Schaeffer’s sound object. He argues that sound art has had tendency to accept John Cage’s ideas without critique.<sup>122</sup> Also having tendency of describing sound as something primordial, or something natural, existing itself, real, although there has been human factor involved in the artistic gesture of representation. For example Kim-Cohen pays attention to La Monte Young’s artistic practice as something that is restricted, and would require “not a receiving ear but producing ear”, and this ear being ear of La Monte Young to establish his desired pitches. Suggesting that the listening would happen according to Young’s preselected ways, or values forming a “discipline needed for listening”. And if discipline is needed then it is essentialism.<sup>123</sup>

*“Value is not inherent, but rather a process that overflows the boundaries of the thing-itself. Meaning is always contingent and temporary, dependent on the constantly shifting overlap of symbolic grids. It never simply it.”<sup>124</sup>*

In his book *Against Ambience*, Kim-Cohen worries that his arguments made in his previous book “*Blink of an Ear: Toward A Non-Cochlear Sonic Art*” have been unheard. Sound art has found more, and more recognition in the world of gallery arts last years by having some big exhibitions in MoMa in New York (Soundings), and sound artist Susan Philipsz winning Turner prize in 2010. Still sound art is dealing mainly with perceptual concerns. Cohen claims that sound’s tendency towards sound-in-itself has granted concept of “ambience”, in forms of light art, and “soothing soundscapes”, and passive perception to re-enter at the focus of art. He fears that sound’s “navel-gazing”, and stubborn attitude against conceptual

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>120</sup> Kim-Cohen, S., p. 188.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

approaches has constituted this shift.<sup>125</sup> He is connecting dots as “the ambient movement” is employing – light, sound, environment, and immersion.<sup>126</sup>

For him these kinds of artworks offer no resistance against the problems of world, but instead allow spectators to be “knocked-out”, and to “drop-out” by illusions, and miracles made possible by the use of technology.<sup>127</sup> According to him these spectacles for example by James Turrell, Olafur Eliasson, Ryoji Ikeda, and Random International grant authority to the artists as gatekeepers to the something divine by the black fabric of technology that was questioned, and diluted with conceptual approaches.<sup>128</sup>

*“Rather than the gilded robes of prelates, we’re more likely to dress our transcendent inclinations in the idiolect of scientism and methodical diagrams. We call our religiosity “auratic” or “ethereal” or “ambient” allowing ourselves to sidestep questions of dogma and divinity. Or we call it “natural”, disavowing mystical implications altogether.”<sup>129</sup>*

He finds tendency of ambience, and the ambient works that deal with perception, time and space problematic as they neglect the “situational relations” – “issues of interiority and exteriority, real versus mediated experience”, and issues of power and authority.<sup>130</sup> As a person interested in ambient approaches, I feel need to take closer look what he thinks about it. KIVIKASA also produces a soothing soundscape of sauna for the spectators with the use of technology, and maybe I could learn something about it.

He notes that every work of art should not deal with social issues, but also should not deny these realities don’t exist, and calls transparency for the mechanisms through which art operates. He as an artist and theorist, calls ethical responsibility of an artist, and reminds where to focus — primacy of perception or “the problem the culture tries to resolve.” For him art is about relations — relations between artist and the artwork, public, and the world.<sup>131</sup> For him, the past 45 years conceptual art has questioned these relations, precepts, as considered as cultural habits, not as pre-given rules.

Kim-Cohen reasons that “ambient” as name for art practice, is based on the Brian Eno’s discovery for a new way to listen, and his aesthetical theory to justify his artistic work.<sup>132</sup> Eno hears himself “listening to his listening”. He says it is creation myth similar as the John Cage’s “let sounds be themselves”. It is subjective compositional value that according to Kim-Cohen requires Brian Eno’s producing ear to listen enabled by technological discovery.

What is problematic in ambient according to Kim-Cohen is that it makes the context, or the environment as the content, and devaluates the actual context where we live. Perceiving this new foreground is passive, and this new foreground is construed, and creates an asylum where real world does not exist. This constructed world does allow differentiation — conflicts, as in real complex world that is constantly differentiating. For him art never happens

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<sup>125</sup> Kim-Cohen, S., Against Ambience., 1-8%.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 43%.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 14%.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 11%.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 26%.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 10%.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 13-14%.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 32%.



outside the context, as the listeners, and the viewers always have to negotiate its content, its environment. Artificial ambience, based on “passive perception”, however hides the real world, and the negotiation disappears.<sup>133</sup> Kim-Cohen emphasizes that disruptions create inspirations, shake the environment.<sup>134</sup> As the environment is altered by man-made actions, so is the sonic ambience, and he asks criticality for both producers (artists), and receivers (listeners) sonic ambience not to deny the socio-ethical atmosphere where these works are made.<sup>135</sup>

#### 4.10 Audiovisual Litany & Medium Centricity

Although the following is not specifically related to sound art, it gives insight how to expand the situation of sound. Jonathan Sterne introduces concept for ambiguous “sound studies” an interdisciplinary field part of human sciences that “analyzes both sonic practices, and the discourses, and institutions that describe them, it re-describes what sound does in the human world, and what humans do in the sonic world.” These “studies” challenge “sound students”, consisting from theorists to artists and everything in between, to think about sound as a relational phenomenon, and not as sounds as themselves.<sup>136</sup> Sterne notes that each “sound student” should challenge the sound, and the phenomena, and their intellectual traditions around it, by collectively thinking, reading, listening, contemplating, writing, and talking about sound, and working with sound.<sup>137</sup> He continues that “sound students” cultivate “sonic imaginations” that are driven by curiosity, a practice that doesn’t stop on the sonic knowledge and practice, but also is interested in other questions, and problems from other fields, and histories, and space. Continuously “reworking” culture by developing “new narratives, new histories, new technologies, and new alternatives.”<sup>138</sup>

He reminds that sonic practice is formed according to a “set of knowledges” through which sound operates. These pre-given knowledges, or common-sense notions should be questioned in every occasion. Sonic imaginations do not aim to “totality of mind”, but signify a quality of mind that is a foundation for activity. Jonathan Sterne warns about cultural prejudices related to senses, especially between seeing, and hearing, which he calls “the audiovisual litany”. Sterne warns that this “dichotomy”, division, or separation of senses only empowers the prejudices in the level of theory. The division suggests that sight is the modern, and rational Western sense, and hearing the primitive “African”; thus hearing would be something more natural. This litany should be read critically in every situation; otherwise it would be taken granted, as rule or essential way to perceive. Sterne continues that sound studies should not close in, and claim to be a privileged discipline having sound as its property, but rather reach beyond the fields, and expand in search of wider understanding.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 37-39%.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 62%.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 64%.

<sup>136</sup> Sterne, J. (ed.) 2012, Sound studies reader, Routledge, London., p. 2-3.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 9-10.

## Jonathan Sterne's "Audiovisual Litany"

- hearing is spherical, vision is directional
- hearing immerses its subject, vision offers a perspective
- sound comes to us, but vision travels to its object
- hearing is concerned with interiors, vision is concerned with surfaces
- hearing involves physical contact with the outside world, vision require distance from it
- hearing places you inside an event, seeing gives you a perspective on the event
- hearing tends toward subjectivity, vision tends toward objectivity
- hearing brings us into the living world, sight moves us toward anthropology and death
- hearing is about affect, vision is about intellect
- hearing is a primarily temporal sense, vision is a primarily spatial sense
- hearing is a sense that immerses us in the world, while vision removes us from it.<sup>140</sup>

Kim-Cohen also wants to let go off this dichotomy and proposes to drop off any alliance to single specific medium. He presents Craig Dworkin's critique about media-specificity. For Dworkin media is not object of transmitting something, but rather media are activities, collaboration or collision with other media. Kim-Cohen: "The harder we push on the idea of a work's medium, the more it eludes identification."<sup>141</sup> Kim-Cohen elaborates that medium is "social category" gaining its appearance from transmission of material, and it is also "habitat of the social, where sociality happens." He concludes it as "process and set of conditions". From here he creates an opinion about sound art "not as a medium, not as a category founded on common material, but as a passage between discourses, as unclaimed territory between interpretive domain, as the murmur of meaning produced by unexpected shifts in what is taken for granted." He continues if word "sound" is used as signifier, one must ask every instance "what, when, where, and why of the sonic".<sup>142</sup>

He admits that it is not easy, and there is danger of returning to "material definitions and medial classifications", and again one is referring to audiovisual litany. Those fundamentals must be opposed, as they are temporal cultural ideas. He emphasizes the act of questioning, and this questioning works as a test, not to test "artistic phenomena", but the every work that claims to be sound art.<sup>143</sup>

*"We must continually ask: Does this precept hold when pressured by that work? If the collision of a proposal with a work yields no sparks of radical attainment, then it is worthless to us. If a proposal simply concedes to the work at hand, offering no resistance, then it is discarded."*<sup>144</sup>

### 4.11 Meditative Spectacles

Kim-Cohen ponders the similar question while watching the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks and considering for example James Turrell's spectacle ambient light installations, as I did with KIVI-KASA and amusement park ride. Let's find out what he thinks about spectacle. For him there is no difference, but it is again question about "what art wants to do". The works are playing

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>141</sup> Kim-Cohen, S., *Against Ambience*, 79%.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 80%.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 81%.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 81%.

with the notion “seeing oneself seeing”. He pays attention to the art critic’s description of Turrell’s “Ategn Reign” as contradictory figure of speech “meditative spectacle”.<sup>145</sup>

He presents them “names” for the same thing. For him spectacle’s desire is to reach meditative state, and continues that spectacle cannot stay spectacular too long otherwise it would draw too much attention. Rather it is a sudden flash of realization that disappears as fast it appears. This flash is a self-generated realization of self-presence. Also the meditative practice’s aim is the spectacle.<sup>146</sup> He says fireworks, and Turrell’s works are both spectacular, and meditative, and pleasure for the eye. They are concerned with perception, accepting the gradual diminishment of expectations, never reaching the “climax”, being ignorant to the world. He agrees that these spectacles are of course great to experience, but offer little content, or do not open a discussion. Staying in the level of eye-candy. He concludes that Turrell’s light revelations are rather a creation myth of one man’s desire for revelations, personal interest story.<sup>147</sup>

Painter Henry Hagman writes about how art has forgotten, in the pursuit for resolving problems, and being active, one of its essential aspects — invitation for spectator to contemplate with work of art. For him contemplation is concentration, where the mind is reaching towards more a spiritual state, a universal love, and also becoming aware of the relation with mind, and the world around. To generate contemplation, artwork should have multiple layers that become visible only after focused attention, and spectator personal revelation. The work cannot be too suggestive, generating psychic reactions, like optical illusions, or color after effects, but it should leave room for spectator’s own effort.<sup>148</sup> To him we all have access to mysteries, and the skill of contemplation is already prepared in us. The contemplation is not disciplined self-torment but instead “joy of child’s play”.<sup>149</sup>

He is aware of the question whether it is appropriate to contemplate while the world is full of injustice, and the criticism it being ascetic withdrawal out of the world, or pure perceptual enjoyment. He sees that kind of critique as narrow understanding of contemplation. For him contemplation connects these extremes.<sup>150</sup> Through contemplation one gets intensive sensation of the world and the self, the connection of interior and exterior worlds is producer of a joyful sensation of being present, being real.<sup>151</sup> He continues that behind all activism there is desire to peace and justice, a state of being where everybody could have peace and time to contemplate, to focus on the things one does, and activism has forgotten this ideal, and is no more driven by contemplation, but rational thinking as a tool to reach desired actions, for example like material equality.<sup>152</sup> He wishes that activism should include contemplation as a way to raise the skill of realization, and expanding the mind, seeing things differently. That is possible through empathy, and love towards other, and a chance to experience things peacefully from another people perspective, thus changing views how we per-

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 45%.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 46%.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 47%.

<sup>148</sup> Hagman, H., *Taiteen tarkoitus – taiteeseen kätkeyty ihmisen utopia ja sen toteuttaminen*, Kustannus Oy Taide, Helsinki., p. 26-27.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 34-35.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p. 37-38.

ceive the world.<sup>153</sup> He sees that contemporary activism has a problem that its driving force is based on moral guilt rather than inner ethics of love between all men that contemplation generates. This causes the criticism of contemplation as a reality escape, a drug to find meaning among to social misery. He argues that this criticism of contemplative art is based on the lack of personal experience on contemplation.<sup>154</sup>

#### **4.12 Time To Stop: Ethics vs. Vanity**

Now I find myself engaged in an interesting debate of what art should do. I am asking myself whether my earlier considerations of art being a gateway to other worlds, and the joy of perception, or my personal interests are anymore relevant in the ethical shadow of the “problem that culture tries to resolve”. This is something that I wasn’t definitely considering, while I was constructing KIVIKASA. Besides that, I must return the original frame of asking what kind of sound art KIVIKASA is, and what is the context of sound art where it is located. That question will be solved with the help of some of the points that I consider relevant.

As LaBelle writes sound being relational phenomena, the review shows that understanding about sound art is also very relational, depending on each writer’s way to hear. The categorization, or defining thus becomes very temporal, and can be expanded in every situation. And if amplifying Neuhaus’s, and Kim-Cohen’s idea, it should be expanded right now. Idea of transparency instead of withdrawing behind the curtain of mysticism is also something that I will consider. My material centered understanding of sounds art is now mutated by what I have explored, and will be elaborated in the following pages towards understanding that does not create dichotomy between senses. But as I have material interests towards sound, I will consider its ability to animate space, and twist the notion of time by playing with past, now and future. It can also rupture the space by making cuts to the soundscape, as sounds cuts our thinking, as Kim-Cohen writes. As I am working with sound, I need to understand the possibilities of exploring the aural potential of world. By understanding the aural potential I become aware of the material of sound, but also aware of the world where the production of culture takes place. This is done by simply turning ears toward world, and its uncontrollable nature, as John Cage did by allowing the chance to become one of the parameters of his compositions.

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 39-40.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

## 5. After KIVIKASA — KIVIKASA in the Context of Sound Art

Now it is time to inspect some of the aspects that I have not earlier considered about KIVIKASA that I realized while getting to know the theory that I reviewed. This is also continuation of a demystification process that started earlier, when I reviewed creative process. Through this analysis I present the most important aspects for a new artistic statement that does not define KIVIKASA how it should be perceived, but rather reveals our intentions behind the artwork, still leaving the discussion open between the spectator, and the artwork, as Seth-Kim Cohen suggests.

Although the concepts, and the ideas that have inspired the work are not actually self-evident, the conceptual connections between Japanese rock gardens, and Finnish sauna are the foundation for the visual design, and the inspiration for the “soothing” sound design. What is conceptually apparent in KIVIKASA, is the aspect of sauna. Both, visually in form of miniature kiuas (sauna stove), and sonically in the soundscape of sauna. What we have done is reinterpretate these elements into a form of art. This work deals rather with “primacy of perception” rather than “problem that culture tries to resolve”. It is about an experience of moving sound. Technology allows us to play, as it allowed Pierre Schaeffer, with the sound phenomenon getting inspiration from real world, and turn it into something else. Sound of löyly (steam) is material that we bend by our artistic desires, but it is still understandable, referring to the source where it originates. It would be futile to claim that the sound that one hears would not be sounds of sauna, or sound of löyly, or that it could be separated from its inspirational source, as Michael Chion, and Seth-Kim Cohen point out.

I can claim KIVIKASA to be sound sculpture, or new media sculpture that is made possible with mixed-techniques, and materials, and by employing sound as primary element. This claim was inspired by Seth-Kim Cohen, as he suggests that there is no certain criteria that would grant a right to call something as sculpture, or as sound art. Rather it is a discursive field where my claims are evaluated in each instance. This emphasis on sound does not neglect the visual element, but emphasizes the idea that to experience it, one needs to be present with it by seeing, and listening to it, by experiencing it in the moment of its audition, as Salome Voegelin writes. Without hearing it, it will be an arrangement of black loudspeakers around a black table with a water dropping fountain. Without seeing it, it will be just a processed, and readjusted sound composition about sounds of sauna that is installed along architecture. As I call it sound sculpture, it hopefully also invites people to listen to it, as it is very visual, and has physical presence in the space. The center structure is the most notable object, and invites people to get closer to it, to spectate it, and wonder about it or just pass by it.

In this occasion I refer to a division, expressed by Seth Kim-Cohen, about where art should focus its attention. Either “primacy of perception or the “problem that culture tries to resolve”. In the case of KIVIKASA the first is obvious answer. But I still consider and believe in the possibilities of art that deals mainly with sensorial experience without rational literal construction behind it, that it could invisibly, and indirectly work as an activating force for “freeing mind to understand world differently”. For example Max Neuhaus’s public sound installations raise awareness about the surroundings, as waking people up from day to day commuting, or John Cage by silencing the concert hall asks audience to rehear the situation, and ask the question “what is music?” Of course it is speculation, and justification with per-

sonal values and believes, as all the aesthetic texts, if one takes extremist writer Leo Tolstoy by his word.<sup>155</sup>

## 5.1 Origins of KIVIKASA and I

KIVIKASA is an artwork based on technology, from creators that were born to a world that was on the threshold of mechanical and digital technology. It is a combination of computer based programmed virtual autonomy, and misused electronics with Do It Yourself –attitude. It is Gyro Gearloose (Pelle Peloton) on-spot inventions with duck tape solutions in the essence of MacGyver from the Peter Pan generation that is interested in never-ending parties, media illusions, and dropping out into the pleasure of own world bubbles, because the bigger bubble of society has gone out of the date. The values are changing, the World is shrinking, and the alternative histories are present where ever, and whenever we connect to the information highway of Internet. Everything is mixing, and everything is remixed by whole history full of influences available all around the world, from all the previous ages, delivered at your front door. The access through Internet to material from the past creates multitude of influences. The old movements of the past like zen, psychedelia, or minimalism, provide the nostalgic world that reconnects us with the past before the last step to purely digital contemporary world.

What I mean to say is that digital technology has revolutionized our minds, and the amount of available information, at least mine, but also it has made me to become aware of its “unnaturality”, and made me to want reconnect with the mystical, and spiritual sides of life, nature, and disappearing folk traditions. Finding alternative ways of life for progressive artificial economic growth, and scientific explanations of the truth about this world. This mentality is behind the use of technology as a way to create spaces in the middle of the busy urban life that would by artificial ways to reinterpret something inspired by natural world. This space within space made by means of sound, is something where to go, and slow down, and stop for a while, in the middle of hectic life, and information overload. This interpretation is what I want to share as an artist.

This is a naïve belief, and that belief is not so one-dimensional as I have my intentions to justify my professional career, and status with everything I happen to invent, and to explain. But this approach of making something “good”, or “joyful”, or “relieving” for self, and for others motivates to continue. This believe definitely doesn’t point to any single problem in the world that culture could try to solve, but it can be more universal approach of showing how culture could work as revitalizer of life, and silently reevaluate the standardized values of our current sociopolitical environment. Raising attention to subjects that might lose their value in the spin of time, and by working outside the rules of journalism thus not only revealing, but instead leaving questions open for each person to find our their own answer. What is the answer in the case of KIVIKASA? It is difficult to tell without particular questionnaire, but that is a method of statistics, not art. Could it be then that for someone like me, art has turned into a reservoir for confused young practitioners to find routine how to start living a life? If one does not oppose the filth of the world, but instead tries to heal – is it escape of reality, or way to alter way of living?

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<sup>155</sup> Tolstoi, L., *Mitä on taide?*, p. 70- 71.

## 5.2 The Meaning We Constructed

The DIY-attitude shows that with little you can create more than little. The free information from Internet frees creators from the reliance to the large manufacturers. By combining concepts, and materials, artists are able to create new meanings that are greater than parts of its sum. As in the case of Japanese zen-gardens, or Finnish sauna, one takes something from the nature, and arranges it by according to a certain intention. And that has become one personal explanation to understand what is art making — selecting, fishing for ideas, and organizing them through one's most sensitive attention. KIVIKASA is a construction beginning from the name. Designed, carefully thought, and full of rationale thinking, but it is also loaded with mystic attitudes, and funny jokes, and having fun.

KIVIKASA is not materially only sound-in-itself, but more. It is collection of various materials:

*4 active loudspeakers, 64 passive 3W loudspeaker elements, 16 MDF loudspeaker boxes, audio cable, 2 Esi Gigaport HD+ sound cards, RME Fireface sound card, 2 self-made 8 channel amplifiers, computer, Arduino, Arduino motorshield, pure data, windscreen wiper liquid container with motor, acrylic display, black fabric sheet, colored aluminum tea container, are you reading this? a lot of junk indeed, stones from the seaside of Helsinki, chicken wire, wood, plywood, duck tape, screws, dishwashing sponge, trashcan, water proof plastic, foam plastic padding, do not touch sign*

But all this arrangement, and construction was done with an intention to create environment for sound to exist, and work as the main element. It is also sound-in-itself, as the artistic energy is concentrated in the aural beauty, but it doesn't escape reality, and it is always possible to point the origin of this cultural act — sauna. And this reinterpretation is never able to compete with the experience of real sauna experience. The context of audiovisual art is present, and that is where it originates. KIVIKASA was not aware of Sterne's audiovisual litany, but now as it is informed, it should not, or does not create friction between sight, and aural domains. To complete the work all the senses are occupied. This work would not be KIVIKASA without visual element, the physical sculptural aspect, which works together with immaterial sculptural presence of sound. The moving sound triggers aural suggestions, and can be seen as mental images, if eyes are closed, without seeing the actual physical movement of sound. This amplifies the nomadic nature of sound by moving something that is already all about motion.

Then what situation does KIVIKASA expand? It does not expand the technological situation. Its technology is already outdated, kind of already standard tools of new media art, and there is no revolutionary programming behind. As I have written before, it remixes, and misuses technology in a way that it is under our control according to our skills.

As the literature reveals, the music and field of sound art has already been expanded throughout the history so I shouldn't go and say that this work would expand those situations, especially Kim-Cohen's idea of expansion as "non-cochlear" way. KIVIKASA requires cochlea, and rest of the senses. KIVIKASA is not music, nor experimental music either. It could be said to be sound art, as Kim-Cohen, and Neuhaus propose that sound art should not be a category for experimental music. KIVIKASA is not music in the sense of music, but it could also be music after all. All the sounds, and noises can be music in our listening, and in our contemplative mind, as John Cage believed, and all the events can be music as George Brecht expanded Cage's idea. So then KIVIKASA could be claimed to be automatic, and gen-

eratively working atmosphere jukebox playing the steady rhythm of sauna experience proposing a different aesthetics for sound diffusion, and situation how to playback music. It could work as a proposal for a new extended automatic instrument aligned with architecture. But then ethical considerations, and Kim-Cohen ask, is entertainment proper material for the context of art.

KIVIKASA could be entertaining; it could be mystical, totally not understandable, danceable, meditative, passive, activating, and many other sensations depending, on the last hand, on the spectator's encounter with the work. We can explain the work with artistic statement, which I'm later doing, and in the case of KIVIKASA, I feel now that it has to be done. In a sense KIVIKASA does not fulfill my earlier ideal for artwork that would be understood as it is, because as I mentioned earlier, the conceptual constructions are not self-evident. Especially the rock garden aspect got diluted after we decided not to make a rock garden inside the acrylic box. There are people who are more interested what lies behind, and they should be offered a description. It is sort of a revelation of a philosophy of art making, a gesture of showing that one cares about others by being open, and transparent. By revealing the philosophy, and self-generated creation myth, I believe I can remind the spectator that this is a product of human generated culture, and that is constructed by imagination, and imagination is the gift that everybody has.

Transparency of intentions could be an impulse for discussion that expands the experience of the artwork, and in the age of knowledge and rationality, I should not neglect this discussion. As Kim-Cohen says it is a question about authority, and claims of holding access to something that others are not able to reach, if one neglects this, or tries to hide its intentions. Art should not be authoritative, it should be liberating. It could be a child's play, a bravery to face the unknown, asking the question that has not been asked, and going into places of uncertainty, and utopias. It is a process in the borders of rational, and sensorial, literal, and ineffable. The senses, and thoughts are the greatest tools for joy of revelation, and creation — creating an access to embrace art. It is everyday play, as Fluxus was showing. It is seriously focused in the beauty of life, it is revolutionizing, and happy contemplation that accepts life-as-it-is, thus keeps me working towards ideal of art of living. There is no separation between life, and art.

Salome Voegelin mentions that listening situation produces the subjective meaning, and relativity of sound escapes the production of a "total meaning". This is what KIVIKASA does. Although we have our meaning, which has been corrupted along the way of the design process. My primary intention has always been to make something cool, and to make myself look as interesting artists, to make a spectacle, something that is designed to fit within the high-class architecture, leaving the sounds meditative aspects stay beneath as a general philosophy of life. The desire to create something has been the driving force to explore these other intentions, but still this desire has prevented them to be as truthful as they should be. The compromises during the design process are boosting this "desire to be something". The aspect of contemplation, and meditation started to become the most important thing while constructing the sculpture, by deeply focusing to the process. While composing sounds these ideas started appear sonically in the soundscape. I wanted something that I could close my eyes with. We both considered the sauna experience being spiritual, and healing, and this consideration is part of it. I try to believe that KIVIKASA gives a possibility to contemplate, or engage with. That was what I personally ended up doing by focusing on it, and by thinking about it. While concentrating my energy to the making of sculpture, the creation got



loaded with energy, and the sculpture transmits this energy to the others. It is totally speculative whether it happens like I describe, but one thing that is sure that we can always try.

This is my philosophy, and everybody have tools for creating their own. I see myself listening, and I hear myself seeing, and that is the revelation of the mind, in a focused appreciation of uncontrollable fragments of life that are translated into organization by forms of art. The one important thing is to ask whether KIVIKASA is meditative in my opinion just because I was creating it, and now I feel relieved, after all the work is done, and due to all personal connection with the beauty it produces in my mind?

### **5.3 Spatialization As Artistic Method**

As much as I have emphasized sound movement during the creative process, I have to admit that it was not particularly researched. If spatialization, or acoustics would have been researched more, the work could be scientifically, and technologically more interesting, and technically more impressive. I could be writing about technical aspects, and revealing the secrets of the impressive mechanisms behind the work. It could be a totally different artwork attracting technological interest. The work could have been about art of state technology, or serious inspections to aural architecture, while now it is about misuse of technology combined with a concept designed on top of it. When looking to the idea of sound spatialization, it reveals my primary intentions — to be able to move sound, and the meaning that I have loaded to sound — as gateway to somewhere else. KIVIKASA was made technique before content, where the technique is a frame, and where the content of sauna was later embedded.

Just knowing the basic concept about aural architecture that it has potential to enrich the acoustic space was enough to include it as artistic method. The practice, and experimenting was more interesting than spending time doing research. I was interested in the sensation of moving sound, how the moving sounds make hearing more physical, more embodied. As I close my eyes, I can “see-by-hearing” how the sound moves along the loudspeaker surface. Although I have to remind myself that I know the patterns, and can locate sounds from visual memory. As LaBelle notices, already a static sound source mediates, bounces, and reflects from the surfaces, and returns from multiple points, the moving sound multiplies this constantly, and creating ever-altering sound diffusion. With this idea, and current technology we can release our sonic imaginations, and create differing experiences depending on the moment when the spectator engages with the work.

But sound movement can also be too suggestive element for the spectator, as I recall Henry Hagman’s ideas for contemplative art. Spectator, and I might follow passively the moving sound instead personally trying to find the hidden layers through contemplation. This decorative active aspect of moving sound could be a serious argument against the contemplativeness, or meditativeness of KIVIKASA, being just an aural illusion, or aural fireworks. But on the other hand, it could also work as revelation to hear the movement patterns, and understand the possibilities we have with sense of hearing, when engaging in listening amongst the constant soundscape, and all visual aspects of the work. The sound as material creates possibilities for sensory revelation, and this is probably one. To me it is about contemplation, for someone else something totally different. Once again, it is me who is speaking about contemplation after all.

## **5.4 Constantly Differing Sound Diffusion With the Help of Technology**

The use of technology, the 20 channels for sound diffusion, combined with programming can generate an environment for sounds where they can “behave” by their own will, as John Cage, or Steve Reich imagined. Of course we as creators set the limits, but then when we release the control, the generative system produces constantly varying outcome. Thus bringing complexity, and probably rarely producing one to one matching soundscape. By creating generative system one can produce more chaotic, and less static artworks, mimicking the structured chaos of nature, although we all know it is illusion created by technology. The artwork is evolving in time within its limitations created by artist.

## **5.5 The Sound of Löyly — Peaks in the Sleepy Ambience**

As Brandon LaBelle points out, sound having a possibility to animate the space it inhabits, I consider the rupture of white noise, sound of löyly (steam), to be the aspect in KIVIKASA that prevents it just to be passive sound diffusion, and not falling into label of passive ambient, which Seth Kim-Cohen warns about. The peak is sudden, and loud. It is introduced, and prepared with low frequency rumble, and breaks the atmosphere asking attention to the sound pattern to be listened that starts to move via floor loudspeakers. This being active, and perceivable moving element, it enforces attention, and asks the spectator to listen. Producing audative disruption to generate mental cuts, to ask “what is this noise, and what is happening”. This is only guessing, but I imagine, there could be at least two kinds of contemplation. First the curious “what is this thing?” asking the meaning of artwork from the visual, and audative clues it gives, and the other contemplation through engaging in listening. Engaging with particles of white noise filling the air, and moving around, enabling the mental images to wander in the space through hearing. Imagining the spirits to be present. Falling in the lure of ambience, and to be again waken-up by a peak of löyly that disrupts, and presents a new moving sound pattern which to follow. And from these two it can end up to multiple different ways to contemplate depending on each spectator who gets affected by “emotional pull of sound”, as Voegelin describes it. There is no total meaning, and there doesn’t need to be, and that is the beauty of art.

## **5.6 Seeing KIVIKASA**

Kim-Cohen argues that hidden mechanisms, and black fabric of technology grant access for artists into the ephemeral, and mystical worlds as gatekeepers with authority. He calls transparency with artworks own status, and mechanics through which it operates as a way to demystify this illusion of authority. By carefully designing the visual appearance of the sculpture we have also created a Zen garden of loudspeakers, as Zen gardens are organized with high concentration, and man-set essential rules. The black center structure connected with audio cables to loudspeakers, as smaller replicas of center structure, create already a visually strong spatial frame for the work. The closer inspection reveals cheap materials, and in a way can break the illusion of not becoming a product of commercial production line, but instead a manifestation of grass-root hand making. Personally becoming deeply involved with the mechanics, and its components. I believe this wipes away the feel of restricted, and privileged authority becoming accessible to everyone, as it is made by two guys, who work with hands, and whose mistakes are visible. These guys are not flawless machines.

At one point after reading Kim-Cohen's reminders about transparency, I was thinking that in the case of KIVIKASA, some level of transparency could have been reached by revealing the hidden technology. Now everything is hidden underneath the magician's black fabric, and is out of reach, out of sight, and out of mind. But then rises the question what we want to show — technology, and wires, and the materials that art is made of. Or should the focus be on the content, which in this case is the sound, and the curiosity of the displayed object, and the whole sculptural construction in the space. The black fabric that hides the technology can raise the sense of mystery, by saying "there is something there that runs this work, but what it is, I don't know." This is not science fair, where we would display how skillful we are of using technology, it is more about the experience we imagine, and want to share. By hiding the technology, as Robert Morris did, the work is not about the material, but the environment for experiences it creates.

### **5.7 Site and KIVIKASA**

KIVIKASA can be said to be designed for the Tokyo exhibition, but cannot be said to be particularly site-specific, as it is possible to be customized to different spaces. From the Kwon's paradigms for site-specificity, the first, aesthetical site-specificity is obvious. The visual design was done to match the round carpet by placing the center structure in the center of the floor, and by laying the small loudspeakers on the floor symmetrically forming a wireframe of a circle. The sound design is also reflecting partially the round shape of the space, and one of the patterns is named "spiral", and moves around loudspeaker grid creating a rotating spiral, vortex movement — named after the Spiral Building. The sounds are circulating in the space, moving through the loudspeaker grid, and mixed to fit in the exhibition place. Not being too loud, and disturbing, and not being too silent, to be able hear the sound diffusion. It is about finding a balance, and aligning with space.

The rest two paradigms "social/institutional", and "narrative" are not considerable in the case of KIVIKASA. There is no institutional critique, or critique of site, and it stays inside the gallery institution not being public. It is a static art object. I could speculate that the display box, and its content could make fun about displayed art objects, or museum aesthetics, but I'd rather not consider that too seriously, because I invented these ideas now in the moment of writing.

### **5.8 Engaging with the Source of Sound — Sauna**

Brandon LaBelle describes sound art being a practice that is aware of the condition of sound, and the how it performs in the aural world. In my case what happened during the creative process, which now cannot be proven by any documentation, was that I started to visit sauna more often than before, and opened my ears, and learned by listening how the sound of steam "operates". I was engaging with material that I was going work with. Listening the small details, and locating myself in the acoustic space, I became to understand the possibilities of listening as a way to understand world from new perspectives, and listening to impulses of other senses, my whole body — as a way to expand mind. A weekly routine of going to swimming hall for a swim, and sauna, to be refreshed in the middle of creative process, and to think about what could be done. This routine has expanded now into a continuous practice as part of my life, and into a good source of inspiration, as the listening ears monitor what is happening around them, and what people are talking about — mostly something that I have not considered before.

## 5.9 New Refined Statement

As we have intentions, and believes as artist, and now year later, I have new knowledge that can polish, or mutate these intentions, I still have to be honest for those intentions we had while making KIVIKASA. What will change is the level of transparency, which Seth Kim-Cohen calls, and which I personally agree. But as a stubborn young man I have to stay loyal to my personal believes thus creating hopefully personally satisfying description of the work, which reveals enough, but still prevails, in the slight fog of mysticism. The new description is a construction from these previously generated considerations. It will be a mix of old, and newer ideas trying to reach the essence what I truly want to say about the work. By being honest to my intentions, and believes.

In the introduction part I presented the official descriptions of the Sounds from Finland exhibition, and KIVIKASA. I will use them as inspiration, and as a model for transparency about usage of audiovisual technology, and idea of proposing new way to understand the original phenomena, or nature in general, as the exhibited works gave possibility to experience these phenomena from new perspective reinterpreted by intentions of artists.

## **KIVIKASA**

### *20-channel sound sculpture*

KIVIKASA is a combination of two Finnish words KIVI (a stone) and KASA (a pile) that together have a new meaning — a pile of stones. Other than Finnish it could also be some pseudo-Japanese or array of letters without meaning, if we would not explain to you what we think about it.

People gather stones and place them on piles thus creating more than just a pile of stones. By selecting and arranging according to personal beliefs and intentions, man loads the construction with meaning that is beyond the meaning its pieces had.

In Japan a pile of carefully organized stones can work as a field for a wandering eye to surrender in the joy of unexpected contemplation.

In Finland stones are piled on top of fire, they are heated, and they are rinsed with water. The appearing sensation of wandering energy of the hidden spirit of sauna – löyly or according the terms of physics — steam, purifies the body and mind, creating a space for contemplation.

Like a spirit, the activated energy dances in the sound of white noise and erupts on top of the soundscape of crackling fire, and boiling water. The spirit overwhelms, takes over, and is perceived with all senses when it moves around the sauna.

The active nature of the steam works as material for our purposes to express the imagined movement of sound in 20-channel custom made loudspeaker setup. The sculpture is spread within an exhibition space creating a Zen-garden of miniature sauna stoves for the sound to wander, and the spectator to experience the dance of spirits that is possible to reinterpret with the help of current technology.

The exhibition space is filled with recorded and processed rotating sounds of sauna stove, crackling of fire, and the breath of the spirit of sauna. Every now and then, an arduino-controlled automatic water system triggers an eruptive burst of filtered synthetic white noise that moves along the loudspeaker setup based on the random selection of over 30 predesigned sound movement patterns created with the sound programming environment Pure Data.

All this selecting and arranging is just a small microscopic fragment to understand and explain the uncontrollable existence. Possibly a new clue in the search for the meaning of life. And now, what is important is what do you think about it?

## 6. Conclusions

KIVIKASA not being clearly conceptual, either politically, or socially activating, or expressing a certain literal idea, instead it calls spectator to see, and to listen as an experience driven work of sound art. To complete the work it must be inspected, and listened — experienced. Otherwise the experience remains single-sided if the possibility of diversity of multi-sensorial experience is neglected. KIVIKASA animates the space while its sounds are leaving from constantly altering multiple sources, and arriving as collage of sound waves to a cochlea of listener. It emphasizes the single wondrous phenomenon of man's ability to realize patterns in the chaotic nature. By arranging, and combining man is able to extend the worldview, and enrich life. As sauna heats, and washes away the earthly pain, the sound as animating force invites the spectator to open up his or her ears, and hear the possibility of healing spirits of sound. It does not drive spectator, but instead it creates an environment where to wander, and test one's ability to experience, and to reason. The peak of löyly disrupts the constant sound diffusion, and introduces the sound of steam, and releases it to wander from loudspeaker to another.

If one wants simple conclusions, this burst of white noise can invite the spectator to close one's eyes, and allow one to start seeing-by-listening. This realization of sound movement can work as an inner revolution for a spectator thus making KIVIKASA an activating artwork. It can also suck spectator into an embrace of meditation, and stop spectator in a single moment of deep contemplation that might reveal new ways to understand. KIVIKASA creates a space where one can stop. Or it might not invite to do, or feel anything at all. But as a mystical, little explained, sound producing sculpture it leaves the question open what it actually is. It is not a roller coaster ride in amusement park for sure. It does not move people, but people move along it. Spectator's own intention, and desire to experience defines the profoundness of the experience. Artwork can only try to invite. KIVIKASA is made to work as an invitation to stop, and listen, see, and wonder. As irrelevant, and meaningless event like a drop of water, explored as sonic event in George Brecht's "Dripping music", KIVIKASA creates from a simple event, a complex, and rich altering sound world. There is always more in the events than it first seems. I guess that is the message, after all.

KIVIKASA does not fall asleep in the lure of ambience. It is transparently manifesting the hand-made, human touch, cultural production, and nothing to be taken as natural, or granted. It is a product of sonic imagination. Its creators have after rational framing jumped into the phenomenon of sound, and by act of listening, and embracing the subject, as Voegelin writes, produced previously unknown worlds, and possibilities. It is a fragment that is picked-up from the chaos of the world, and displayed in a manner to encourage others to select, and arrange. It is serious rational work, but it is also making a joke of the seriousness that is behind it. The cherry on the top is a clown's nose instead of golden polish. It is the clumsy layer of paint sprayed by excited, and dedicated human creator. Every closer inspection of details reveals that.

It is sound art that is pouring inspiration from multiple sources; its ear is turned toward the world through technical framing of sound spatialization — toward the sound events of sauna. By coloring, and adding layers, the original source is framed and prepared for the spectator to experience. Without frames there would be chaos, multiple focus points, impossibility to distinguish what is nature, and what is man-made. It is a totem, an act of appreciation for the source of its inspiration. By building totem poles we create rituals, grass-root, individual

or community level rituals, which are no performed according to a single truth that is dictated from official truth agency of the world, but from the people who are living everyday life, and are the truth themselves.

## 6.1 What Is Sound Art?

After reading literature, and after personally writing about KIVIKASA, I have come into conclusion that if one wants to do inspiring, and imaginative sound art, the ear should be turned towards the world. By listening to an environment, other people, and self — one is constantly connected to the never-ending pool of inspiration, and material for a content of artwork. The medium is not often the message as Max Neuhaus says. Message is the experience, emotion, voice, sound, and vision that spurs out from the uncontrollable world, and is a flower of open mind. A mind that hears from multiple points, questioning answers that shut up discussion, and invites to discussion. Sound art could add life, rupture, and it could wake up the ones that are sleeping. Hearing is not a privilege of chosen ones; it is an inherent skill of everyone. By listening others, and by letting go of the preconceptions, one is already on the verge of understanding the world from different perspective. So sound is understood, as multiple hearings. It cannot be reduced into single, as it-self, but it is multiple, due our will to communicate thus becoming an activating force. After all it is energy that can become explanation for a religion, but one who does not take everything for granted, and cares about sound much enough by questioning it, and altering perspective about it in every occasion. Moving, and readjusting the frames of medium of sound, every time when new sonic inspiration appears to be explored, and expressed.

As Caleb Kelly finds sound having been always part of art experience due to our multi sensorial attendance to art experience, sound art is also multi sensorial. The authoritative demand to “close your eyes and listen” is questionable approach. Sound art only considering listening as primary sense, and sounds its privilege, is like is a practice of oil painting, becoming a material description like Kelly’s mentions. Instead it should be as Neuhaus, Furlong, Kim-Cohen suggest, an extension of every convention, as categories only creates restrictions. As Neuhaus says, fine distinction that make artwork, I read him he meaning the fine-tuning of the desired content, can be blurred with the overriding emphasis of the used material.

Sound art should not stick into its materiality, but use it as one of the tools when expressing experiences, and ideas. Every possible material should be considered as appropriate material in the making of sound art. After all art is construction of meaning, everybody explains their selection, and by cleverly explaining a plastic bag full of CD’s can become piece of sound art. It is the social activity which then questions the act of artist, who has hopefully questioned his or her own ways of working, his or her intentions, and believes, and after questioning, does what needs to be done according the personal truth.

Seth-Kim Cohen’s notions about being aware about the context where we are proposing our sound artworks are important. One should ask constantly, is my artist creation story honest? What are my intentions, where do I believe? His critique towards formalistic approach was very ear opening for myself, liberating me from the idea that if I want to do sound art, I should go sound first. That is a thinking of an ignorant, one whose ears, and eyes are closed. The world is around, but it does not exist in my world. Only thing that exists is the will to do sound art by any means. Not really thinking about content, rather thinking about the idea of doing sound art was on top of everything, because it seemed interesting. During the process

of making KIVIKASA, my ears opened to really understand the content that I was dealing. Anecdote from Chinese master painter says that one cannot paint the landscape of mountains in west, if one lives in the east. One needs to embrace the subject by the act of listening as Salome Voegelin notes, and by becoming a professional of life, as John Cage was suggesting by turning the interest of art towards the way of living. This is also what Brandon LaBelle suggests when describing sound art as practice that “harnesses, describes, analyzes, performs, and interrogates the condition of sound, and the process by which it operates.” It is not about interests, it is about engagement.

Although I called for the multitude of senses, sound art can always find its vital foundation from the art of listening. As Labelle notes by act of listening, the sound goes beyond individual understanding thus becoming a social activity — sound exists in the context, between people. This relational aspect makes it social, and it can activate existing social relations, and place. Sound artist should embrace with the full focus in the act of listening using both rational, and intuition, as the finest emotions, experiences, voices, are heard in the careful listening. Sound happens in present, it happens now. Listening to sound is like listening to a friend – openly with full empathy, to understand something that was never before present. Sound is misunderstanding, and understanding. It turns literal when we think about it, and write about it. We must embrace both literal, and ephemeral sides of sound. By finding an in-between place, the sonic imaginations, and meaning of the message unite. Sound is healing, sound is immaterial ornament, it is fantasy, it is violent, it is authority, it is silence, it is personal, it is social, it is potential material to explore time – past, now, and future.

In that sense sound art slips away from our hands as it should. It is music, and it is noise. One who works with sound should be aware of those mechanisms that are part of the culture of sound. As Salome Voegelin writes, sound art can propose new ways of understanding world. It does not deny literal understanding, but rather expands it. Side by side the two becomes stronger. We can find ways to describe experiences; it is our will to share as social beings — to rise above the noise, and become heard. The world is loaded with stories, and sound, and sound artists with sensitive ears should dive in with the same love, and appreciation as landscape painters who go to capture the flux of moment. Sound art can freeze the flux, release it, and create new possible fluxes. By working along side with the space, sound art can propose possibilities for alternative understanding of the world, and how we perceive it. By creating environments within environments, sound art can raise awareness of world we are living in with the combination of memory, presence of now, and future utopias. It can amplify meaningless things into universal measures.

For example Fluxus movement, and artist like George Brecht was using sound to call attention to insignificant event of dripping water, in a way asking attention to rethink the way we think about life, and perceive life in a humorous way. Also Max Neuhaus reminds that we are living in the sonorous world, full of potential of sounds waiting to be explored, and which Brecht explored by proposing new ways how perceive piano, and in the same breath the whole cultural habit of musical performance situation. As did John Cage by disrupting the musical performance by silencing it, and bringing the background noise into attention. They were creating situations where questions could be asked, not answered. As Neuhaus is trying to raise attention to the impossibility of added sound in the urban environment, one can elaborate that into to raise attention to the possibility of experiencing new alternative ways of living. Sound art could have possibility of creating situations that can travel in the past,



now, and future, by aligning with the site being aesthetical, critical, and discursive at the same time, and by knowing the context of art, and the world.

What La Monte Young then did by isolating himself from social, was asking to give attention to something that we take as granted — the sounds that constitute music, the frequencies, and their inner world. Ideally it is about expanding the mind, creating possibilities for inner revolutions, yet again rehearsing the world we are living. I consider all the efforts to rehear our existence meaningful. But what I can learn from Young is then again the question of the relativity of listening ear, and producing ear, and how do we hear in general. There is no single hearing and, that is part of sonic imagination to understand.

## 6.2 Sonic Imaginations

Presented by Jonathan Sterne, sounds students cultivate sonic imaginations, and curiosity. It does not stop to single point, but expands. So I have done under the fear of expanding too much with this text. I am staying on surface, because it is my will to understand, to construct the context, which is not specific, but diverse. By not specializing into one perspective, I do not isolate myself from other perspectives, although by writing this text, and focusing on cultural habit of sound art, I have already isolated myself from the reality.

If I take Max Neuhaus by his word, I would not start calling myself as a sound artist. It would be safer to call myself as an artist, who works with sound. If we do now unite as a movement of sound artists, I would not go as far as Kim-Cohen goes by almost negating the sound, but in every occasion it should be a considerable option. For example if we would not hear Alvin Lucier's voice in the room, and the process of its destruction into sonic ghosts, it would be a mute text that would probably sound in our imagination, but as Salome Voegelin suggests, the texts only describe the processes, and concepts while sound, or voice produces them, and makes them alive, and is the honey that engages the listener. Alvin Lucier's clever process description becomes alive by the focused, and engaged artist who does not fear the passing of time, and completes the clever processes by experimenting them. Listening reveals the possibilities of sound phenomena, and our ability as human beings to make our world more imaginary, and meaningful place, and as LaBelle notes by listening we can align with surrounding world to hear which was before unheard. The sonic imaginations always listen, and sometimes disrupt the conversation, and say that there could be more than it seems. Imagination is caring, and the greatest force behind evolution of culture, and life, by rethinking, and expanding the settled cultural habits. Every ear that produces needs a listening ear. Cultural production does not happen in vacuum, it is at least now important to emphasize that, as obvious as it might sound.

Sonic imagination is mediation, dance, contemplation, rational reasoning, engagement, conceptual, and allowing all rest of possibilities. Every writer about sound art is right, if they follow their personal truth, and are aware of their status as passing anecdotes to raise understanding about phenomena they deal with. Everyone has a producing ear, and that means one must be aware of the complexity of receiving in the ears of listener. Everybody listens in his or her own way; Kim-Cohen listens like a reader, Voegelin suspends, and engages in the moment, Brian Eno listened himself listening, La Monte Young heard his frequencies in the space in his way, and John Cage heard silence, noise, and their possibilities to expand our ways of thinking about art. The myth busters will arrive whenever one claims that there is a single way to listen, and will show that there is something shady hidden be-

neath the surface, as Michael Chion's notes the difficulty of reduced listening — we process the heard with rational thinking, when turning it into language, and communication.

How do I listen? In the case of KIVIKASA, I see-by-listening. I close my eyes, and see how the sound moves. This concentrates my thoughts into a single point, allowing me to stop for a while, and experience, to contemplate, and even meditate. It takes me to an audative journey where the heard, and the thoughts raising from within, collide, and produce new revelations. The act of listening thus might separate me from the source I am listening, allowing myself to sink down to my thoughts in this reservoir made by sound, and provide time-spaces to do that. And of course this does not happen all the time. The sound artwork enables, creates possibilities depending on the attitude who attends it. It can be a combination of real-life relation, and imagination, which turns spaces into immaterial sculptures that we can live, and experience.

### **6.3 The Outcomes of the Process**

What I have written is a result of the process and is relevant now, and will be readjusted tomorrow. As I laid the modified version of practice-based research as my method of asking these questions from myself, and the artwork that I inspected, I became to wipe off the myth that I started to conduct, beginning from the moment of ecstatic sensation of exhibited artwork. By revealing the everyday process and design aspects of the work, I also redefined the process of art making for myself. Through the process of enquiry I place my presumptions in the critical light, and walk out of the spotlight with new understanding. Realizing that the artwork that I was making, is not that innocent as it seems in the myth-creating mind. The ideal of art appearing from the stream of universe is a beautiful idea, which requires the intervention of open mind, engagement, contemplation, and repetitive work to capture it from the stream, as something that is possible to be experienced. Our liberated mind, and soul are starting points that are tuned to the social environment where to wander, and experience, and from where we might get inspired, and we start to select, and categorize. We start to organize, and construct. The desired meaning is distilled from the flux experiences by being sensitive to self, to the content, the context, and the others. This realization pulls down the pants from the arrogant, mute, and deaf, young artist whose personal interests, and aspirations gets overshadowed by the noise of other people's overlapping personal stories.

It is not anymore what I am interested in, or what I consider "cool", it is more about what do I want to say about what I truly know. The material fetish, and personal self-meditation isolates the young artists inside the personal bubble that is so fragile that it cannot resist the touch of social. The bubble is covered with thick layer of paint that poorly hides the insecurity of artist who has nothing to say, but rather a desire to be exposed. This is done by creating various dead-end opinions, and dogmas that narrow the worldview to be a manifestation of arrogant escape of responsibility of being truthful — to the self and others. If the social situation occurs, and discussion is not accepting this dogma, one can always withdraw in the misery of "they just don't get it". The dishonesty is the most transparent thing, and this is why the young artist is so eager to hide it with promoting unique personal style, attitudes, deafness, muteness, and superficiality. The will to be something overrides the being. The being becomes a tool for something artificial. And artificial is done under a fear of being, and becoming nothing. And all the time one is already something. The fear of artistic death isolates the self from the true self, while isolating the self from the others by not being true self, but instead being a construction of what the self should be in the presence of the others. The

young artist is a hermit, and a social copy machine, producing paper sheets with the title “What I Should Do”.

The process of readjusting the printer heads and accepting the lid to be open for literature, and well-articulated knowledge, and to the world around the copy machine, makes it possible to print papers with new title “What I Do”. The new machine does not have to print material furiously in the sake of printing, but prints when it is time to print. This printer is like harp that Bo Ya was able to play by engaging with the world that he was part of, and singing what the world sang through him.

The young artist who I was talking about could be you, but in this paper it is mostly me. The idea of suspension resonates in my memory. By suspending my comfort of authority of artwork, and asking the initial critical questions while drinking beer in Koenji train station in Tokyo; started a never-ending avalanche where the desire to understand has taken me into a new state of comfort — comfort of letting go of the authority. This new understanding has emerged in the modes of listening. By listening to the world, others, and self, I have started to release the grip from the handlebar of the furiously spinning world, and eventually finding myself floating along it, not spinning with it. By aligning and floating with it, the constraints of agency and control start to lose their meaning, and constantly appearing new horizons and inspirations walk in as much I turn my ears to the world. These ears have opened slowly, and they will get dirty quickly, if the printer heads remains unadjusted for too long. It is an everyday adjustment.

The personal and material restrictions prevented me from finding the answer for the question that I had after the project “Kadun ääniä” of how I could express social issues with means of sound. Also these presumption and ignorance prevented me from engaging with the topic that I truly now, for example Finnish-ness. My ears were turned to the other dimensions to matters I could only imagine and think about. That noise prevented me hearing myself, and the world that I can truly know. Frame was built before the content and the content was constructed within the frame. The realization of this approach and its will not to understand the unknown enlightened the aural potential of the everyday mundane and sonic imaginations. And not only the aural potential, but potential of unified senses in engagement with the world and inspirations it transmits. The inspirations turn into intentions and imagination from where meaning is constructed. The meaning is presented within frames, and that is the moment it gets corrupted and the illusion of total meaning escapes.

#### **6.4 Future?**

It is unknown, but I must face it. KIVIKASA will be probably exhibited some time somewhere, as it is an object that can be assembled and disassembled in various places, and I as artists have intentions of doing that. Meanwhile it will live its own careless free time inside my attic as material junk without any burden of the label of art or design, but as we construct it inside the room with institutional status, it will have to surrender into rules of our man-made cultural habits and become something else than it actually is. Then it has to listen and spectate the experiences and reactions of the listeners, who give it totally new meanings and names, and narrate their own story about it. I cannot control that. I have lost my authority for the meaning. I can only explain and talk about my intentions and provide ideas for the discussion.

The discussion will continue, as the search for the truth. I will continue explorations in the field of sound, and engage with the call that Seth-Kim Cohen expresses in his book *Against Ambience* “*We must interrogate what we’ve previously taken for granted. We deserve an art that is equal of our information age. Not one that necessarily parrots the age’s self-assertions or modes of dissemination, but an art that is hyper-aware, vigilant, active, engaged, and informed.*”<sup>156</sup> And engaging in to the call by asking how to expand the situation of our information age, and how to heal the symptoms it breeds? Should I use tactics that are used now, or that has been used before? First I review, relocate, select, and then remix. The output is expansion, and it is as active as sound that expands and escapes from spaces to another. Imagination, engagement, contemplation, understanding, mundane, and the transcendence of everyday life without the moral guilt, but rather with the joy of child and revitalizing love could work bridges for a new form of activism? Stepping-stones towards the art of listening?

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<sup>156</sup> Kim-Cohen, S., 8%



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**Sees -Serene**

Stepping into the Spiral from the main entrance, the visitor sees that the showroom has turned into a forest.

In the entrance hall a path of glowing treads connects the forest to an intriguing object, a sauna stove.

The visitor, intrigued by this sight, can explore the audiovisual space affecting it by their presence.

The sounds don't leak, distinct natural sounds fill the showroom(METSÄ), the path(POLKU) makes sounds from nature and sports that are only audible in the proximity of the treads, while the sauna stove(KIVIKASA) requires visitors to come up close to hear the sounds of water, fire, and rocks.

**Kivikasa**

A concept:

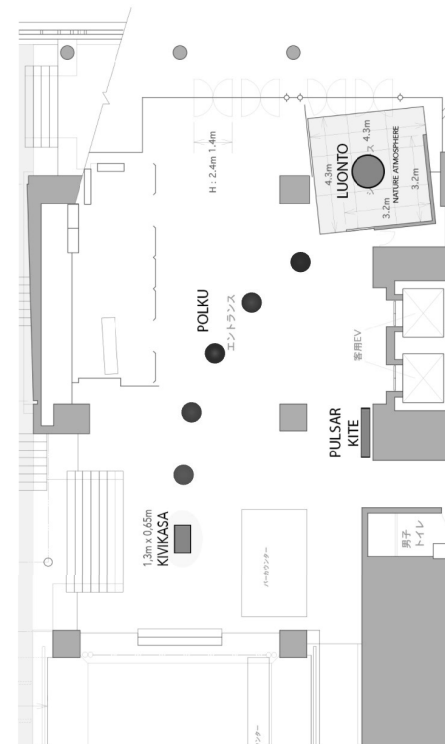
"The spirit of stones is released, when the Löyly(hot steam) is thrown to hot stones in sauna."

"We want to bring the holy and mysterious sensation of Sauna by using sounds."

Inspiration from Japanese stone gardens and Finnish Sauna – oven stones / kiuskivet.

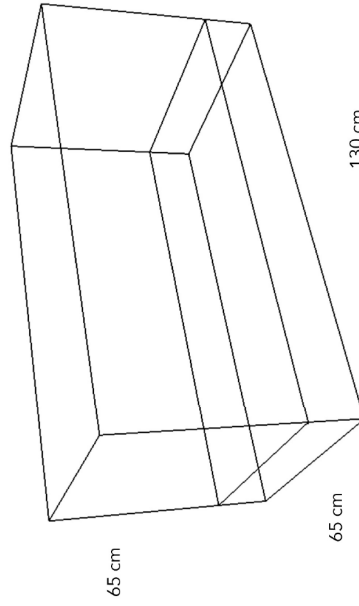
What is it? A minimalist sound installation, autonomic and acousmatic. The main sound element - löyly (hot steam) - the spirit of sauna and ambience of kiuas.

How? Moving the sounds on the loudspeaker surface - creating "sound pixels". The sounds will create new sounds by the little physical movement of small stones caused by the vibration of sound.



**A plexiglass box**

- divided in two spaces - a lower space is for hiding the involved technology of the installation

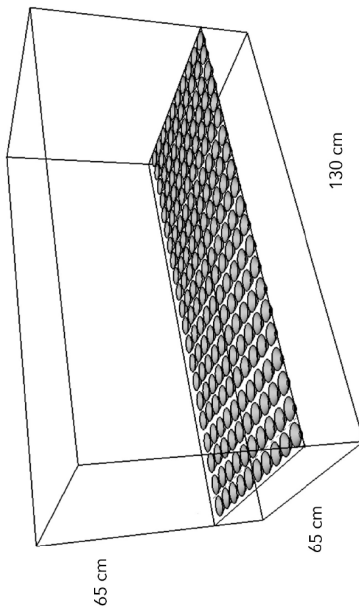


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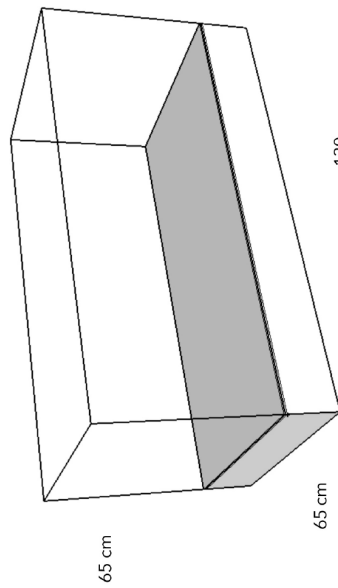
**A plexiglass box**

- divided in two spaces - a lower space is for hiding the involved technology of the installation
- 200 small loudspeakers will be placed on bottom of the upper space



**A plexiglass box**

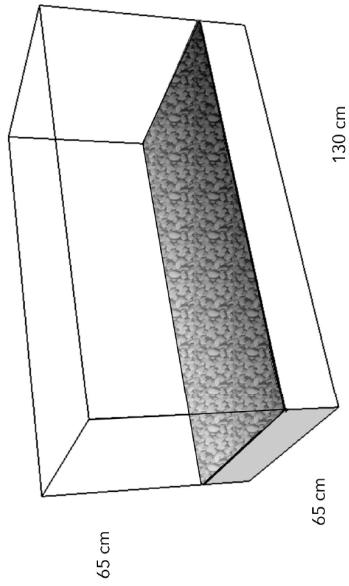
- a loudspeaker fabric will be stretched on top of the loudspeakers



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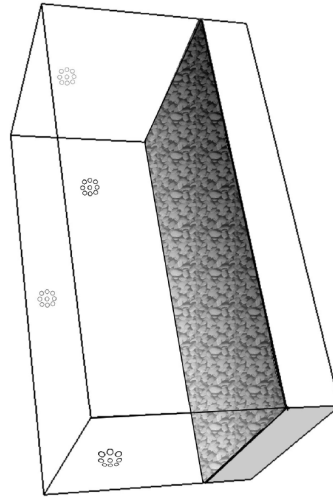
**A plexiglass box**

- a loudspeaker fabric will be stretched on top of the loudspeakers
- a big amount of small stones will be placed on the fabric



**KIVIKASA**

- there will be holes on each side of the box
- people can listen through the holes

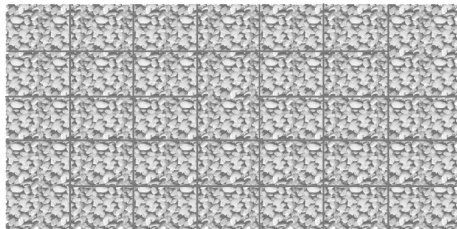


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**KIVIKASA**  
**The Sound Design**

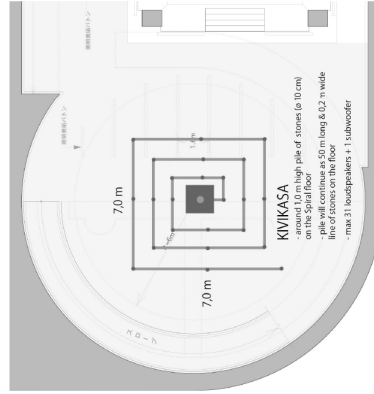
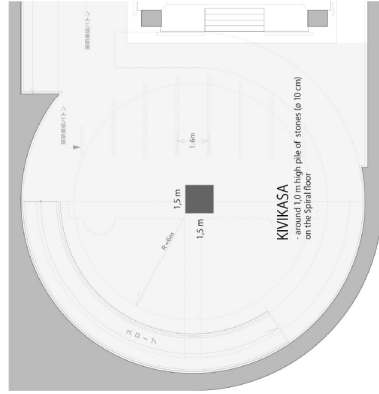
“The spirit of stones, ambient of kiuas.”

- 1.) Sound pixels  
- max 32 different sound spots
- 2.) Moving sound  
- move the sound from pixel to another
- 3.) Visual feedback of stones  
- sound pressure vibrates the stones on each sound pixel



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## Floorplan for Kivikasa



### Kivikasa

Kivikasa is an interactive and acousmatic sound installation that introduces the mystical and subtle sounds of sauna stove (kivas) to the Spiral Hall Atrium. When the installation is "inactive" loudspeakers will diffuse the droning sounds of kivas, but when water is dispensed to the rocks it will diffuse a sound of löyly (steam).

The stones that lie on top of the stove, the fire in the stove, temperature change in the materials, boiling water and the shape of chimney flue altogether create interesting and transforming droning soundscape that we will diffuse in the Atrium through a custom designed sound system.

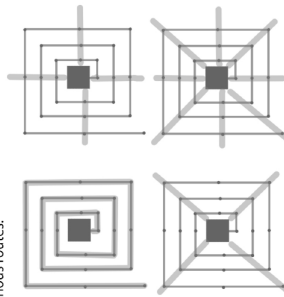
### Why?

The ambience is a crucial part of the sauna experience but we tend to forget it when all the other sensor are also occupied. Therefore we want to emphasise it by loosening it from the context of sauna and presenting it as an individual element in a form of sound art that resonates in frequencies of Finnish kivas.

### Background

"The kivas is like an organic being, the spirit hiding beneath the stones that awakes and blesses us with refining steam when doing the sauna ritual."

The inspiration for the installation comes from the practical and aesthetical usage of rocks. In Finland stones are used as a crucial element in a sauna stove, where as Japanese rock gardens are using them mainly for aesthetical purposes. Still both share a quite similar experience - a space for relaxation and enlightenment.



Example of sound movement in a sound system

Kivikasa is an exploration between these two different cultures and traditions.

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**How?**

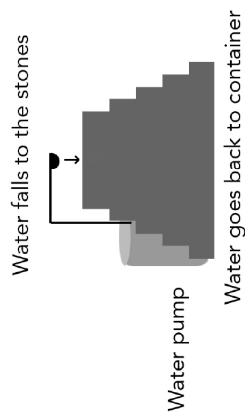
Kivikasa transforms the perception of space and acoustic with moving kinetic sound. Movement of sound in a loudspeaker grid enhance the diffused sensation of löyly when water is colliding with hot stones. The sound can move through different varying routes from the big stone pile in the centre to the outskirts stones on the floor level.

The installation has watering system that recycles the water that is used to trigger the löyly sound. The viewer can walk next to the big stone pile and turn on the water.

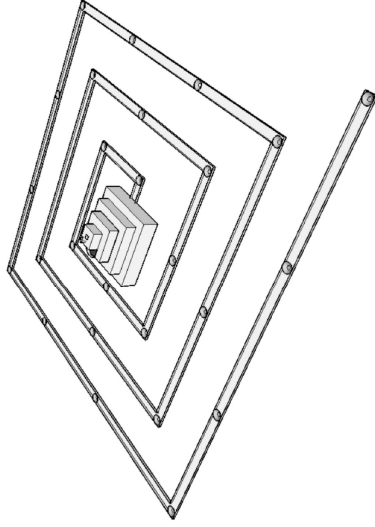
**The Centre Structure**

The frame construction will be covered with stones. 1,5 m x 1,5 m x 1,0 m.

There is a water container and water pump system inside the construction that will dispense water to the stones.



**3D sketch of KIVIKASA without rocks**



## Kivikasa

Kivikasa is an acousmatic sound installation that introduces the mystical and subtle sounds of sauna stove (kivas) to the Spiral Hall Atrium. When the installation is "inactive" loudspeakers will diffuse the droning sounds of kivas, but when water is dispensed to the rocks it will diffuse a sound of löyly (steam).

The stones that lie on top of the stove, the fire in the stove, temperature change in the materials, boiling water and the shape of chimney flue altogether create interesting and transforming droning soundscape that we will diffuse in the Atrium through a custom designed sound system.

## Why?

The ambience is a crucial part of the sauna experience but we tend to forget it when all the other senses are also occupied. Therefore we want to emphasise the sound by loosening it from the context of sauna and presenting it as an individual element in a form of sound art that resonates in the frequencies of Finnish kivas.

## Background

**"The kivas is like an organic being, the spirit hiding beneath the stones that awakes and blesses us with refining steam when doing the sauna ritual."**

The inspiration for the installation comes from the practical and aesthetical usage of rocks. In Finland stones are used as a crucial element in a sauna stove, whereas Japanese rock gardens are using them mainly for aesthetical purposes in search for a perfect harmony. Still both share a quite similar experience - a space for relaxation and enlightenment, a space for contemplation.

Kivikasa is an exploration between these two different cultures and traditions.

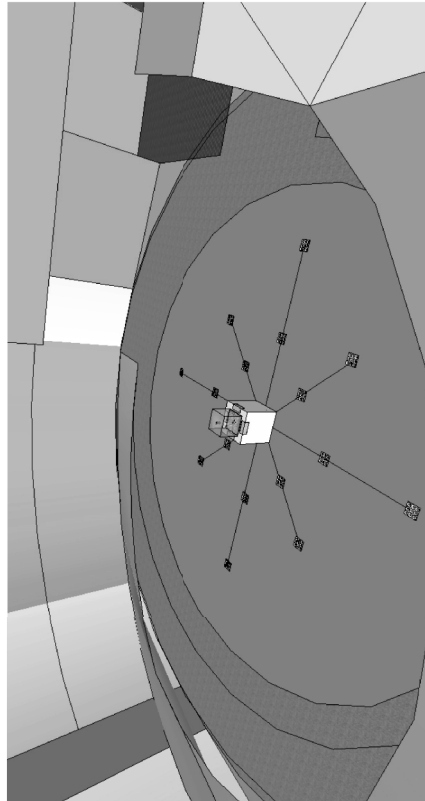
## ARTISTIC STATEMENT:

"We want to explore sound movement and spatial sound. We don't want to make illusion of sauna, but instead use the sounds of sauna as material for our artistic desires in sound movement. The sound of löyly is naturally active element in the soundscape of sauna and can be felt and heard moving and therefore it is good material for our purposes."

"Throwing water to the stones triggers the sound of löyly. We use this idea as a concept and transform it into an interesting automatic event. We make dripping fountain where just a small drop of water can create big sound events."

## KIVIKASA

A sound installation



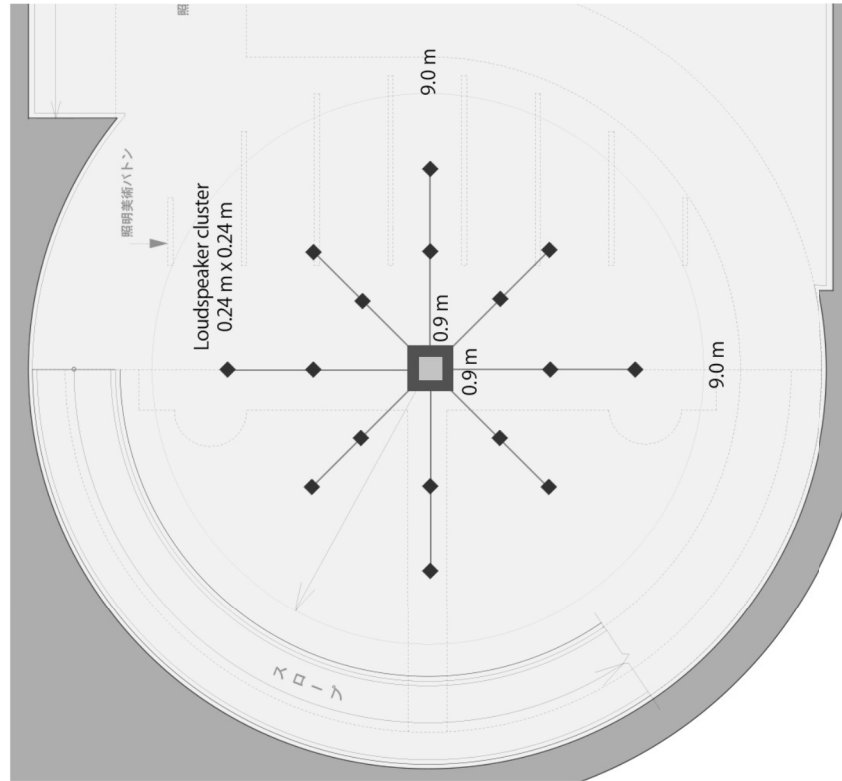
Recording kivas at 64° 21' 53.859", 27° 34' 39.0252"

Saku Kämäräinen & Ari-Pekka Leinonen  
 sakukama@gmail.com / aapee.leinonen@gmail.com  
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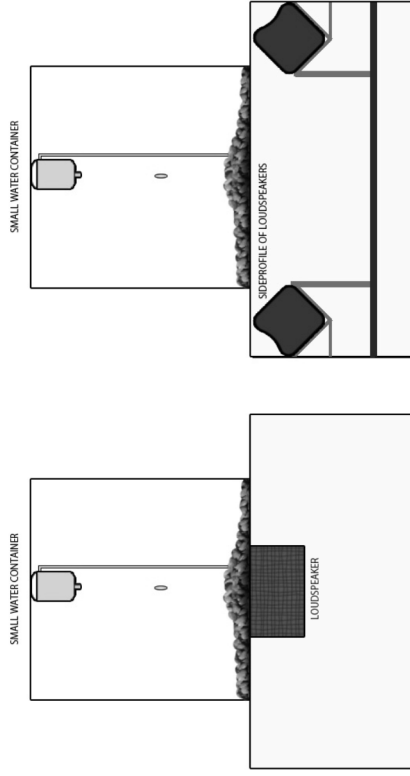
**How?**

Kivikasa transforms the perception of space and acoustic with moving kinetic sound. Movement of sound in a loudspeaker grid enhance the diffused sensation of löyly sound. The sound can move through different varying routes from the centre structure to the speaker clusters on the floor level.

The installation has watering system that recycles the water that is used to trigger the löyly sound. The viewer can walk next to center structure and see the miniature rock garden with water dripping system inside the plexi glass box.



**Step by step guide to KIVIKASA**

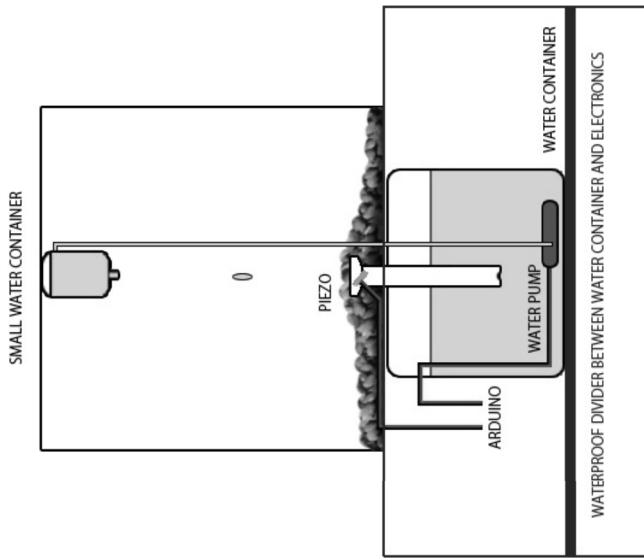


**Support structure**

- There is a support structure in the middle of the Atrium floor
- The size of the structure is W: 90 cm, H: 90 cm, D: 90 cm
- There is mounting for four loudspeakers on each side of the structure
- The structure will hide all the used equipment
- Inside the structure is a ~10l water container
- A pipe will connect water container with a hole on a plexi glass box
- Inside the water container is a water pump
- A small pipe will raise up from the water pump towards the plexi glass box

**The plexi glass box**

- There is a plexi glass box on top of a support structure
- The size of the box is W: 50 cm, H: 50 cm, D: 50 cm
- In the center of the box is a funnel, a small hole (ø 5 cm) and a pipe from the water pump
- The floor of the box is covered with small stones leaving the centre open for the hole
- There is a small water container (~0.5 l) on top of the box
- The small water container is connected with the pipe from the water pump
- The small water container will drop water to the hole in the centre



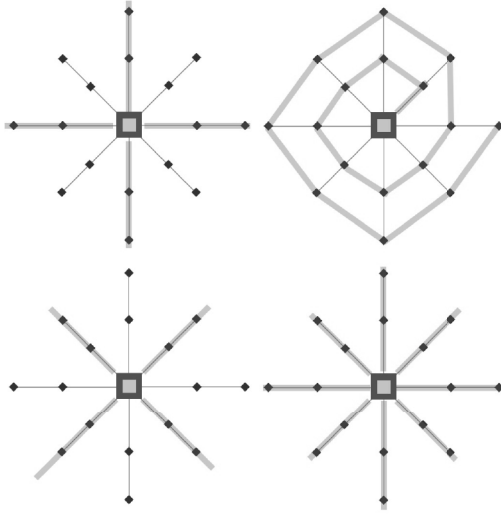
**The water system**

- The water drops automatically from the small container
- The size of the water drop is very small and the tempo is slow
- After some time the water pump will refill the small water container
- The water pump works with timer that is controlled by Arduino
- The water is recycled

**The sensor**

- There is a tilted piezo sensor on top of the hole in a plexi glass box
- The sensor is connected to Arduino
- When water drop hits the sensor it will trigger a sound effect - sound of löyly

When water hits the stones, the sound of löyly will travel from the center to the outskirts of the grid using various routes.



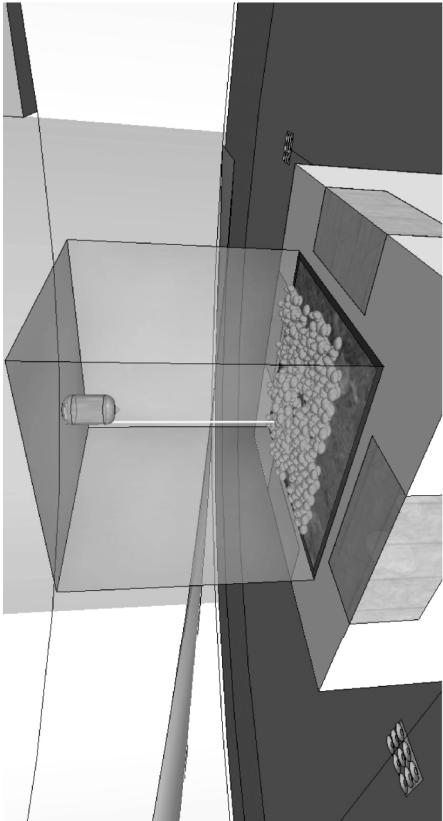
Example of sound movement in a sound system

**Loudspeaker grid on floor**

- There is 16 clusters of 9 small loudspeaker elements on the Atrium floor
- The clusters are placed according the floor plan (see the floor plan)
- When sound effect is triggered the sound will start moving on a loudspeaker grid
- There is multiple amount of various pre-designed sound movement options
- The selected movement strategy is randomly picked avoiding repetition

**The sound design**

- The loudspeakers inside the support structure will diffuse the different sounds of Sauna stove
- When sound effect is triggered the loudspeakers will diffuse sound of löyly and later it will move into the loudspeaker grid
- The loudspeaker grid will diffuse the sound of löyly



Close up 3D model of the structure