Searvedoaibma: Art and Social Communities in Sápmi

Edited by Mathias Danbolt,
Britt Kramvig & Christina Hætta

DIEĐUT 1 | 2024

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On the Cover Image:
Outi Pieski and Jenni Laiti, *Ovdavázzit—Forewalkers* (2016–)

Ovdavázzit—Forewalkers is a constellation of Sámi walking sticks created by Sámi artists Jenni Laiti and Outi Pieski, together with Sámi ancestors. *Ovdavázzit—Forewalkers* composes an ancient yet futuristic path to the world beyond, guided by indigenous knowledge, ancestral technology, duodji, and the Sámi understanding of a good life.

Despite being the inventors of skis, the Sámi walked a lot. The Northern Sámi language has over 320 synonyms for walking, reflecting how a semi-nomadic Arctic people walked for a millennium, migrating between dwelling places and living a good life in reciprocity with their land. In times of polycrisis and at the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era, ancestral ways of living and walking become a real climate solution. *Ovdavázzit—Forewalkers* beats the pace of the land, which is the rhythm of walking.

The Sámi walking sticks of *Ovdavázzit—Forewalkers* have created paths at Art Ii Biennial (2016), Alvar Aalto Pavilion at La Biennale de Venezia (2019), Land Body Ecologies Festival at Welcome Collection London (2023), This is Forest at Mode, Leeds (2023), and Luleåbiennalen, Luleå (2024).

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Mathias Danbolt, Britt Kramvig & Christina Hætta

What would you do
If everything that's been passed down to you
Started disappearing
Losing your grip
Have it slip through your fingers
You'd fight, right?
I know, I fucking fought
And without a second thought
I did everything in my power
—Juvvá Pittja, *duođain in dieđe / vet verkligen inte* (2018: 26)

At the end of July in the summer of 2019, the three of us writing this text—Sámi cultural worker Christina Hætta, Norwegian Sámi scholar Britt Kramvig, and Norwegian art historian Mathias Danbolt—sat outside our lávvu at the campsite of the Sámi cultural festival Márkomeannu on the Norwegian side of Sápmi, boiling a pot of coffee. We were waiting to meet with Sámi poet and painter Juvvá Pittja, whom we had just heard reading from his debut poetry collection *duođain in dieđe / vet verkligen inte* (2018) at the festival's library. After hearing Pittja's uncompromising poetry, we invited him to a *gáfestallan* (a coffee meeting) at our camp to learn more about his artistic practice and working process.

The poems in *duođain in dieđe / vet verkligen inte* reflect a personal and political desperation pertaining to the ongoing infringements of Sámi land rights by the nation states that hold jurisdiction over Sápmi. While shuttling between expressions of gratitude toward the land and rage against Swedish mining companies' extractivist destruction of the landscape, Pittja's poems put words to the unbearable compromises that many Sámi are forced to undertake in order to sustain themselves within colonial contexts.

Once Pittja had taken a seat outside our *lávvu*, we asked him to tell us about how he started to write poetry and what the language of art offered him. He commented:

> I started writing poetry when I worked in the quarry at Aitik, close to Gällivare. It was a question of survival for our family, as we needed money to feed the reindeer herd in the difficult winters. It was the only job that could give the kind of money that we urgently needed in just a few months. Even though I would personally never want to work in a place like that, when it comes to something that is bigger and more important than myself, such as my family, I swallowed my pride. In retrospect, I am almost grateful for those years in the mine, because it created this enormous pressure that needed a release. How to handle the fact that you need to do something that goes against everything you stand for to support and sustain your family and tradition? That was what led me to poetry.

Pittja's description of the challenging conditions that prompted him to write reveals how art and poetry function as a medium not only for reacting, responding, and reflecting but also for repair: His poems turn individual experiences of rage and distress into a shared space for listening, learning, and conversing about the personal and political effects of the current colonial conditions. In response to our comment on how his poetry can be seen as part of a longer tradition of Sámi artists turning to art to both protest and heal, Pittja explained:

> I have previously been involved in activist protests in Sápmi and at climate summits internationally, and it has been rewarding meeting other indigenous peoples and learning from their fights that are so similar to our own. But I kept returning to the question: What can I contribute, over longer periods of time, without throwing myself, again and again, against a wall that never seems to move? How can I find a way to contribute besides screaming at the top of my lungs and pouring out all my energy, when activist strategies do not seem to cause any changes? As it is now, art seems to be the only tool we have left.

Pittja's description of how art seems to be the only arena left where Sámi can make themselves heard on their own terms has stayed with us since our *gáfestallan* at Márkomeannu in 2019. Similar sentiments have since come up in many of our conversations with Sámi artists and cultural and creative producers in the context of the research project Okta: Art and Communities in Friction in Sápmi that we worked on with Hannaellen Guttorm from 2019 to the end of 2022.

Fig. 1:
Ingemund Skålnes,
BAAJH VAERIDE ÅRRODH!
(Let the mountains live!), 2023.

Since we started the research project, we have witnessed a new generation of Sámi activists stepping up and mobilizing under slogans such as "LAND BACK" and "BAAJH VAERIDE ÅRRODH!" (Let the mountains live!) (fig. 1). Their protests against the violation of Sámi sovereignty have taken place in multiple territories in Sápmi, from demonstrations against the concessions given to mining industries in Riehppovuotna in Finnmárku and Váhtjer (Gällivare) in Norrbottena leatna to protests against the transgression of Sámi human rights in the context of the illegal wind turbine park in Fovsen-Njaarke in Southern Sápmi. Sámi activists have been loudly and fiercely protesting and they continue to pour out their energy into fighting for the survival of Sámi culture, language, and livelihood.

Artists are at the heart of these protests, and Sámi art, duodji, lyrics, performances, joiks, and music have been crucial tools in bringing people together, from collective weaving and sewing during the activist occupation of the Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy in Oslove/Oslo in February 2023 to the communal joik during the sit-in at the Norwegian Parliament in October 2023. While artistic expression has been important in communicating Sámi sovereignty in these actions, art has also been central in bringing people together across differences. It is these dynamic and frictional interactions between art, activism, and community that we examine under the title *Searvedoaibma: Art and Social Communities in Sápmi* in this anthology.

Okta: Art and Communities in Friction in Sápmi

This book grew out of the communal work undertaken in the research project Okta: Art and Communities in Friction in Sápmi (2019–2022), which was funded by Arts Council Norway and the Danish Arts Foundation's research program Arts and Social Community. Our motivations for embarking on this research project were manifold. Firstly, we wanted to address the continual lack of research on Sámi art grounded in Sámi language, culture, perspectives, and methodologies. Sámi have been the object of research for centuries, as Nils-Aslak Valkeapeää wittingly made clear in *Greetings from Sápmi:* "an average Sámi family consists of parents, three children and an anthropologist" (Valkeapää 1983: 3). While Sámi academics have worked for decades

establishing Sámi-led and Sámi-oriented research communities, exemplified by seminal publication series such as *Dieđut*, the majority of writing on Sámi art and culture remains written by majority researchers for majority audiences and published in majority-oriented research channels centered on non-Indigenous contexts, concepts, and traditions.

Secondly, we wanted to examine what we consider to be a striking paradox pertaining to the development of Sámi art and culture. Sámi art is experiencing a booming visibility internationally, and Sámi artists are being invited to present their work in prestigious Indigenous-oriented exhibitions as well as mainstream venues such as Documenta in Kassel and the Venice Biennial in Italy. But the conditions for working as Sámi artists in Sápmi on Sámi premises have not changed accordingly. There are still few Sámi art institutions, there is still no Sámi art museum, and—as Gry Fors Spein points out in her article in this anthology—the curatorial framing of Sámi art remains all too often marked by a disregard for or lack of competence in Sámi language, knowledge systems, and customs. As the statement from the KulturSápmi summit in Inari in 2023 makes clear, Sámi artists urgently "need to be able to govern our own arts and crafts according to our own premises" (Kuokkanen, Kramvig & Gaski 2023). To strengthen artistic and cultural forms of self-determination, numerous actions must be taken, including demanding that the national governments understand their responsibilities for "the borderless Sámi art and culture sector," reforming educational systems to support and foster the intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledges, and promoting "Sámi art criticism based on Sámi knowledge and internal competence" (ibid.). Moreover, as Petra Laiti argues in her contribution to this publication, developing better Sámi cultural support systems would ensure that Sámi do not need to spend time explaining, translating, and legitimizing their work to majoritarian cultural agents and can instead spend time and energy to "think more deeply about what we *want*, not just what we absolutely *need*."

Truth and Reconciliation

The critical importance of strengthening the infrastructure for Sámi art and culture was raised in the Norwegian Truth and Reconciliation Committee

(TRC)'s comprehensive report published on June 1, 2023 (TRC 2023). The TRC was established by the Norwegian Parliament in 2018 to investigate the so-called "Norwegianization policy" against the Sámi, the Kven, and the Norwegian Finn peoples. The report's chapter on art and cultural expression makes clear that the Norwegian state's colonial assimilation policies, which sought to exclude Sámi art and cultural expression from the public domain, have had "profound negative consequences for Sámi [...] culture, language, identity and living conditions" (TRC 2023: 510). The institutional marginalization of Sámi art and culture has also meant that the Sámi people "have not had the same opportunities to have life experiences, such as grief, pain, and experiences of loss acknowledged, articulated, [and] processed in public (ibid.: 527). This marginalization stands in stark contrast to the roles played by art and cultural institutions in majoritarian Norway to create and maintain Norwegian national identities and communities oriented around ideas of common language, history, and cultural heritage since the nineteenth century. Within this national narrative, the Sámi have been either involuntarily assimilated into the Norwegian community—and thereby invisibilized—or framed as strangers and "Others" who do not belong (ibid.: 510). Othering is a central premise for colonization; as the decolonial philosopher Aimé Césaire has argued, it amounts to "thingification" (Césaire 2020). While the objectification of colonized subjects can range from racist chauvinism to romanticized stereotypification, the "thingification" of Sámi populations have been central to the commodification and exploitation of Sámi lives, land, and resources.

The Sámi protests across Sápmi and in the streets of Oslove against the Nordic nation states' persistent colonial practices and politics must be understood as more than a struggle for voice and visibility in protecting Sámi land. The protests are also an assertion of *a will to community and a will to life*, to invoke philosopher Achille Mbembe's philosophical conceptualization of the practice of decolonization (Mbembe 2021). When Sámi activists and artists chant "LAND BACK" and "BAAJH VAERIDE ÅRRODH!" (Let the mountains live!), this is less a demand for "special interest" within frameworks of "identity politics," as the media tend to suggest, than it is a cry for the survival of Indigenous Sámi worlds and a struggle for "forms of life that could genuinely be characterized as fully human" (ibid: 55).

Infrastructures of Sámi Art and Culture

Sámi cultural workers have a long tradition of responding to the history of ignorance and minorization of Sámi art and duodji in Nordic majority institutions and museums by creating alternative networks and institutions (Danbolt 2018; Grini 2021). In our examination of Sámi forms of resistance and resurgence in the Okta research project, we focused on cultural festivals in Sápmi, which have been one of the most important artistic, social, and economic infrastructures in the development of the transnational field of Sámi art (Danbolt et al. 2022). Against the lacking institutional support structures for Sámi art in the Nordic nation states, festivals in Sápmi have been vital in sustaining, encouraging, and promoting artistic expression and experimentation. Festivals have also been some of the most supportive venues for artistic attempts at addressing colonial dynamics and processes of reconciliation via critical and creative ways for multifaceted audiences. Aside from operating as important arenas for the articulation and negotiation of Sámi perspectives and knowledges, festivals provide space for the creation of Sámi communities and publics, which often connect with and rub up against Nordic majority publics (ibid.). Nevertheless, as pointed out by Christina Hætta and Petra Laiti in their articles in this anthology, as long as Sámi organizers are forced to spend time and energy compensating for the ongoing national neglect of the infrastructures of Sámi art, the full potential of Sámi festivals and their artistic contributions cannot be fulfilled.

Throughout the Okta research project, we focused our activities on three different festivals in Sápmi: the majority-oriented festival Festspillene i Nord-Norge/Arctic Art Festival in Hárstták/Harstad, the Sámi festival Márkomeannu in Gállogieddi on the Norwegian side of Sápmi, and the Winter Market in Jåhkåmåhkke/Jokkmokk on the Swedish side of the border. When working with these festivals, our research strategy was rooted in Indigenous methodologies and their focus on knowledge as a collective practice (Wilson 2008; Smith 2012). Instead of merely studying how the festivals function as sites for artistic presentation, performance, and discussion, we actively participated in the festivals by developing forums for knowledge sharing through public events such as panels, talks, and roundtables, as well as intimate forms of *gáfestallan*, like our conversation with Juvvá Pittja at Márkomeannu.[1]

The title of this book takes the Northern Sámi term *searvedoaibma* —which was an analytical framework developed throughout the project—as its starting point (Danbolt et al. 2022). This North Sámi term has no direct English equivalent. In Northern Sámi, *searvi* refers to something one participates in (e.g., an association or community), while *doaibma* describe practices of doing or enacting something. In short, *searvedoaibma* is an active concept that shifts the focus from understanding community as a noun—that is, as something that exists—to focusing on communities as being enacted into existence through practices and negotiations. By using this concept as the starting point for this publication, we seek to emphasize our interest in understanding how art and social communities are made and enacted in dynamic and relational processes, and how art and aesthetic performances contribute to and challenge these processes. The concept of *searvedoaibma* is based on Sámi ways of knowing and communal (inter)actions that are made and remade through the traditional knowledge and practices the land offers (see also Finbog 2023). As the article by Gunvor Guttorm, Iŋgá Påve Idivuoma, and Samuel Valkeapää in this book reveals, the land plays an important role in how communities are made and in determining who is able to harvest or "take" materials, stories, or knowledges when making artistic objects, telling stories, or carrying out performances.

1 At Festspillene i Nord-Norge in 2019, we collaborated with Sámi artist Carola Grahn, who was the appointed curator of the festival exhibition *native@home*. Mathias Danbolt was co-producer of the festival exhibition; the research project also co-curated an event program in the exhibition that included research dialogues such as: "*native@home*: A conversation between Carola Grahn and Mathias Danbolt" (June 23, 2019); "Festivals and communities in friction: Four years with Festspillene i Nord-Norge. A conversation between Mathias Danbolt and Maria Utsi" (June 26, 2019); "Fiction as prepping: Sigbjørn Skåden and Siri Broch Johansen in conversation with Hannaellen Guttorm" (June 27, 2019); and "And now what? Roundtable on Sámi Art at arts festivals with Joar Nango, Jérémie McGowan, Carola Grahn, Britt Kramvig, and Mathias Danbolt" (June 29, 2019). Okta was present at Márkomeannu in July 2019, where we organized the public dialogue "Goas lea sámi dáidda politihkalaš? (When is Sámi art political?)" with invited guests Juvvá Pittja, Sunna Nousuniemi, Margrethe Pettersen, and Elin Már Øyen Vister (July 27, 2019). At the winter market in Jokkmokk, Okta organized the roundtable conversation "Art, Duodji and Community Building in Sápmi" with invited guests including Hilde Hauan Johnsen, Britta Marakatt-Labba, Anne Henriette Nilut, Katarina Pirak Sikku, Gunvor Guttorm, and Kaisa Huuva (February 8, 2020). See also Danbolt & Utsi 2020; Kramvig & helander 2020; Kramvig, Hammarén & helander 2021; Danbolt & Nango 2022.

While this book investigates the negotiation of communities in artistic and aesthetic forms of *searvedoaibma*, we have also aimed to enable the editorial process to function as an arena for communitarian interactions, where Indigenous artists, writers, and scholars can come together with allies to negotiate new research communities into being. Thus, the majority of the contributions to this anthology are not only collectively written but also carry traces of dialogues, exchanges, and interactions—including from our online writing and feedback meetings and conversations. Some contributions are explicitly framed as an attempt at Indigenizing and queering research (e.g., the exchange between Tuula Sharma Vassvik and Elisabeth Stubberud), while other texts (e.g., Danbolt and Kramvig's and Erika de Vivo's contributions) are the result of collaborative or co-creative research processes. Like Aslak Heika Hætta Bjørn's essay, these texts engage with artistic projects from festivals in Sápmi, including the Arctic Arts Festival and Márkomeannu. To summarize, this book is invested in centering Indigenous voices and perspectives in order to secure self-governance in research and cultural infrastructures—and thereby regain Indigenous governance over land and waters as well. For, as Jenni Laiti makes clear in the manifesto-like photo collage *If the earth is not kept healthy, we won't survive* (2022) included in in this publication, "Our PLACE-BASED INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS are a key to design a THRIVING EARTH for all." Collectively, then, this book brings together multiple voices and forms of expressions, all of which share an investment in creating "brave" spaces for the sharing of knowledges, stories, and artistic interventions.

Sámi artists and *duojárs* are "our pathfinders, our guides, [and] our soul medicine" (Kuokkanen, Kramvig & Gaski 2023). This description from the KulturSápmi Statement from Inari in 2023 captures the essence of why we wanted to place an image of Outi Pieski and Jenni Laiti's ongoing project *Ovdavázzit—Forewalkers* (2016–) on the cover of this publication. In the image, a series of beautifully crafted Sámi walking sticks are placed in a snowy landscape, forming a line or path. Walking sticks are support structures: They allow us to maneuver difficult terrains. But when standing in a line in the snow, the walking sticks take on the function of sign posts that help us navigate when it is difficult to see which way to go. As the title of the work suggests,

Ovdavázzit—Forewalkers, these walking sticks not only mark a path for us to follow but also trace the passage of ancestors who have walked the earth before us. In the context of this publication, the walking sticks stand as a model for how Sámi tradition brings us forward; to us, they also symbolize how dependent we are on artistic skills and knowledges to enter into and imagine new sustainable futures.

*

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Peer-Reviewed Articles

Queer Sámi Conversations: Making Room for Safer Spaces

Elisabeth Stubberud & Tuula Sharma Vassvik

We dare claim that we are now at a crossroads when it comes to queer Sámi visibility in Sápmi and beyond. Over the past decade there have been substantial societal changes in Sápmi when it comes to the general visibility and understanding of queer Sámi issues. After the first queer Sámi organisation was established in 2002,[1] we have seen gradual positive changes in Sápmi when it comes to queer Sámi visibility and rights. The book *Queering Sápmi: Indigenous Stories Beyond the Norm* (Bergman & Lindquist 2013) was important in this regard. The book fleshed out queer Sámi stories and experiences through interviews and photographs that highlighted how queerness is a natural aspect of Sápmi—even if many of the stories told in the book gave bleak images of queer Sámi lives. The travelling exhibition that followed the project brought queer Sámi people physically together in the same space across Sápmi. As such it was monumental in the consolidation of the queer Sámi movement. Following this project, the first Sápmi Pride was organised in Giron/Kiruna in 2014, and in 2019 a new Queer Sámi organisation was formed, Garmeres.

There is a stark contrast between some of the stories of isolation and marginalisation that people told in *Queering Sápmi*, to what was being said from the stage at Sápmi Pride in Heahttá in 2023, where a young panellist stated that his queerness had barely led to a lifted eyebrow in his family. He was, in fact, uncertain of whether his lack of a narrative of queer suffering meant that he was fit to speak from a queer Sámi stage. Politically, we are now in a situation where important Sámi institutions and Sámi spaces are actively interested in including queer Sámi issues, something that the invitation to arrange Sámi Pride during the Sámiráđđi/The Sámi Council's conference in 2022 in Váhtjer (Gällivare) attests to. However, there is still work to be done. Norms around heterosexuality and cisgender are still strong in Sápmi, and

1 The first Queer Sami organisation was called Nettverk for samiske homofile og lesbiske (The Network for Gay and Lesbian Sámi) and was established in 2002 by, among others, Risten Ravna Heatta and Lemet Ánde Stueng.

these norms could be loosened up to create safer spaces for queer Sámi. Another example of work to be done is the pressing need to improve the legal and medical situation for trans people in Sápmi. Furthermore, Sápmi is not immune to the backlash to lgbtiq+ rights that we see in many places across the world—even if things are moving in the right direction at present.

In the following exchange of letters, we meditate on our experiences as queer Sámi against the social and political backdrop outlined above. We draw on the feminist insight that the personal is political, and perhaps in a very particular way for queer Sámi. There is something fundamentally political in having and being role models for others. Some of the loneliness and isolation that queer Sámi people have previously talked about (Bergman & Lindquist 2013; Stubberud, Prøitz & Hamidiasl 2018) was connected to having no or very few role models. Without others to look to, others who can mirror our lives, the future becomes unimaginable, unsafe. Being able to envision a queer Sámi future is a prerequisite for survival for many of us. And to do that, we need ideas. We need to tell queer Sámi stories. We should never underestimate the power that we all hold in showing each other that it is possible to live as ourselves, to live good lives as queer Sámi. This was partly what the *Queering Sápmi* project was about, and this is partly what we are continuing in this text, ten years later.

In this exchange of letters, we—Elisabeth Stubberud and Tuula Sharma Vassvik—explore queer Sámi activism, art and academic work in the form of a conversation. We have each been involved in different forms of queer Sámi organising and thinking, and seek here to explore in a dialogic manner how personal experiences and politics come together in queer Sámi spaces. From a queer Sámi perspective there is a need to build knowledge and awareness in a manner that allows us to think about who we are and what we need. However, a prerequisite for this is physical spaces that are safe (enough), as well as mental space for doing the work of not only thinking, but also thinking aloud and in collaboration. This mental space requires a degree of energy, trust in the surroundings, as well as faith that we will be listened to and taken seriously. None of these are a given.

Our collaborative thinking and writing around un/safe spaces for queers in Sápmi has been enabled by those who walked before us and paved the way, as well as by the various social changes and inclusion of queer people and queer perspectives in Sámi communities, organisations, media and public bodies. Although much work remains to be done, we nevertheless want to acknowledge and extend our gratitude towards our queer siblings and elders who have worked for our safety in Sámi spaces, as well as to our friends and allies outside the queer Sámi movement who continue to work alongside us to make sure that our joint spaces are safe, also for us.

This is a text that is written in a personal manner. We would therefore like to introduce ourselves. Elisabeth Stubberud lives in Tråante/Trondheim and has her Sámi and Kven roots in Pyssyjoki/Bissojohka/Børselv in Porsanger. She was the leader of the queer Sámi organisation Garmeres—Norwegian section until 2023, and has been involved in queer Sámi organising since 2017, including the organising of several Sápmi Prides. In her day job she works as an Associate Professor at the Centre for Gender Studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. She teaches at PhD, master's and undergraduate levels in equality and diversity studies, and focuses on queer, Sámi and Kven perspectives in her teaching. Queer issues, as well as Sámi and Kven rights—often in combination—are central to both her work as a researcher and as an activist.

Tuula Sharma Vassvik is a queer Sámi artist and writer from Oslo with coastal Sámi roots from Gáŋgaviika/Gamvik. Their work centres connections and relationality as tools of decolonisation. They believe that strengthening connections to homelands, family, oneself, community and one's history all are ways of strengthening and re-imagining Sámi and queer futures. This is what feeds their imagination, foretelling a time when energy can be used for something completely other than fighting colonialism. Currently, Tuula is working on their first album, they are the advisor for Sámi Museasearvi/The Sámi Museum Association and is the producer and presenter of the podcast *Vuostildanfearánat—Sami Stories of Resistance*, which centres on the lives and work of Sámi activists, researchers and artists.

Elisabeth and Tuula met when recording an episode of Tuula's podcast in Romsa/Tromsø in 2021 and decided to continue the conversation

in writing. Inspired by similar conversations in letters, we write from a middle ground between academic, personal and creative positions. This manner of working and thinking collectively is well-established within Indigenous methodologies (see for example Maynard & Simpson 2022; Knobblock & Stubberud 2021; Huss & Fjellgren 2015; Helander & Kailo 1998). We are interested in going beyond individual experiences and knowledge to explore not only the importance of relations in queer Sámi contexts, but also of developing relational methods when engaging with queer Sámi issues. Through our conversation we address various aspects of our lives as queer Sámi, relating to spaces, nature, safety, art, family, coming of age and community.

From: Elisabeth Stubberud
Sent: Monday, 22 August 2022
To: Tuula Sharma Vassvik
Subject: Queer Sámi spaces

Hi Tuula
I'm so pleased we can have this exchange on indigenising queerness and safe spaces. One of the main goals for Garmeres, the organisation by and for queer Sámi that I work with, is to increase visibility. I'm grateful for every conversation that we can have on these issues, and for every space we're invited into as queer Sámi, such as the anthology that this text will be part of. Though, I wonder, is that defeatist? Should I be taking our space for granted? I don't. I never assume that I'm welcome, and I don't assume that various spaces are safe. I am always on guard.

Yet this is a balancing act. Visibility is important to us in Garmeres, but it is problematic to be on the alert all the time if we want to communicate that queerness is a natural part of Sápmi. We know that many queer people, and especially queer Sámi people, grow up thinking they are literally the only ones. So being explicit and open, and discussing these things in many different arenas, is important to us.

We also know that many queer people are worried about not being either Sámi enough or queer enough to be able to belong in the spaces we create. This is perhaps another consideration when thinking about what safe spaces are or should be.

You're a person who has contributed to queer Sámi visibility in Sápmi, among other things through your podcast for which Timimie Märak and I contributed to an episode.[2] While I've seen you in many Sámi contexts, we don't know each other so well. I'm curious about your motivation for doing the work that you do, and what significance safe spaces have for you in this context?
– Elisabeth

From: Tuula Sharma Vassvik
Sent: Monday, 22 August 2022
To: Elisabeth Stubberud
Subject: Nature is queer

Hi Elisabeth
Thanks for your words and questions. Visibility is important—as well as safety. I was in Bergen last month when one of our safe spaces here in Oslo, London Pub, was attacked by a man shooting at queer people the night before the Pride parade. When the state and the police cancelled the parade and recommended people to stay inside, I longed to be in Oslo with my fellow queers who defied the orders and took to the streets. At the front of the protest march one could see organisations such as Skeiv verden, Salam and Sámi queer and disability activists. It was also they who had worked behind the scenes to organise the march together with Reclaim Pride. In Norway, we are minorities, but we represent connections to larger communities working together to combat the effects of global colonisation and exploitation rooted in white supremacy, capitalism and patriarchy that are also part of the settler colonial state that has control over the Norwegian side of Sápmi.

While the fight against colonialism, white supremacy, capitalism and patriarchy might not be seen as part of the message of queer liberation, I wholeheartedly believe that this is the only way forward to safety. To increase awareness of how our personal lives are deeply affected by a system that was not built for our own well-being, even for those who identify as straight. Our fight is your fight.

2 https://soundcloud.com/vuostildanfearanat/indigenizing-queerness-with-timimie-gassko-marak-and-elisabeth-stubberud.

Majority society divided the queers and the minorities from the rest. They tried to integrate or assimilate or drive the "otherness" out of us. We want to live in our whole fullness, and we are fighting for the freedom to exist in safety. Because we don't really have a choice. In this way I feel that Garmeres and the work you do, Elisabeth, unites two fights: the Sámi fight against colonialism and the queer fight for visibility and safety. It seems that no matter which way we look at it, we are fighting aspects of the same systems and world views.

Colonisation of the Sámi has been a long process of violence, displacement, shame-installing, and attempts at disconnection (Salinas 2020), from our families, from our communities, from the land, from the sea, from waters, from our deities, from our bodies and the feelings and thoughts that run through them, and from our ancestors and our world views. Sámi culture, on the other hand, has always been about connection.

We hear the same colonial stories from all over the world: attempts at presenting queerness as something shameful, attempts at separating us from our communities and the sacred, attempts at telling us that we are "unnatural", when nothing could be further from the truth. Nature is queer. Ask any reindeer herder. Ask any bird-watcher. Shame is so powerful, and it has been installed in us, knowing—ironically—that the need to be accepted by our community is about life or death. And so, if they tell us that queerness is wrong, that Sáminess is shameful, some part of us will internalise it, because we are human. However, we have kept and made, maintained, our own communities, as safer places. We must continuously fight for these connections, as we must fight for our languages and our songs, to be in communication with the land. Without this we have no chance to know who we are. And we must take care of each other.

I'm grateful for communities like Garmeres, Salam and Skeiv verden that give us space to "just breathe a little", as Timimie Gassko Märak has phrased it. These are places of safety, where we can be ourselves. Thank you for that, Elisabeth.

–Tuula

From: Elisabeth Stubberud
Sent: Tuesday, 23 August 2022
To: Tuula Sharma Vassvik
Subject: Safety and the centring of queer Sámi lives

Hi Tuula
Thank you for your thoughts on these matters, and for bringing up safety as an issue. The attack in Oslo deeply unsettled me. Like you, I am grateful to the people in Oslo, as well as elsewhere in Norway, who took the protest, grief and community out into the open on the days following the shooting. I was also far from Oslo at the time of the incident, yet physical distance becomes less important, as the attack tapped into these old fears that so many of us—queer or otherwise marginalised peoples—know so well. With hate crimes you don't need to be directly affected for the crime to have an impact.

I spoke to a journalist a few days after the attack, and he asked me if I was scared. I hadn't really thought about my own fear until he posed the question. Only then did I realise that I take so many precautions in life that are based on a notion that I'm not in fact safe. Many of us queers, as well as Sámi people, have experienced having our boundaries stepped over in various ways, alongside various forms of blatant discrimination (Anderssen et al. 2021; Hansen & Skaar 2021; Hansen 2016). Yet, research also shows that witnessing or being aware of violence or hate speech directed towards a group you are part of affects people belonging to this group negatively (Bell & Perry 2015; Kunst, Sam & Ullberg 2012; Perry 2014; Gelber & McNamara 2016; Perry & Alvi 2012). My habitual precautions that I undertake without thinking suddenly became visible to me again after the attack on London Pub. Precautions such as always looking over my shoulder, assessing a situation and people around me, and being mindful of when and where I hold my wife's hand. And I was reminded that there are reasons why I do these things.

On a side note, I find the visibility I gain as soon as I put on a gákti more stressful than the visibility of my queerness—to the extent that these positions can be kept apart. People in non-Sámi areas seem to interpret the gákti as an interpellation to them, directly. They approach me, most of the time in a friendly manner, but sometimes not. And sometimes it's hard to

know in advance. I've practiced moving around in the urban area that I live in with a steel mask on whenever I wear my gákti. I don't look right or left, and I try to communicate with my body as clearly as possible to people around me that, *"No, the gákti is in fact not an invitation for you to approach me"*. The visibility of my queerness doesn't usually work quite in the same way in my case, but I know this is different for many other queer people.

We need research to make sense of our experiences, including the experience of belonging to several marginalised groups, and how visibility and risk is not evenly distributed among us. The lack of research frustrates me, both as an activist and as a researcher. There is hardly any research that deals with queer Sámi issues (Olsen 2022: 373-74), and the little there is on, for example, queer Sámi living conditions related to openness, health, relations and so on is very limited in scope and is becoming dated (Grønningsæter & Nuland 2009; Løvold 2014; Stubberud, Prøitz & Hamidiasl 2018). A lot has changed in Sápmi and beyond over the past ten years when it comes to the situation for lgbtiq+ people. From the perspective of a researcher interested in living conditions for various groups of queer people I genuinely wonder what the most important issues for us are right now.

Yet this change for the better in Sápmi is perhaps what is preventing me from becoming paranoid. We are in a situation now where Sáminess and queerness are centred in different spaces and moments in time. I felt that this happened at the Márkomeannu festival this year, and I treasure these spaces and moments. The centring of queer Sámi means that this part of who I am becomes something I can look at and ponder upon, both from the inside and the outside simultaneously, without fear. I started coming to Márkomeannu in 2016, when they had a poster of what could most easily be read as two Sámi men in gáktis kissing (fig. 1).

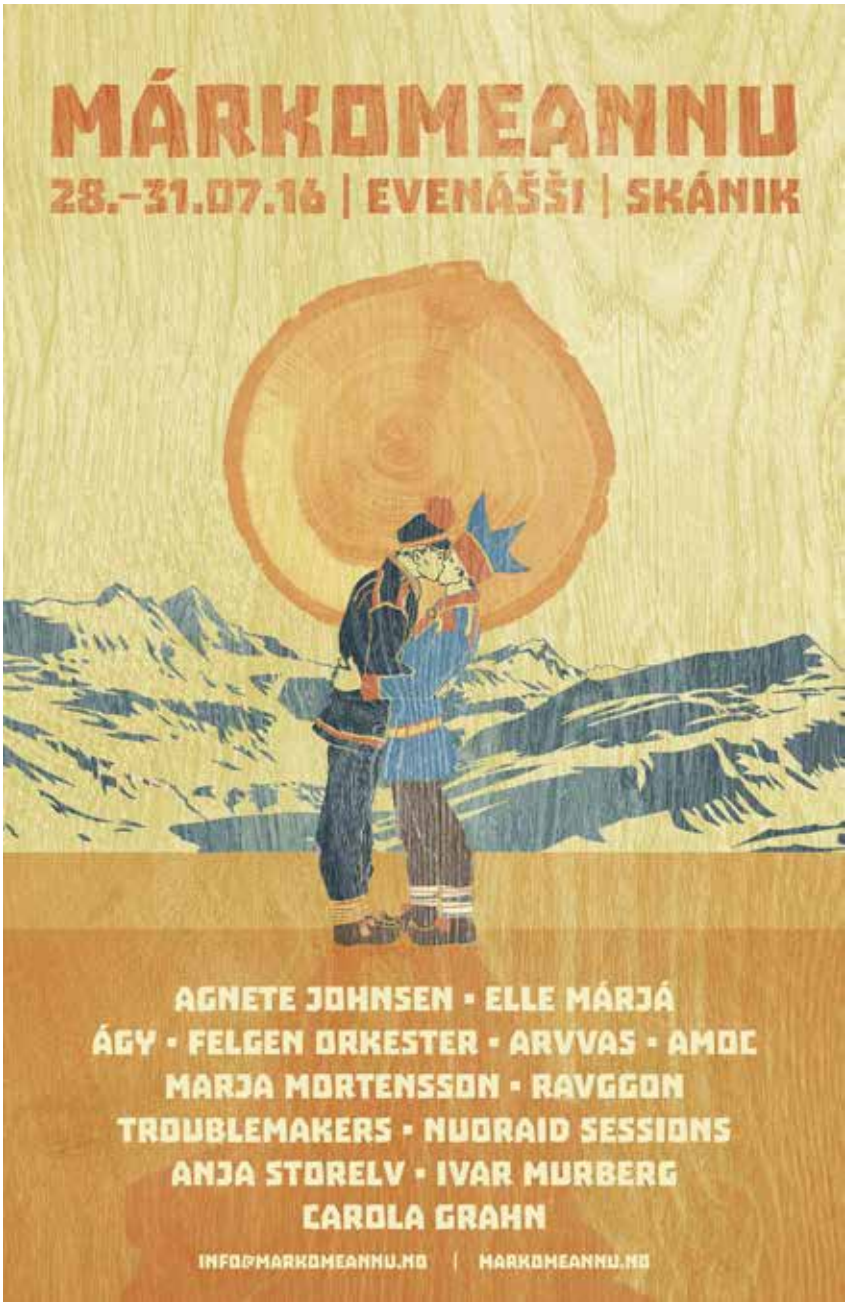

Fig. 1: Poster for Márkomeannu festival in 2016.
Design by Tor Åge Vorren in collaboration with the Márkomeannu crew.

I saw the poster and thought, this is my place! As long as I've been coming to Márkomeannu I've experienced it as a welcoming and friendly space, both for me as queer and as someone who is not from that area. But the 2022 festival was particularly nice, and Garmeres was invited to participate as part of the festival programme.

One experience that stood out for me at Márkomeannu was the performance *The Vuogas Way: Sániidkeahtta hállat* where nine duodji practitioners collaborated with nine performance artists in creating interpretations of the meaning of the North Sámi adjective "vuogas", which is used to describe something beautiful, practical and useful (fig. 2). Queerness was right at the core of the performance, but in an unmarked way. The performance made me feel seen, like there was a larger we that I was a part of, with my feelings, experiences and wishes mirrored in what was going on at the grass-covered stage in the sun at Gállogieddi. I'm not really a crier, and certainly not in public. But I don't know what hit home the most; Ellen Berit Dalbakk cutting up her gákti, Sunná Káddjá Valkeapää citing her grandmother's approval of her queerness, Dávvet Bruun-Solbakk and Anna-Stina Svakko's collaboration merging family history and queerness, Rönn and Nelly Engström's unfiltered care, Biret and Gáddjá Haarla's powerful and captivating movements, or Timimie Märak and Liisa-Rávná Finbog's rawness. The last chapter of the anthology *Queer Indigenous Studies* (Driskill et al. 2011) addresses the role of art in queer indigenous contexts in a powerful way. They write that "Artists are the visionaries leading us to a bright future, to mourning the past in productive ways, and to sensuously stunning us in the present" (Driskill et al. 2011: 220). I really feel that this was what happened during *The Vuogas Way* this summer.

Fig. 2: Anna-Stina Svakko and Dávvet Bruun-Solbakk during *The Vuogas Way* performance, Márkomeannu, 2022. Photo: Elisabeth Stubberud.

It's interesting when you write that "nature is queer". I agree. *The Vuogas Way* was a project initiated by Lásságámmi, the foundation that manages the legacy of poet and multi-artist Áillohaš/Nils-Aslak Valkeapää. The visions for the future, mourning of the past, and stunning in the present that happened at Márkomeannu during *The Vuogas Way* felt very much in the spirit of Áillohaš. Yet, I still wish that someone would look into and do a queer reading of Áillohaš' work. I think there is so much potential in putting into words the ways in which nature becomes queer through his work.

You were also at Márkomeannu, but what are the most important communities or places for you in your life right now?
– Elisabeth

From: Tuula Sharma Vassvik
Sent: Wednesday, 24 August 2022
To: Elisabeth Stubberud
Subject: Growing up and queer homes

Hi again Elisabeth :-)
Re-reading the previous mail I sent I realise I must have written it while being taken over by something. I'll try to keep writing with my heart open.

I am grateful for the people that I have met in the process of undoing and unthinking what this society has tried to make me feel about myself and the world. Growing up, I was repeatedly told and shown that my mind and emotions frequently produced situations that were "improper" and made people uncomfortable. And that somehow, my body and many of the things it did, were dirty and unspeakable. I was searching, turning in all directions for ways in which to change myself; finally realising I could not. In the process of letting go of trying to change I have started to realise that in the eyes of this western society I must be "queer" in more ways than one; in fact, I'm probably queer in most ways. Queerness, being "skeiv", in Norwegian, means being crocked. A little "off". I have embraced that, seen the beauty in it. However, it's tiring always digging your claws in at the edges. Not knowing how far you are from falling off. So instead, I am working on centring this body; creating room for safe spaces and places in my mind and in the world outside of it. Being gender queer is easier in Sámi where the only pronoun is "son".

The Vuogas Way made me feel like I was part of something and filled up with love and acceptance and lots of space to move and play. Experiencing the piece for the second time during the festival, it was heart-breaking to hear Timimie's pain and anger during their last act of the play directed at the harassment that many queer people routinely face. It pulled me back to reality.

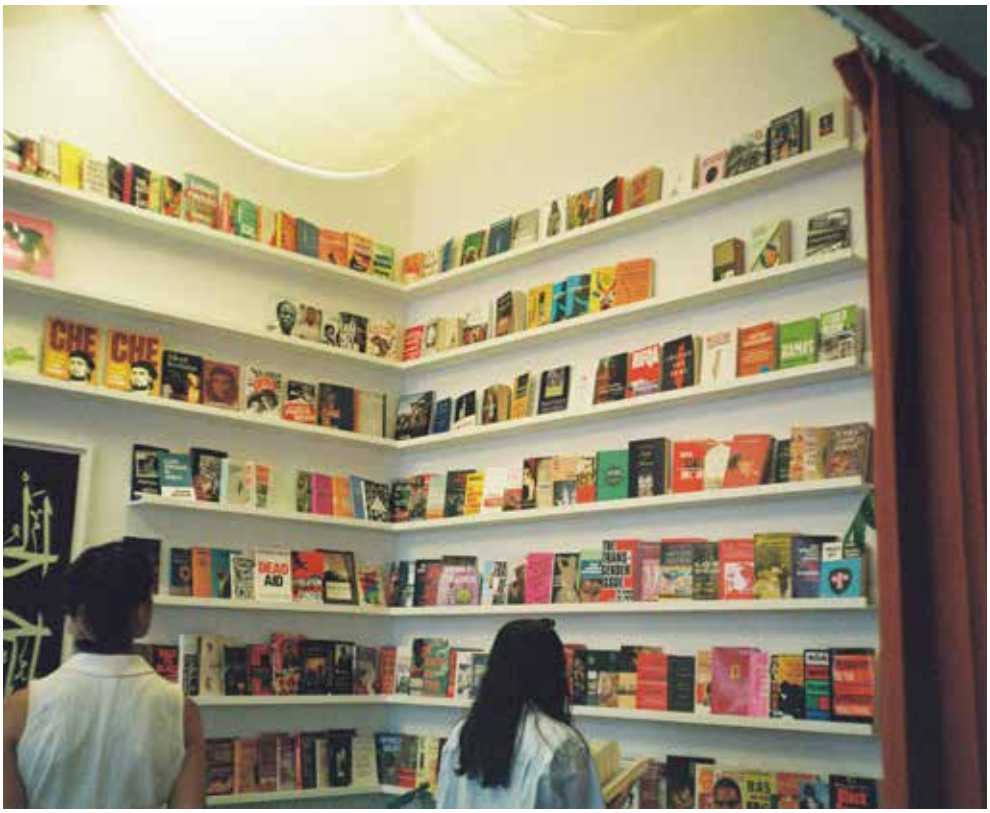

Fig. 3: *Assata* at Oslo Kunsthall, 2023. Photo: Lisana Preteni.

Some important spaces for me now are: my body. Lately I have been working on being an accepting caretaker of this body I was born with, and the emotions and thoughts that flow through it. The forest and the sea around Oslo have always been places where I feel the most like myself. The last couple of years I have been very lucky to befriend some amazing trees in the parks and

botanical garden close to where I live and so I have to mention these as well. The activist library *Assata* at Kunsthall Oslo in Rostockgata 24, established by young, brown, black and queer people, like my friend Piniel Demisse, celebrating revolutionaries of the global majority (fig. 3). As in the forests and by the sea I somehow feel like myself whenever I'm there. You should visit if you are in town. Places like *Assata* and people like Piniel bring me much hope and happiness.

As mentioned I've spent years looking for antidotes to whatever I was or wasn't experiencing while growing up in this queer, brownish body. How was it for you to exist as a young queer person in Bodø and Pyssyjoki/Bissojohka/Børselv? Who were your allies? And how did you end up working with Garmeres? I would love to know more about your journey with gender studies as well, if you want to share.

Looking forward to your answer.
– Tuula

From: Elisabeth Stubberud
Sent: Friday, 26 August 2022
To: Tuula Sharma Vassvik
Subject: Finding my queer Sámi self

Hi Tuula,
I think being taken over by something, or being carried away, is probably a good thing. There must be some level of trust in the surroundings for this to happen.

Growing up wasn't particularly cheerful for me. For as long as I've thought about age, I've been grateful for every year I've grown older. The first time I came out as queer was at 15, and it didn't go well. I did, however, connect with the queer community in Bodø. We were very few people, but simply knowing that someone else like me existed felt so important. I remember clearly the only teacher at school who was openly lesbian, as well as every single queer celebrity I heard about and every single queer film I saw growing up.
I was completely starved of role models. This is also something young queer Sámi speak about today when we've interviewed them about their

lives (Stubberud, Prøitz & Hamidiasl 2018). I lacked support when I grew up, and in my immediate surroundings I could not find spaces where I could explore my own queerness in safe ways. I lost courage, and eventually I went back into the closet for more or less another ten years.

It wasn't until I met my wife, Stine, that I came out again. This was also when I started being open in Pyssyjoki/Bissojohka/Børselv. I've always felt that we are welcome there. Even my grandmother, who was part of the Pentecostal congregation, was very welcoming. Initially she did not seem to know how to react, though, so she cited something they might say on the missionary channel on TV. It wasn't pretty. But she apologised quickly, and it did not take her long to come round to it when she discovered that Stine could cook and clean, as well as doing "manly chores" around the house.

I have a sense that we reminded my grandma of herself. She lived alone after she and my grandfather separated in the 1960s. At some point she and some other women in the village started fishing in the river. This was something the men in the village were doing, and fly fishing is still male-dominated today. She was proud that she and the other women started fishing. Living on your own, living life at the margins, means that you can't operate with traditional "male" and "female" divisions of labour. Gendered norms in mainstream society have perhaps in fact not been so important to her because they've been far removed from her practical lived reality (see also Nedrejord 2022).

It may even have been easier for her to understand my choice of partner than it was for my parents. They have worked hard their whole adult lives to prove their place in society, fearing, I imagine, that this place could be taken away from them at any point if they made any mistakes—such as having a queer child. I think this is a remnant of the assimilation and Norwegianisation policy: that you feel like an impostor in Norwegian society, someone who can pass only under certain circumstances. I sometimes imagine that my parents have not felt safe in their own lives.

It has been a long and winding road for me to work with queer issues, as well as Sámi and Kven issues—also in combination. When I did my master's and PhD, neither my queerness, my Sáminess nor my Kvenness was something I brought into my work. I did not think that these parts of me were relevant within the context of academic institutions. When thinking about it now, I find it hard to conceptualise this in other ways than shame. Ina Knobblock and I have written somewhat critically about the place and space for our Sámi and Kven/Tornedalian belonging in gender studies in Norway and Sweden (Knobblock & Stubberud 2021).

It wasn't until I left the university to work at the KUN: Centre for Equality and Diversity that I started working with these issues professionally. I visited the Lule Sámi centre Árran several times and witnessed the immense courage of the people working there. I saw how people like Anne Gurak used the space of the museum to propel social change in her local community (Árran 2016). I also saw the *Queering Sápmi* exhibition at Árran for the first time and I think that sparked something in me. Then I met Dávvet Bruun-Solbakk and we did a queer Sámi project together at Riddu Riđđu in 2017, and then we organised Sápmi Pride in Tråante in 2019. This was also where Garmeres was established. To my knowledge this is the third attempt at establishing a queer Sámi organisation. I hope we survive.

Your phrase, "space to move and play" touched something in me. I think this is an important motivation for me to do this work. I want more of us to be able to move and play. I don't want people to grow up feeling as stuck, stifled, inflexible and limited as I did. And I think one way of doing this is to explore what kinds of spaces we need to feel safe enough to be spontaneous. For me, there has always been freedom and a potential for spontaneity in sport and physical movement. I love to run. Yet the spontaneity that I connect with running is not available to me in other contexts. I want us collectively to be able to move and play in the sense of being capable of spontaneity in all our queer Sámi glory. This perhaps also connects to your other point about the body. Coming to terms with our bodies can be a piece of work for many of us. I am happy to hear that you are doing this work.

Also, I would love to hear more of your thoughts on places and spaces and communities, and your work with organising conversations in public contexts that bring queerness into play. I'm thinking specifically about the live recordings you did for your podcast *Vuostildanfearánat—Sámi stories of resistance* with people like Timimie and me, and also Ella Marie Hætta Isaksen and Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska at the Riehppovuotna/Repparfjord protest camp, where I know you also touched upon queer Sámi issues. Why do you think it is important to talk about this? And have the conversations you've had with people in the *Vuostildanfearánat—Sámi stories of resistance* podcast sparked any new thoughts for you on queer Sámi issues?
– Elisabeth

From: Tuula Sharma Vassvik
Sent: Sunday, 28 August 2022
To: Elisabeth Stubberud
Subject: Space to move and play

💜 I feel for the kid who came out at fifteen, Elisabeth. I think I can relate to some of those feelings you describe. This strange happiness about growing older. As if I've defeated or overcome something maybe. Survived.

I also remember soaking up all the queerness I could find growing up. I came out to my mom at thirteen and went into a deep state of depression around that time. Not just because I realized I was queer, but this came on top of all the other ways I had been othered by my peers just for being the child I was. I have so much compassion for that kid. I went to a private Catholic school in Oslo city centre that made me feel like a complete alien.

Being able to write about it makes it easier for me to distance myself from the heavy feelings carried by the child I was at that stage. I feel that so many of us emotional kids need to be reminded of the fact that the school system often works to separate us from ourselves. It is designed to change the way we think. To be our thoughts, ignore the way our body speaks to us, and so many of our gifts. In order to be the adult I wanted to be I had to take it all back. And I'm still working on it.

I'm happy for you and your grandmother. Those kinds of relationships are crucial. We should never underestimate our elders. They have seen and felt so much. I'm very hopeful about Sápmi and queerness. We have so much more to work out and so much of our history, spirituality and art to come back to with our queer eyes and other senses. But how do you feel? I might be more distanced from it, living in Oslo. Studying in Guovdageaidnu, however, a couple of years ago, was eye opening. It reminded me that there is still a lot of work to do, many places in Sápmi.

I think you are on to something important when talking about a difference between your grandmother's and parents' generations when looking at homophobia, or a need to fit in. A very real need, but nevertheless not a very healthy one in this case. And thanks for filling me in about your journey with Garmeres and your research; it makes it very evident how dependent we are on our networks, and how much our work is resting on so many other shoulders, whether it's our grandparents, colleagues, partners, friends, or queer artists like Dávvet Bruun-Solbakk, Timimie Märak, Anna-Stina Svakko, Sunná Káddjá Valkeapää, Márja Karlsen, Ole-Henrik Lifjell and Ritni Rávdnji Ráste Pieski—just to name-drop a few people who have recently made a difference for queer Sámi.

Speaking of spaces to move and play, I think that my podcast *Vuostildanfearánat—Sámi stories of resistance*, has become something like that for me. Thanks for bringing it up. Queerness is something I have been centring on from time to time, but especially in the episodes on Riehppovuotna/Repparfjord and the one called Indigenising Queerness. This is something that I witnessed during the Indigenous protest at Standing Rock as well: Queer people and femmes taking the lead and standing on the frontlines. I don't think this is something new, as I said in the conversation with Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska and Ella Marie Hætta Isaksen at Riehppovuotna, where this came up. I always seek to bring up queerness in Sápmi. Visibility is so important, as you said, as well as safe spaces. I would love for *Vuostildanfearánat* and all other spaces I inhabit to be exactly that.

– Tuula

From: Elisabeth Stubberud
Sent: Tuesday, 30 August 2022
To: Tuula Sharma Vassvik
Subject: I want to do queer readings of Áillohaš

Hi Tuula,
Thanks for sharing. I'm sorry to hear that it was hard for you back then. We carry these experiences with us. I keep trying to bundle mine up in a way that makes them easier to carry. And as I'm growing older, I'm getting stronger. Can you feel that too?

I'm thinking a lot about the baggage we carry around with us. Is queer Sámi organising harder than other forms of organising, since so many of us are carrying so much? How does this play into how we function today and what we are capable of? Garmeres organises Sápmi Pride, and before Garmeres there were other organisations, and partly other people. We've been doing this since 2014, trying to create a loud and proud meeting place for queer Sámi people, and a place where our friends and allies can show support. We have so many things we want to do when we plan Pride; we have artistic, academic, literary and social ambitions. We want to make queer gáktis, dig out the queer in our history and heritage, make it clear that we're not the first, and many have gone before us. But it may take some work to get the stories out in the open. We need representations of ourselves. We want to show that there are many ways of living queer Sámi lives, so that both young and old people who are still wondering if it is even possible to live as a queer Sámi can see that it is. You can be you and be happy.

When we do manage to meet up outside the context of Sápmi Pride, we don't sit around the fire doing collective queer readings of Áillohaš' work (I keep coming back to this fantasy). Instead, we end up talking about self-care, how we can avoid burning out when organising the next Pride, since we worked way too much the last time around. It's the same conversation, over and over. All the main organisers of Pride have burned out.

Why do we keep doing this? It would be so much easier to get ourselves another hobby. None of us are paid to do this work. We are spread over massive geographical distances and several time zones. We hardly ever meet the

other organisers, our closest queer siblings. Queer Sámi organising might be a repetition compulsion—we keep re-enacting the fatigue of carrying whatever burden it is that we are carrying. At the same time, the enthusiasm of planning events together, the feeling of wanting something to happen collectively, imagining collectively, all this is addictive, uplifting. This was addressed at Sápmi Pride 2021 in the collective dreaming sessions organised by Ritni Rávdnji Ráste Pieski and Anne Olli.

While some of us do opt out, most of us keep coming back, trying to create these safe spaces with queer Sámis at the centre. And to latch onto something from your last letter: perhaps for us this very tiring organisational work is an attempt at becoming whole, an attempt at moving back into ourselves again.

It is interesting, what you write about the queer people and femmes who took the lead at Standing Rock. Why do you think that it was these communities that were stepping up?
– Elisabeth

From: Tuula Sharma Vassvik
Sent: Monday, 24 October 2022
To: Elisabeth Stubberud
Subject: Family

Hi Elisabeth,
At times I do feel like I'm getting stronger and sometimes I need an anchor. Those moments can bring about shame, fears about weakness. But in my strength lies the ability to reach out. I keep reminding myself of that. Perhaps your work with Garmeres is part of this balancing between care and strength as well. It sounds exhausting and exhilarating, the cycles you go through of tireless work and dreaming and love and longing and fatigue. I somehow understand the addiction!

Although I imagine it can be hard to see in the eye of the storm, the spaces you make are invaluable to those of us who are free to reap the fruits of your work and dream with you. It is a shame that your labour takes you all the way to burn-out each year. It is a shame that in this society we must fight the hardest to make love happen. To centre it the way you do.

The work you do for Garmeres is not paid work; it won't physically feed you. Something that I have come to understand the more I get to know activists and community organisers is that capitalism lives separately from care, it feeds on greed and fear. And we are all TIRED. Tired of educating the majority just so we can have the space to take care of our own and maybe, as you say, become more whole in the process.

I think the reason why so many of the people doing Indigenous community work are women, trans-people, femmes, queers and non-binary people is that most of us have had to become strong. I think this strength comes from love. Discriminated people who must fight for their space to exist know what it is to be alone. We know what it means to make a real friend. We know what genuine acts of care feel like. And how much they matter. That is why, I think, we understand the importance of community. And in so many Indigenous world views the concept of community includes the land. We are not separate from it. We cannot let the colonial forces of separation violate us anymore.

Our love strengthens the work we do. Women, trans-people, femmes, queer and non-binary people hold power. But that does not mean that we don't miss and mourn the absence of the rest of our communities, our potential allies. Yet there is also anger behind radical acts of care. I think it is important to share, like you do Elisabeth, that we too can break, no matter how hard we love, no matter how hard we crave becoming whole.
– Tuula

From: Elisabeth Stubberud
Sent: Friday, 2 December 2022
To: Tuula Sharma Vassvik
Subject: Healing

Yes, we can break. And we do break. But perhaps we have no choice. We need these spaces that we create for one another, and while we risk breaking in the making of these spaces, they are also the spaces where we can heal together.
– Elisabeth

Coda: Queer Sámi futures

In this text we have explored queer Sámi activism, art and academic work in the form of letters. We have shared parts of ourselves and our stories, and attempted to spell out and make meaning of our experiences in a collective manner. Behind this lie the concepts of relationality and connectivity—because we are always connected through a process that keeps weaving, connecting. By opening we aim to softly pull closer; each other, ourselves, the reader. We want to make safer spaces of connection, safer spaces for movement and play, and lots of room to get to know ourselves and each other bit by bit. We think of this as movements towards healing, and believe that actions like these—telling stories about ourselves—matter because we ourselves have been opened by the stories of the people around us and those who came before us. These stories—even when they only contained glimpses of queerness where we had not expected it—connected the past and the future, showed us that life was liveable. In the same manner we use this text as a means of connecting with one another and the larger communities that we are a part of. Because even if the social and political situation for queer Sámi has improved, we need to keep working for queer Sámi spaces, making these as safe as we can for those who are coming after us. One way of doing this is to stay open, stay visible, speaking and listening.

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Abstract

In this text Elisabeth Stubberud and Tuula Sharma Vassvik explore queer Sámi activism, art and academic work in the form of a conversation. Elisabeth and Tuula have been involved in different forms of queer Sámi organizing and thinking, creating and existing. The exchanges in this text created a space for them to think together. In the process of holding space for each other and their experiences, the conversation explores themes connected to growing up and living queer Sámi lives, the importance of safe (enough) spaces, and the role of art and activism in queer Sámi organising. These subjects are all related to and woven together by Tuula's and Elisabeth's lived experiences. Yet as the experiences turn into a written exchange they formulate a joint need to take their ideas and dreams beyond the now and into a hopeful future where play, vulnerability, safety, storytelling and care can create platforms for thriving, awareness and collective queer healing.

Keywords: queerness, indigiqueer, care, community, resistance.

Duddjon jagiáiggiid mielde

Gunvor Guttorm, Iŋgá Elisa Påve Idivuoma & Samuel Valkeapää

Álggahus

Artihkkalis guorahallat mo guovllut, ávnnasteapmi ja duddjon bohtet oidnosii, go čuovvu jagiáiggiid dahje jahkeáigodagaid. Mii leat erenoamážit deattuhan luondduávnnasteami, go leat ieža vásihan ahte dalle ferte čuovvut jagiáiggiid rievdama. Mii geavahat sihke doahpaga jagiáigi ja jahkeáigodat go čilget jagi iešguđet áiggiid. Duddjon (mas lea sihke ávnnasteapmi ja duoji dahkan) lea aktiivvalaš proseassa, ja mearkkaša ahte m persovnnalaččat leat oktavuođas birrasiin ja nu maiddái ávdnasiiguin maiguin bargat. Min vuolggasadji ja -báiki lea guovlu gos mii ieža orrut, davimus Sámis gos meahcit, jeakkit ja duovdagat leat lahkosis, ja man mii gohčodat váimmusguovlun. Mis lea fenomenologalaš geahčastat vásáhussii ja dasa, mo dat doaibmá máilmmis. Duddjomis olmmoš geavaha olles rupmaša, áiccuid mat vurkejuvvojit vásáhussan. Mii leat hárjánan duddjot ja min lihkastagat leat šaddan oassin min rupmašis. Rumaš máhttá juoidá maid ii leat jurddašan máhttit (Tin 2011: 207-208). Rumašlaš vásáhus bohciida rupmaša ja máilmmi gávnnadeamis (Tin 2011: 207, Frykman 2012).

Olmmoš ráhkada iežas muitalusa duodjái, muhto duodji maid áddejuvvo oktasaččat, joavkkuin ja birrasiin. Go ávnnasta, de mearkkaša ahte diehtá maid dárbbaša, ja gos ja goas galgá ávdnasiid ohcat. Goas omd. muorra unnimus lihkada ja goas muohta buoremusat guoddá olbmo, nu leat buot oasit čatnasan oktii, ja daid sáhttá čatnat jagiáiggiide. Dasa lassin dárbbaša diehtit elliid luonddu ávdnasiid háhkamis. Sáhttá lohkat ahte muorat šaddet manin nu ávnnasin go olmmoš ohcá ja nammada daid omd. rákkusin (dahje rággomuorran), čuoimmisin (ávnnas čuoibmái), gámasin (ávnnas goikkehiidda) jna.

Lea čađa gaskka sáhka olbmo oktavuođas elliiguin ja šattuiguin mat gávdnojit dihto guovllus. Asta Balto lea geavahan giissá metaforalaš árdnan eallimis. Giisá lea geavahuvvon vurket dávviriid maid mii atnit árvvus. Balto ovdanbuktá árvvuid mat čuvvot olbmo eallima. Giissá bodnái bidjá doahpaga

Olmmožin eallit, mii lea Balto mielas sámi ekofilosofiija (2022: 241). Dat sisttisdoallá boahttevaš buolvvaid oahppama dássidit ja ráfálaččat eallit sihke birrasa, elliid ja olbmuid gaskka (Balto 2020: 241). Min mielas lea olmmožin eallit vuogas dadjanvuohki, go dat sisttisdoallá gullevašvuođa earáide, elliide ja birrasii. Mii oaivvildat ahte buot oasit váimmusguovllus šaddet vuogas gulahallanguoibmin. Dáid guottuid lea vejolaš maid hálddašit gos dal jo olmmoš lešge. Finbog árvala mieloahppama go lágida omd. bargobájiid (2020:81-85). Dákkár vuohki sáhttá leat čoavddus, go dujiin bargá váimmusguovlluid olggobealde go lea dárbu gávdnat eará vugiid, mo gaskkustit dáid árbevieruid ja árvvuid mat leat duddjomis.

Ulbmil, jearaldagat ja lahkonanvuogit

Čállosa ulbmilin lea čalmmustahttit iešguđetlágan ávnnasteami ja duddjoma mat čuvvot iešguđege jagiáiggi. Go nu dahká, de leat olbmuiguin, elliiguin, eatnamiiguin ja guovlluiguin oktavuođat, ja olmmošlaš gaskavuođat čatnasit maiddái doaimmaide. Mii jearrat:

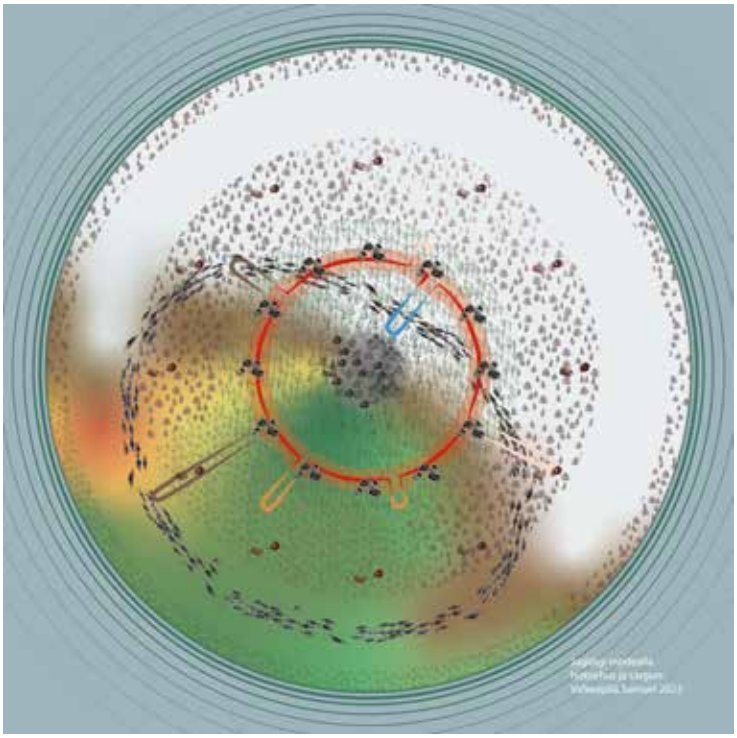
1) Maid mearkkašit jagiáiggit ávnnasteapmái ja duddjomii, ja mo dat bohtet oidnosii?

2) Makkár čanastagaid duddjo olmmoš guvlui, ávdnasiidda, elliide ja nuppiide duddjonproseassas?

Artihkkalis geavahat jagiáiggiid vuohkin lahkonit čuolmmaid. Leat huksen artihkkala nu ahte álggahat jahkegierdduin, mii lea min váldogovus man vuođul geahččat sierra beliid min jearaldagain. Dasto vihkkedallat oktavuođa gaskal doahpagiid ávnnastit ja duddjot. Govahallat de muhtun ovdamearkkaiguin mo mii vásihat jagiáiggiid váikkuhusaid duddjomii, ja divaštallat mo de sáhttá oaidnit oktavuođaid gaskal guovlluid, eatnamiid, jagiáiggiid ja duddjoma.

Lahkonanvuohki - jahkegierdu váimmusguovlluin

Mii leat geavahan jagiáiggiid, mat čuvvot mo mii lihkadat giđđageasis giđđageassái duovdagiid gaskkas ávnnasohcama ja duddjoma ektui. Vaikko mii leat geavahan davvisámi guovllu ovdamearkan, de lea jurdda ahte kártta sáhttá geavahit mállen maiddái eará guovlluide ja eará doaimmaide. Jahkegirdui leat sárgojuvvon bohccot ráidun. Dat govvida gosa bohccot jorggihit guđege jagiáiggis. Dálvet bohccot leat siseatnamis ja geassái bohccot čoahkkanit davás. Ná eandalii lea dábálaš Ruoŧa bealde ja Suomanjárgga sámiin. Norgga bealde siiddat johtet davás iežaset riddoguovlluide ja sulluide. Dán govvosis bohccot čájehit gokko dat lihkadit guovlluid ja jagiáiggiid mielde. Ávdnasat maid mii govvidat, leat dakkárat maid fidne boazodoalus dahje dain guovlluin gos olbmot leat.



Govus 1: Jagiáiggiid, duddjoma, guovlluid, ávnnasteami ja olmmošlaš relašuvnnaid čilgenveahkkin lea jahkegierdu. Jagiáiggiin oaidná mo čállit oidnet daid duddjomis. Iŋgá (čáhppesruškes), Sámmol (muorra ivdni) ja Gunvor (feaddá ja bárkku ivdni) lihkadit váimmusguovllus: ávnnasteamin, duddjomin ja meassuid galledeamen.
Govvosa hábmen: Samuel Valkeapää.

Olles jahkegierdu čájeha dan, maid mii leat gohčodan váimmusguovlun. Váimmusguovlun gohčodat dan dihte, go mii oaidnit ahte dat lea leamaš ja lea guovlu, gos olbmot lihkadit, doibmet ja gávdnet birgejumi ja gos máhtuid ja dieđuid ovdánahttet. Váimmusguovlu nappo oahpaha olbmuid. Váimmusguvlui čujuhit sápmelaččat ain go čilgejit iežaset gullevašvuođa, vaikko soitet leat guođđán guovllu. Go geavahat jahkegierddu mas leat dihto áigodagain dihto barggut dahje doaimmat, de mearkkaša ahte ferte dalle maid leat gearggus dahkat daid doaimmaid maid áigodagat bagadit.

Olggomusas lea mearra ja riddoguovlu (davvi), ja siskkobealde govvidat guovlluid gos leat valjis soahkemuorat (vuomit, vuovddit, njárggat). Dasto leat guovllut, gos olbmot gaskkohagaid orrot go geavahit guovlluid ja gos orrot gaskaboddosaččat danne, go soitet leat bivdimin doppe, johtimin ealuiguin dahje eará. Dat leat báljes duoddarat. Daid siskkobealde leat birastahtti vuovddit. Gierddu guovddážis leat min festivála- dahje márkanbáikkit, mat sáhttet leat čoahkkebáikkit, gávpogat (lulli) ja dakkár báikkit mat čujuhit máŋgga guovllu olmmošlaš deaivvademiide.

Rukses gierdu, mas leat earáivnnat spiehkasteamit, muitala gos duojár goas lea. Rukses oasis oaidná duojára orrun- ja duddjonbáikki. Rukses sárggis dán kárttas sajáiduvvá soahke- dahje beahceguovlluide. Daidda guovlluide leat ásaiduvvan olbmot, mat leat čatnagasas guovllu eará olbmuiguin, elliiguin ja muoraiguin. Muhtomin lea dehálaš oassálastit čakčageasi njuovademiide. Giđđageasi, geasset ja čakčageasi soaitá dárbbašit viežžat feattáid ja osttuid. Skábman soaitá dárbbašit duddjot. Dálvet soaitá ávnnastit giisáávdnasiid, ja giđđadálvve fas ávnnastit iešguđet muorraávdnasiid.

Duddjon ja ávnnasteapmi

Duodji ja duddjon lea ovdánan dárbbu dihtii, nugo Iver Jåks čálii (2022[1967]: 24-28). Son govve mo sápmelaččat sihke duddjojedje praktihkalaš, geavatlaš dárbbu dihtii, muhto maiddái estehtalaš dárbbu dihtii (ibid.). Sámiid árgabeaivi lea sakka rievdan dan rájes go son dien čállosačálii, muhto seammás leat sujurdagat ain áigeguovdilat. Duodji lea eanemus oinnoleamos sámi ovdanbuktinvuohki (gč omd. Magga 2022: 91-105). Sigga-Marja Magga oaidná ahte go sámi perspektiivvas leat álgán guorahallat ja dutkat duoji, de lea maid duodji-doaba ožžon saji (ibid). Dalle vuolggasadji lea sámi eallimis ja eallinvásáhusain.

Magga maid oaidná ahte duodji doaibman, aktivitehtan oažžu mearkkašumi sámiid gaskkas 1970-logu sámáidahttináigodagas (2022: 96-97). Earágielat digaštallamat duoji birra, nugo suoma-, dáro, ruoŧa- ja eaŋgalasgielat digaštallamat, leat váikkuhan mo sámegielagat leat guhkit áiggi válljen čilget duodjedoaimmaid omd. suomagielat doahpaga käsityö bokte (gč. Guttorm 2010: 13-41). Nuba mii leat ovtta oaivilis Maggain ahte duodji-doaba šattai dehálaš reaidun sámáidahttinproseassas go sámegielat doahpagiidda adde fas saji. Nuppe dáfus sámegielagiidda ii leat duodji-doaba miige amas ja ođđa ráhkadusaid. Nu guhká go sámegielagat leat gulahallan iežaset gillii giehtabargguid birra, de leat diehttalasat geavahan sámegielat doahpagiid. Dál geavahussii lea sajáiduvvan duodji-doaba, go lea sáhka sámi kultuvrralaš ovdanbuktimis ja eallinvásáhusas dan ektui.

Muhtun sámegielagat sirrejit gaskal dan go duddjojit biktasiid, lávkkaid jna. ja dan go ávnnastit guvssiid, náhpiid ja gerresiid. Dipmaduoji nappo duddjojit ja garraduoji fas ávnnastit. Omd. Nils-Henrik Valkeapää (2021) muitalii, ahte sin guovllus Suomanjárggas *duddjon*-doahpagiin čujuhedje daidda bargguid, maid bohcconáhkis dahke. Garrasit materiálain bargama govvidedje eambboge ávnnasteapmin. Muhtun birrasiin de amašit duddjonsáni, baicce atnet ávnnasteami sátnin go leat garradujiin bargamin. Konrad Nielsen čállá omd. ahte olmmoš ávnnasta gerresa, dainna mearkkašumiin ahte dahká dan (Nielsen 1979: sv.: avnnastit). Boares filmmas maid Norgga Filbmaguovddážis oaidná go Nigá Jovnna dahká gerresa, lea vejolaš oaidnit mo dađistaga ávnnasta geresosiid (Statens Filmsentral 1978: Sámi dilit XI), ja de ii soaitte amas go čilgejuvvo ahte ávnnasta, ja hui čielgasit boahtá oidnosii ahte ferte válljet dárkilit geresosiid. Iver Jåks lea vuohkkasit čilgen ahte go duddjogoahtá, de ávnnasta dárbbu mielde (2022[1967]: 24-28).

Min mielas duddjot-doahpaga sáhttá geavahit go oppalaččat hállá giehtabarggu birra. Go de galgá eanet čilget duoji, de geavaha dárkilit namahusaid nugo omd. nuvttohat, guksi jna., ja seammá láhkai maiddái go lea čilgemin duddjoma iešguđege doaimma hárrá, omd. guohpat, gohpat, fearrat, fearkut jna.

Ávnnastan - ja duddjondoaimmat jagiáiggiid mielde. Giđđageassi ja geassi, čakčageassi ja čakča

Dán áigodagas, maŋŋil dálvvi ja giđđadálvve, lea váimmusguovllus ollu mii dáhpáhuvvá: guovlluid luondu rievdá ja olbmot lihkadišgohtet eará láhkai ja ožžot buriid das. Dán áiggis lea vejolaš čohkket ávdnasiid, main de beassá duddjot muđui buot eará jagiáiggiin ja álo go heive.

Sámis leat eatnamat máŋggaláganat, muhtun sajiin leat šattolaš vuovddit, sihke soahke- ja beahcevuovddit, nuppe sajis sáhttet leat eanet sáttoeatnamat ja lánját. Juohke guovllus gos fal šaddet muorat, leat maiddái ruohttasat ja feattát, maid maŋis Gunvor, okta artihkalčálliin lea. Dan rájes go girsi lea luoitán gitta dassái go bulašta fas. Danne lea feaddáávnnastanáigi nannosit čatnasan geassái ja muhtun áigái velá čakčageassái ja čakčii. Ellen Kitok Andersson -rohkki logai ná go govvii ávnnasteami:

> Eadni oahpahii mu ávdnasiid iešvuođas, álggos ferte oahppat ávdnasiid iešvuođas. Mu millii lea čuohcan luondu, lottit, eallit ja visot mii lundui gulai, ja čáppa ivdnemolsašumit čakčat. Dat leat boktán mus duojára. Urbeáiggis veattit molsot ivnni nu čábbát, beanta eallájit. (Utsi 1993: 47).

Son govvida dás bures oktiigullevašvuođa gaskal áiggi, eatnama ja dárbbu hálddašit ávdnasiid, ja gulahallama, mo dat lea boktán duddjon- ja hutkanmiela.

Juohke guovlu rávve olbmo, ja mis soitet maid guovllut maid dovdat lagabut go eará guovlluid ja dádjadat doppe. Artihkalčálli Gunvor dávjá ávnnastišgoahtá doppe gos lea mánnávuođa rájes vánddardan (gč. maid Guttorm 2013: 41-43). Váimmusguovlu sutnje - su ulbmiliid várás gávdnat feaddábáikkiid - lea guovttešlájat: seahkalas vuovdi gos leat sihke beazit ja soagit, ja sáttomiellit, guovlu gos leat eanaš soagit ja sáttoguolbanat. Jus lea vuovdi, de čalbmi ohcá beahcejalgŋáid mat leat jo muorkiluvvan ja eanaluvvan, ja lahkosis lea velá soahkemuorra. Eanaluvvan muoras gávdná feattáid maid lea álki gaikut. Sáttomilliin eai dárbbaš leat go moadde muora mielleravddas ja báikkis sáhttá liikká gávdnat feattáid.

Feaddágaikun lea áddjás bargu, ja dasa ferte atnit áiggi nu ahte gártada doarvái feattáid. Hivvodatge ii leat juohke sajis seamma lágan go nuppi sajis, sáhttá deaivat oali mas sáhttá gaikut valjis. Leat luondduávdnasat ja lea váttis fidnet justa seamma gassodagas, vaikko dan sávvá. AIDA-prošeavttas (Arctic Indigenous Design Archives) oidno ahte feaddágaikuma sáhttá čatnat oktii njoazes hábmema lihkadusain (gč. Guvsám 2022, Guttorm ja earát: 2022: 73-101). Oktavuođat guvlui ja áigái johtet giehtalagaid. Artihkalčálli Gunvor váldá feattáid nu ollu go diehtá ahte geargá ain háválassii dain bárkku faskut, ja nu eai mana duššás ávdnasat.

Govus 2: Feattáid gaikun lea áddjás bargu, ja go galgá gártadit iešguđege assodahkii daid, de dasa ferte bidjat áiggi ja asttu. Govven: Gunvor Guttorm

Feattáid gaikun lea okta oassi ávnnasteamis. Nubbi lea ahte bárkku ferte astat faskut dahje njaldit oalle fargga maŋŋil go lea viežžan ávdnasiid. Dakkaviđe go lea gaikon feattáid, sáhttá faskugoahtit, ja jus ii geargga buot faskut ovttatmano, de bidjá daid galbma čáhcái. Go lea ladnjii, de lea álki faskut feattáid, dalle sáhttá masá njaldit. Nugo ovdalis namuhuvvui Kitok Andersson hállá urbeáiggis, ja oaidná ivdneerohusa ávdnasis: ávdnasat leat čuovgadat. Muhto lea maiddái de álkit faskut. Maiddái bárkofaskun lea áddjás bargu, mii gáibida ahte bargá dađistaga iige nu guhká maŋŋil go lea viežžan ávdnasiid. Nu ávnnas láidesta olbmo, ja gieđaid bokte vurkejuvvo diehtu ja máhttu (Guttorm 2021: 103-122, Guttorm ja earát: 2022: 89-90).

Go ieš ávnnasta ja maŋŋil áigu duddjot juoidá das, de lea vuogas ahte astá giđđageases gitta čakčii viežžat feattáid, nu ahte lea gártadan iešguđege gassodagas. Gunvor lea plánen AIDA-prošeavtta oktavuođas duddjot installašuvnna, ja čohkkedettiin feattáid, de lei maid dárkon daid. Dát geahčadeapmi attii ođđa jurdagiid ja son válljii geavahit sihke beahce- ja soahkefeattáid, muhto sirrii daid go galge sierra atnui. Beahcefeattát sáhttet lea guhkibut ja gasibut, ja fuomášii ahte daid lea álkit botnjat báddin, ja oinnii vejolašvuođa das. Dasto lea vejolaš geavahit beahcefeattáid čielgefeaddán ja soahkefeattáid gođđinfeaddán. Go ávdnasiiguin bargá, de šaddet dat dego hábmenverddet ja olbmot čatnet muitalusaid maiddái ávnnasteapmái (Guttorm 2017: 168). Duddjonproseassa bisttii badjelaš jagi, go mihttun lei čájáhus čakčat 2022 AIDA-prošeavtta olis Kárášjoga Dáiddaguovddážis. Feattáid guhkes mátki muorramáddagis sádduid siste dassá go suorpmat daid burget čuovgasii, attii idea *Čuovgasii*-installašuvdnii.

Govus 3: Gunvor Guttorm *Čuovgasii*-installašuvdna. Govven: Line Kalak.

Čakčadálvve sogiid maŋis

Juohke oassi soagis lea masa nu geavahuvvon: ruohttasat, bárkkut, beassit, ieš muorra, ja assin vel báikkit gos dat šaddet. Maj-Lis Skaltje čállá nu deaivilit ahte soahki lea muorra maid sápmelaččat leat dábálepmosit geavahan. Das leat sámit ožžon orohagaid, áiddiid, gárddiid, suonjiriid, duorggaid ja luviid, ovssiin leat bonjastan bessodagaid, luvddáid dahkan ja rissiid geavahan. (2005: 29- 31.) Ávnnasgeavahusa lassin lea soagi máihli ja lasttat geavahuvvon maiddái olbmuid ja elliid biebmun - ja ieš muorra boaldámuššan (ibid). Soagi iešvuođat muitalit olbmui maid heive goas váldit.

Nugo mii oaidnit, de ferte muhtun ávdnasiid viežžat dihto jagiáigge vai heive ulbmila várás. Jon Ole Andersen oaivvilda ahte jus giđđat njeaidá dahje čuohppá muoraid, de muorra dego vardá (Persen ja Geving 1999: 34). Danne árvala ge ahte čakčat ja dálvet go luondu jaskkoda, sáhttá ávnnastišgoahtit muoraid.

Čakčadálvi giđđadálvvi ektui lea seammasullasaš áigodat ohcat báhkiid, go goappaš áiggit leat lasttaheamit. Čakčadálvve lasttat leat geargan gahččat ja eana jiekŋugoahtá. Eanan guoddá, vánddardettiin oaidná guhkkelabbui go lastta áigge ja nie áicá báhkiid ja erenoamáš muoraid bures.

Skábman gápmasiid háhkamin

Artihkalčálli Iŋgá okta váimmusguovlluin lea čearru gosa lea gullevaš ja gos skáhppo duodjeávdnasiid bohccos. Dát guovlu lea viiddis ja doppe boazu johtá gaskal geasse- ja dálveorohagaid: alla gáiseeatnamiin geasset ja beahce- ja soahkevumiin dálvet.

Skábman rátkkašan- ja gárddástallanáigge lea dábálaš váldit dahje fidnet niestebohcco. Mii leat ovdalis namuhan ahte elliid galgá gudnejahttit ja čájehit daid ektui vuollegašvuođa. Dát guoská maiddái njuovvama hárrái. Iŋgá lea ruovttustis oahppan ahte bohcco galgá ávssi bokte russestit suorpmain ovdalgo dan niskáda ja giehtada (gč. maid Johnsen: 2007). Son ii leat ožžon čilgehusa manin nu galgá dahkat, muhto lea dulkon ahte dat lea juogalágan sivdnideapmi ja bohcco gudnejahttin. Sivdnideapmi sáhttá máŋgga láhkai govvidit, mo olbmot árgabeaivvis oidnet oktavuođa sihke elliiguin, dáhpáhusaiguin ja guovlluiguin ja dat addá buori olbmuide (Mienna Sjöberg 2018: 97-99). Bohccuid gudnejahttima dáfus ii galggaše bohccojulgg id árvvoštallat duodjeávnnasin ovdalgo daid lea njuovvan. Muđui lea bilkideamen bohcco (Oskal 1995: 95).

Sivdnideapmi njuovvama oktavuođas lea vierru mii galgá bohccos váldit eret bákčasiid (Mienna Sjöberg 2018: 97-99).

Njuovvama olis Iŋgá lea oahppan ahte go gápmasiid čállá, de lea hui dehálaš dan rivttes láhkai dahkat. Jus gápmasat leat boastut čállojuvvon, de dain ii soaitte maŋit áiggis sáhttit vadjat gámabáraid. Son lea máŋgii gullan vuorrasut olbmuid nurrideamen, go njuovahagat botkejit bohccojulggiid čippiid ja čevžžiid bokte ja nu "bilidit" buriid duodjeávdnasiid. Áilen Nigá Elle Máret (Elle Maret Eira) čállá go háreheamit njuovvá bohccojuolggi, de ii sáhte ollásit ávkkástallat gápmasiin, ja nu šaddá binnet, ja nu de ádjána guhkit goarrumiin (Eira 2004: 10-14).

Govus 4: Borgegámasgotturat. Govven: Iŋgá Elisa Påve Idivuoma.

Gámasrádjamis galgá leat gearggus gávlut duoljis, gaccaštit, ja dasto juogo fuolahastit dahje goikadit. Dasto galgá gápmasiid jámálgahttit maŋit skábmii ovdalgo sáhttá dikšugoahtit daid. Nilsen gázzi oaivvildit ahte gearggusvuohta lea mihtilmas olbmuide, go geahčča maid guovllut, meahcit ja mearra fállet iešguđege áigodagas (Nilsen ja earát 2022: 18). Duolji ja gápmasiid áimmahuššamis galgá olbmos leat gearggusvuohta mielas.

Go várrugasat gieđahallá ávdnasiid njuovvama maŋŋil gitta ávdnasa dikšumii, de dat lea okta vuohki čájehit vuollegašvuođa eallái, mas lea fidnen daid. Nils Oskal lea iežas doavttergrádabarggustis čállán boazolihku birra. Son maiddái oaidná gáibádusa ahte olmmoš ferte vuhtii váldit ja láhttet čábbát elliiguin nu ahte ieš fas oažžu buorre eallinlihku. (1995: 83–90.) Eallu ii galgga - jus dan geahčča boazolihku oainnus - leat gaskaoapmin man nu olgguldas ulbmila várás, nugo omd. bivttasávnnasin. Juohke oassi mii lea bohcco gorudis, gullá dasa, ja danne ii veardit bohcco bittuid dahje goikkehiid mielde, daningo dalle lea bilkideamen bohcco (Oskal 1995: 95). Jorunn Eikjok oaidná ahte sápmelaččaid oktavuohta elliiguin oidno myhtain, muitalusain ja luđiin, ja čállá mo son bajássattadettiin ja maŋŋil ge oahpai ahte olmmoš galgá guldalit birrasa ja nu gudnejahttit dan (2022: 250). Biras dán oktavuođas leat eallit ja luohtu (ibid). Go várrugasat gieđahallá ja ávnnasta rivttes láhkai, de maiddái lihkostuvvá olles proseassain.

Dálvi ja giđđadálvi

Dálvi lea máŋgasiidda huššás áigodat. Dat lea áigodat goas dihto duojit duddjojuvvojit ja máŋggat meassut, heajat ja konfirmašuvnnat dollojuvvojit iešguđet guovlluin Sámis. Muhtin meassuin lea guhkes árbevierru nugo ovdamearkka dihte Johkamohki dálvemárkaniin, mat leat leamaš badjel 400 jagi. Johkamohki márkan lea dehálaš čoahkkananbáiki, gos olbmot gávppašit, čuvvot doaluid nugo earret eará konsearttaid, čájáhusaid ja logaldallamiid.

Juovllaid áigge go Johkamohki márkanat lahkonišgohtet, Iŋgá smiehttagoahtá, makkár čiŋaid ja bivuid dárbbaša ja maid ferte ođasmahttit dahje divvut. Leat go sus čikŋagápmagat maid galggašii ođđasit coggat nu ahte šaddet fas hámálažžan. Son fuobmá ahte nieidda vuottagápmagat leat unnon. Iŋggás livčče gárvves vaddjojuvvon gápmagat áittis, mat livčče maiddái niidii heivet, muhto son gávnnaha ahte ii dáidde astat goarrut daid. Son gávdná baicce

boares čikŋaguretgápmagiid áittis, mat eai šat geavahuvvo dan sivas go dain leat dološmállet gurethearvvat. Son mearrida baicce ođasmahttit daid. Son rahtá gurehiid ja goarosta gavllaid vuoddagiid várás. Soai nieiddain beassaba gudnejahttit máttaráhkkorohki, gii lea duddjon gápmagiid 50 jagi dassái. Iŋgá nappo gudnejahttá dainna go lea divvon ja ođasmahttán daid, ja nieida fas go geavaha daid.

Dasto Iŋgá iská sudno isida bittuid ja gálssohiid leat go játnan dahje menddo galjit. Vuottadiehpit leat maid golan ja son oaidná ahte daid galggašii jevdet. Ráhkkanettiin leat maid milas maŋemuš áiggi treanddat. Treanddaid áican ja čuovvun lea birra jagi doaibma iešguđet doaluin gos leat gávttehasat. Isida gálssotnjálmmit leat 15 jagi boarrásat, ja dain leat boarásmuvvan ja gollan báttit ja láđđi, nu ahte son mearrida ođasmahttit daid. Son goarru daid ođđa láđđis ja herve njunnesuorramiiguin ja ođđaseamos roncciiguin, mat čuvvot dálá treandda.

Dán jagáš Johkamohki márkaniin deaivá sámeálbmotbeaivi márkaniid áigái ja guovdu Johkamohki márkana leat ávvudoalut. Sii ráhkkanišgohtet čiŋadit ávvudoaluide. Iŋgá coggá bittuid, dállasta gápmagiid ja gámada ieš álggos. Son viggá čolčet nu bures go sáhttá, muhto mánnáolbmos lea unnán astu vuoruhit iežas. Dan mađe čábbát gal čolče amas bođggiid bokte šaddat doađgga-sin. Dasto čiŋahišgoahtá mánáid, geat leaba juo áigá vuorjagoahtán goas sudno vuorru lea. Son gámaha máná guoktá ja giessá vuoddagiid nu čábbát go vejolaš. Dasto veahkeha gávttiid, liinniid, boahkána ja gahpira coggat. Go buot dáiguin lea ollásit geargan, de lea dehálaš vel geazadit máná guoktá gávttiid.

Sii mannet ávvudoaluide, gosa ollu oahpes olbmot leat čoahkkanan. Doppe sii deaivvadit fulkkiiguin ja eará oahppásiiguin iešguđet guovlluin Sámis. Sii deivet doppe muhtin fuolkenieiddaid geat muitalit ahte leat vuordán ja ráhkkanan Johkamohki márkaniidda jahkebeale juo, ja illudan goas besset fas čiŋadit.

Govus 5:
Eadni veahkeha nieiddas gámadit.
Govven: Ánne-Mággá Idivuoma

Dálvit ja giđđadálvve sojahanmuoraid ja báhkiid ávnnasteamen

Geasi maŋŋá muorra jaskkodišgoahtá. Lasttahis áigi fállá soagi ávnnashámis, mii buoremusat heive máŋggalágan dujiide (Allely ja earát 2000: 20-26; vrd. Johansen 1990:31). Gaskadálvve skápma maŋŋá lea buoremus áigi njeaidit ja ávnnastit sogiid (Guttorm 2017: 168). Eandalii giissá várás gánneha ohcat buriid ávdnasiid ja atnit áiggi gávdnat heivvolaš ávnnasmuoraid. Oaksás ja bonju muora lea váttis sojahit, go sijat sáhttet leat máŋgga guvlui. Bonjusijat muorain áigi manná divvumii iige dattege boađe buorre boađus. Njuolggo-muoras sijat dábálaččat mannet ovtta guvlui ja diekkár muora sojaheami lea buoret hálddašit. Dalle ávnnas sodjá dássidit ja gággamii oažžu fámu go várre liigeguhkkodaga. Danne reaskan lea buorre válljet njuolggomuora, mii lea sullii njealje geardde giissá guhku. Stuorit giissá várás dárbbaša várret jobe guovtte mehter guhkkosaš belkko. Ja mađi stuorit giisá, dađi gasit belko.

Danne reaskka várás gánneha ohcat gárvvisin gasit muoraid. Ovtta govda fiellu sojahemiin oažžu de giisái vuolit ja bajit osiid nie, ahte heivejit nuppiidasaska ja sávdnji dego jávká. Reaskka šaddá sojahit garrasit ja dat gáibida ávdnasis ollu máŋgga eará duoji ektui. Duddjon buori ávdnasis seastá áiggi ja loahppaboađus lea nanus.

Ruovttu- dahje váimmusguovlluin jođedettiin Sámmol, okta artihkalčálliinlea huksen ipmárdusa iežas birrasis (vrd. Guttorm 2017: 168). Reaskaávdnasiid su mielas gánneha ohcat báikkiin, gos soahki fatná guhkkin ja jođánit. Soahki dárbbaša lieggasa, doarvái láktasa ja fámolaš eatnama guhkkut ja gassut. Dakkár šaddilis biras gávdno máŋgii johkalegiin bealdduid ravddain dahje eará báikkiin; doppe soahki šaddá fatnat ja maŋŋelabbos bálle šaddat ráfis. Johka obalohkái buktá ja fállá láktasa, ja biebmá eatnama ja šattuid. Johkalegiide geassige joavdá árabut. Guhkit geasi áigge soahki maid bálle šaddat.

Sámmola áddjá lávii ruovttubáikkistis Anárjot siste fuolahit, ahte dat muorat maid son lei válljen ávnnasmuorran, besse šaddat jođánit nana ja njulges ávnnasmuorran. Go lei gávdnan vuogas sajis buori muoraid boahttevaš ávnnasin, de son sáhtii njáskat lahkosis eará muoraid ja rissiid vai ávnnasmuoraide bázii fápmu šaddat ja gassut. Son anii áiggi sihkkarastit ahte lagaš eatnamat fálle duddjomii heivvolaš ávnnasmuoraid. Mihkubáikkis dego earáge johkalegiid meahcceguovlluin lávejit gávdnot guhkit ja gasit soagit. Dat gilvalit beziiguin dahje eará muoraiguin olahit beaivečuovgga ja šaddet njuolgadeabbon. Eanan maid lea fámolaš. Ná soagit šaddet guhkibun maid loktosit ja goikásit báikkiin. Johkalegiid jođánit gasson soahkemuorra maid alibuččas, váibá (mieđiha) ja gierdá sojaheami buorebut. Dat lea nannosit ávnnas go geassešattu mearri giđđašattu ektui lea stuorit nugo maid omd. ordaravdda sogiin (Laiti 2023; Allely ja earát 2000: 20-26).

Go vuolgá ávnnastit lea buorre čuovvut goas lea šaddi mánnu. Ovdalaš áiggi leat olbmot atnán dehálažžan ávnnastit šaddi mánus (Persen ja Geving 1999: 34). Ávdnasiid vieččadettiin Sámmol váldá daid dan veardde ahte leat doarvái, go muhtumin maŋŋel gávnnaha, ahte ávnnas ii heivege duddjomii nu bures. Reastamuoraid ja -ovssiid son geassá lagabui orrunsaji boaldámuššan. Soagi Sámmol sahe fiellolâganin, das vállje reaskaávdnasa man sojaha varasin. Lea álkit dakkaviđe, dađistaga sojahit varas muora. Go ávdnasa lea liggen ja sojahan heivvolaš reaskka hápmái, de son stáhpalastá badjelmearálaš

ávnnasfielluid, vai áibmu johtá daid gaskka eaige beasa guohpput ja mieskat. Reaskka lea buorre diktit ráfis sajáiduvvat.

Giđđadálvve lea čuvggodan ja beaivváš badjánan dan mađi ahte fitná bivvala bealde. Lea vel muohta mii lea álgán suddat. Bievllat leat ihtán dieváide, bovnnaide ja vilttiide, dohko gosa beaivi báitá. Beaivet lea liekkas ja ihkku buolaš. Lea cugŋuid áigi ja álki johtit. Šaddi mánu áigge árraiđida Sámmol ovttas lagaš fulkkiiguin láve njeaidit ja geassit muoraid geassebáikái. Seammás son rádjá báhkiid maid gávdná ja oaidná duddjon veara. Dán muttus jagi gánneha njeaidit ja fievrridit ávdnasiid álkivuođa dihte. Ávdnasat leat dábálaččat báhkit maid son de sahe ja gohpá omd. gukseávnnasin. Daid son vuoššasta sáltečázis, vuoiddasta bajil liimma ja bidj goikat, vuordit asttu ja duddjonmiela.

Sámi jagiáiggit ja lihkadeapmi daid mielde - digaštallan

Johan Turi čilge iežas muitalusgirjjistis sámiid birra, mo boazosápmelaččain leat iešguđege báikkis ja jagiáiggis sierra doaimmat (Turi 2010 [1910]). Ollu lea rievdan dan rájes go son čálii iežas muitalusaid, muhto jagiáiggit ain gávdnojit. Go eallá ja bargá dihto guovllus, de olmmoš ain hábme guovllu ja guovlu fas olbmo.

Dádjadeapmi vásáhusaid bokte

Dádjadeapmi lea čadnon daguide, ja daguid bokte hábmejit maid dieđu guovlluin ja guovlluid geavaheamis. Dát leat mihtilmasat váimmusguvlui. Dát lea maid mii oaivvildat váimmusguovlun. Nilsen gázzi oidnet ahte eatnamat ja čázádagat leat oasit mat vuođuštit olbmuid dádjadeami máilmmis, ja min birgema ja doaibmama dáppe (Nilsen ja earát 2022: 9). Nu miige oaidnit go dás govvidat, man láhkai geavahit váimmusguovllu. Mii áddet Nilsen gácce dás ahte lea doaibma ja olbmuid vásáhusat báikkis, mii mearrida mo mii áddet dan, ja dat rievddada jagiáiggiid mielde. Dán áigge orrot sápmelaččat juohke guovllus, gávpogiin, olggobeale Sámi, muhto juoga nu láhkai guorrasit máŋgasat dasa ahte sis lea gullevašvuohta dan guvlui, gos sin máttut leat orron ja ain orrot, ja de leat dat sin váimmusguovllut maid.

Guttorm gázzi ge vásihedje AIDA-prošeavttas ahte lea dárbu plánet daguid jagiáiggiid mielde, eandalii dalle go galgá ávnnastit (Guttorm ja earát 2022: 87-91).

Čohkken-, ávnnastan- ja duddjonáiggit

Mii oaidnit ahte čakčageassi ja čakča lea čohkkenáigi, go fal atná ávkin iežas lagaš guovlluid. Dalle lea lunddolaš ovdamearkka dihte njuovadit, goas de maiddái sáhttá háhkat ávdnasiid čikŋagápmagiidda, čikŋagálssohiidda ja beaskkaide. Skápma ja dálvvi oaidnit áigin goas duddjo, ja ollugat váll-jejit omd. duddjot náhkkebiktasiid (beaskkaid, gápmagiid, gálssohiid jna.), go dalle daid eanemus dárbbaša. Skábman leat sámi márkanat, maidda olbmot duddjojit sihke alcceseaset ja vuovdima várás. Giđđadálvve joatka-šuvvet sámi doalut, maidda olbmot maiddái ráhkkanit.

Astu

Gearggusvuođa sáhttá áddet nu, ahte olbmot fertejit heivehit iežaset eallima jagiáiggiide: Váldet govttolaččat dan maid dárbbašit, ja dasa lassin atnet dan áiggi mii gáibiduvvo. Nu čatná olmmoš de oktavuođaid eatnamiidda ja áigái. Min vásáhus lea ahte olmmoš čuovvu goas omd. meahcis lea vejolaš háhkat ávdnasiid, ja makkár áiggis duojár ferte astat leat guovllus ja áimmahuššat omd. gápmasiid, muorraávdnasiid ja feattáid. Nugo namuheimmet ovdalis, de gápmasiid vurke amaset dat suvrut. Dás sáhttá geahčča t olbmo astama. Muh-tin bargguid ferte vuoruhit dalle go daiguin lea bargamin. Astu addá maid de fas vejolašvuođa hutkat.

Njozet bargan, nugo boahtá ovdan min ovdamearkkain, addá vejolaš-vuođa jurdilit, lávkkiid mielde buđaldit, ovdalgo joavdá mearrádussii ja bohtosii. Dat addá maid árvvu bargui. Dás ovdalis artihkalčálli Iŋgá govve, mo son ráhkkana Johkamohki márkaniidda, mo váldá vuhtii iešguđet árvvuid ráhkkananbarggus, nugo divodit gárvvuid, gudnejahttit vádjolan fulkkiid, ja mo atná áiggi daidda.

Barggu bokte nanne hutkama

Dieđu ja máhtu vurke gieđaiguin ja dat vulget dahkamis, mii gáibida hárjá-neami ja áiggi. Ávnnasteapmi lea eanet go háhkat ávdnasiid, daningo oažžu čađa gaskka ođđa vásáhusaid vaikko gearddu ha dihto bargovuogi. Gearddu heami bottus de sáhttá fuomášit maid háliida ovddasguvlui duddjot, ávnnasteapmi lea addán asttu árvvoštallat vejolašvuođaid. Hutkáivuođa luondu lea ahte jurdagat (ideat), čovdosat sáhttet bohciidit go lea boddu, ja nu sáhttá oaidnit mátkki ja ávdnasiid ohcama jur danin.

Gullevašvuohta ja oktavuohta duoji olis

Gullevašvuohta lea guovddášdoaba go lea sáhka duojis, sámi biktasiin ja muđui eará sámi árbevieruin. Gullevašvuođa sohkii oaidná bures go Sámis heajastallet, go leat konfirmašuvnnat ja sullalas doalut. Go sápmelaččat deaivvadit iešguđet meassuin dahje doaluin, de hárjánan čalbmi álkit oaidná guđe guvlui omd. juohke gávttehas gullá. (gč. Idivuoma 2017; Guttorm 2006). Nilsen gázzi čállet ahte sámegielas ja das mo olbmot govahallet guovlluid, boahtá ovdan gullevašvuođa dehálaš árvu (Nilsen ja earát 2022: 21). Mii oaidnit seamma láhkai go geahččat guovllu ja duoji. Sápmelaččaide duodji lea oinnolaš gullevašvuođamearka ja gulahallangaskaoapmi, nugo Magga čállá (2022). Go olbmot ráhkkanit meassuide, nugo Johkamohki márkaniidda, de lea hállu searvat dán gullevašvuhtii. Gákti erenoamážit speadjalastá geavaheaddji ja goarru persovnnalašvuođa ja geográfalaš gullevašvuođa. (gč. Magga 2022; Somby 2014). Duodjeárbevieruid gaskkusteapmi dáhpáhuvvá dávjá ruovttuin dahje lagaš báikegottiin. Dákkár gaskkusteapmi geavvá njuovžilabbot váimmusbirrasis.

Loahpaheapmi

Jagiáiggit váikkuhit váimmusguvlui, ja olbmot lihkadit daid mielde. Olbmot leat válljen bargat dihto ávdnasiiguin dihto jagiáiggis danin, go áigodat heive ávdnasa áimmahuššamii buoremusat. Ovdamearkka dihte gámasduddjomis lea ovdamunni buolašáigodagas goarrut go vuhtiiváldá earenoamážit ávdnasa ješvuođa ja goikkehiid dárbbu.

Váimmusguovllus leat lahkosis uonddu attáldagat, riggodagat nugo guolit, muorjjit, muorat, suoinnit, ealáhat elliide ja eará dárbašat nuvttá, ja danne olmmoš lihkada guovllus daid maŋis. Doppe bohciidit vásáhusat maid de sáhttá gaskkustit ovddasguvlui. Muto váimmusguovllu sáhttá maid oaidnit metaforan dasa ahte olbmos leat čanastagat namuhuvvon guovlluide. Son ain guoddá máhtuid ja dieđuid maid atná árvvus ja maid vuođul háliida duddjot ja nu geavahit iežas kreatiivavuođa. Muoras lea váimmus mii veahkeha dan šaddat ja ahtanuššat, ja váibmosa haga ii veajáše muorra šaddat. Seamma láhkai jurddašat duddjoma hárrái. Juos mis lea iežamet váimmusguovlu man ollái gullet vásáhusat, máhtut ja dieđut, de mii ovdánahttit duoji. Giehtaváibmosiin njávkat,

iskat, dovdat ja guldalit ávdnasiid veahkkálagaid suorbmagežiiguin. Min persovnnalaš lihkadeamit buot áiccuiguin ja olles rupmašiin guovlluid, elliid ja ávdnasiid ektui šaddet dehálaččat. Dovddut čatnet olbmo birrasii ja dien láhkai dat sajáidahttet olbmuid eallinmáilbmái (Frykman 2012: 39).

Olbmot oidnet vejolašvuođaid maid Sámi guovlu buktá ávdnasiid ja eará buriid háhkamis. Go olbmot lihkadit guovllus, nugo mii evttohat ja govvidat min jahkegierddus, ja go sii guldalit jagiáiggiid rievdama ja heivehit duddjoma dasa, de ožžot vásáhusa. Dainna lágiin huksejuvvo máhtolašvuohta ja diehtu, ja danne gohčodat dan váimmusguovlun.

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Njálmmálaš gáldu

Laiti, Sami [2023] Anár. Jearahallan Valkeapää Samuel

Valkeapää, Nils-Henrik [2021] Heahttá. Jearahallan Valkeapää Samuel

Abstract: Making duodji through seasons
In this article we examine how landscapes, harvesting materials and making of duodji appears along different seasons. We have especially emphasized harvesting natural materials, due to our own experiences of the necessity to follow the change of the seasons. Our starting point and place is the area where we live, in northernmost Sápmi where woods, marshes and landscapes are nearby.

The idea of this article is to highlight different kinds of seasonal harvesting and duodji making. In such matter a bond is formed between human beings, animals, lands, nature and relationships between people connected to the activities. Our questions are:

1. What kind of meaning seasons have for harvesting and making duodji, and how does it appear?
2. What kind of relations are people composing for lands, harvested materials, animals and to others in the making of duodji?

In this article we use seasons as a method in approaching the issue. The paper starts with the circle of seasons, as our main figure in discussions of the issue. Following with argumentation of conceptions ávnnastit (harvesting) and duddjot (making duodji), where we describe some examples how we experience impact of seasons on making duodji and how bonds appear between lands, areas, seasons and making.

The circle of seasons displays what we have chosen to call váimmus-guovlu (area where the knowledge is developed through experience/core area). Váimmusguovlu is the place that has been and still is an area where people migrate, function, and manage, as well as develop knowledge and skills.

Why people have chosen to work with certain materials certain seasons is because different seasons are more convenient for taking care of various natural materials. For instance, in the making of fur clothing it is better to do it on winter time with the cold temperature, that takes care of the materials

peculiarity, and also because it is a season when people require it. In the váimmusguovlu there are natural resources around and nearby, such as fish, berries, trees, grass, food for animals and other necessities that people do not need to buy, therefore people migrate for the natural recourses. That is the place where people get the experience and which can be conveyed further on. However, váimmusguovlu can also be seen as a metaphor for people who have bonds and connection to the earlier mentioned places, and they still carry on the valued knowledge and skills they want to use for making duodji and creativeness.

Keyword: natural materials, sámi seasons, váimmusguovlu, experience

Art in the Outer Fields: Márkomeannu as a Site of Indigenous Artivism

Erika de Vivo

Introduction

Since 2002, at the end of every July, the fields around the Gállogieddi open-air museum have resonated with music and sound, laughter and rejoicing. From dusk till dawn, the meadow by the boulder comes to life as different languages come together. Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, and English blend into each other on this side of Sápmi, but one language rises above them all. Once again, after decades of oppression and marginalization, Sámi words reverberate loud and clear around the fields of Gállogieddi. From the meadow by the gállu—the boulder—the sound of Sámi ripples through the Márku hills as words are carried by the wind. Today, Sámi languages can not only be heard in Stuornjárga but also be read on both temporary and permanent signposts all across the Márku.[1] At Gállogieddi, the name of the festival, Márkomeannu, is carved on the tympanum of the permanent wooden stage that now towers over the meadow, next to the old farmhouse (fig. 1). The passage from the previous temporary stage to the now-permanent wooden stage structure epitomizes the strength the festival has gained over the years as an institution that, despite being temporary by nature, is now a lasting feature of the local cultural—and physical—landscape. Built on the fields of a museum valorizing the local (in)-tangible culture, the permanent stage reveals that festival itself has become part of the Márku-Sámi cultural heritage Márkomeannu celebrates.

1 Derived from the Norwegian markebygd (the outlying fields), the terms Márku-Sámi and márku (Norwegian: marka) can be both proper names and generic expressions. "Márku-Sámi" refers to Sámi people dwelling in márku settlements or to those who can trace their ancestry to such settlements. As a generic noun, the uncapitalized word márku is a relational term—originating from coastal villages' perspective—referring to settlements situated in the inland areas of the northern Nordlánnda/Nordland and southern-central Romssa/Troms counties. These settlements are "up in the woods and fields" far from the coastal areas dominated by Norwegian-speaking communities. In the past, they were characterized by a mixed-subsistence economy based on small-scale farming and seasonal fishing (Storm 1993). Márku can be translated in English as "outer fields." Although there are numerous márku-Sámi communities, Márku is used as a proper name in this article, referring to the area and the local Sámi culture of the inland Stuornjárga peninsula.

Fig. 1: The Márkomeannu stage, from a concert with ISÁK at the festival in 2023. Photo: Erika De Vivo.

Since the festival's earliest years, art has been a privileged means of cultural expression at Márkomeannu. Through art, the festival has been able to celebrate articulations of the local Márku-Sámi culture and protest against hegemonic and essentialistic understandings of culture and identity. In this article, I focus on the 2010 Márkomeannu art project *Lihkahusak*. As part of this project, large, purposely created artistic-linguistic banners and smaller signs, along with art installations in Márku-Sámi, the local variant of the Duortnus language,[2] were positioned in the festival area and in the wider local Márku region. I view *Lihkahusak* as an example of the important role that artivism[3] —that is, artistic activism—plays in Márkomeannu. The *Lihkahusak* project has not only contributed to the valorization of local history, language, and culture at the festival but also shown that art can function as an infrastructure for language revitalization. More specifically, art can create sites where individual

and collective identities can be negotiated while being grounded in Indigenous epistemologies; this makes the Márkomeannu festival a privileged site of what can be described by the Sámi term *searvedoaibma* or "communal (inter)-actions" (Danbolt et al., 2022).

Artivism at Márkomeannu

Márkomeannu is a relatively young festival, having been founded in 1999 by the members of the local Sámi youth association, Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak. Within two decades, the festival has transformed from a local Márku-Sámi youth gathering to an important cultural institution in the Sámi cultural landscape, while remaining true to itself as a central meeting place that presents Sámi culture on Sámi terms.[4]

When the festival founders started Márkomeannu, their aim was to affirm the uniqueness and inherent value of the local Márku-Sámi culture, as opposed to the Norwegian stigmatizing attitudes. Despite the changes brought by time to the festival, this positive approach has persisted, and the festival still revolves around the local Márku-Sámi culture, although it has now acquired a more pan-Sámi character. Márkomeannu has proved to be crucial in the valorization of the local Márku-Sámi intangible cultural heritage—a process that started long before the festival itself. Like institutions such as Várdobáiki, the Gállogieddi museum, and Márkomának Sámi mánáidgárdi, Márkomeannu is situated in the wake of the Sámi struggle for recognition and epitomizes local indigenous efflorescence in an area where Sámi cultures were heavily stigmatized. The creation of Márkomeannu and its annual celebration established the formation and continued development of a community where predominantly Sámi participants positively engage with Sámi cultures, challenging stereo-

2 Duortnus Sámi (also known as Torne Sámi) is a variety of the North Sámi language. Linguists named it after the area where some of its speakers lived: the Duortnus lake, known in Swedish as Torneträsk (on the Swedish side of Sápmi). Duortnus Sámi comprises various sub-varieties, including Márku-Sámi and Čohkkiras-Sámi. Márku-Sámi bears strong similarities to Čohkkiras-Sámi while displaying numerous features of the Lule-Sámi language, which is spoken in the nearby Tysfjord cultural area on the Norwegian side of Sápmi (Kejonen 2020).

3 Artivism is an intersection of art and activism that dynamically connects critical imagination with design and politically engaged forms of protest. It aims to foster engagement in socio-political issues, raise new questions, and assign new meanings to artistic practices (Duncombe & Lambert 2021).

4 The importance of indigenous festivals lies in their capacity to provide opportunities for what Philips defines as "fuller indigenous social, political and economic participation on indigenous terms" (Philips 2010).

typical and essentializing tropes that curtail Sámi Indigenous and collective agency and hinder the preservation of local articulations of Sámi identities.

In the Márku, as in the rest of Sápmi, the pervasive effects of colonial processes have been met with resistance in various shapes and forms. In recent decades, Sámi artistic expressions—often politically engaged—have gained a prominent role in the articulation of indigenous Sámi resistance against the colonial overtones that still permeate Nordic societies. Art has emerged as a powerful instrument of protest in Sápmi (Stephansen 2017; Bladow 2019) as well as in other indigenous contexts (Martineau & Ritskes 2014). In Sápmi, art has become an arena for Indigenous contestations; as such, it often addresses thorny topics with strong visual language, resulting in the expression "artivism" becoming popular in Fennoscandinavian academic literature (Sandström 2020). Márkomeannu provides a privileged venue for politically engaged art, and the festival has gained a reputation as an institution that offers both well-established and emerging artists the opportunity to exhibit their work in a supportive, culturally sensitive, and community-oriented Sámi environment.

Looking at Márkomeannu from a diachronic perspective, it becomes clear that the boundaries between different artistic expressions are often blurred during this festival. Music performances, film screenings, visual and material art exhibitions, performing arts, duodji, markets, and food are all inextricable aspects of Márkomeannu, with each contributing to make the festival an experience that—while it lasts—encompasses all aspects of daily life. These artistic expressions are often provocative, connected as they are with activism and characterized by political overtones. The same is true for the main analytical focus of this article, the *Lihkahusak* project from 2010. Although *Lihkahusak* took place 8 years before my first visit to the festival site at Gállogieddi, the traces of the project were still highly visible in the form of a huge steel sign reading *Čirga*, which was mounted next to the museum's toilets. My curiosity about the linguistic meaning and function of the *Čirga* sign in the landscape was the entry point for my examination of the *Lihkahusak* project. Since 2018, I have been researching the Márkomeannu festival, and I have undertaken several research fieldworks in this area. The present article is inspired by collaborative methodologies and a qualitative, ethnographic

approach based on ethnographic fieldwork, participant observation in the rural Márku context in Sápmi (2018–2023), and in-depth interviews. To collect information on the different signs included in the *Lihkahusak* project, I consulted archival materials (including the festival blog's posts, festival materials, and local newspapers) and carried out semi-structured interviews in Romsa/Tromsø with Sigbjørn Skåden, one of the festival founders, who was also one of the cultural workers that developed this project.[5]

The remainder of this article begins with a discussion of the history of the Márkomeannu festival, before zooming in on the 2010 *Lihkahusak*-project, with a special focus on how the installations affect the local linguistic landscape. Through a discussion of how the *Lihkahusak* banners and signs respond to the history of "toponymic colonization" (Helander 2009) in the Márku-Sámi region, I examine how this cultural-artistic activism is not only displayed but also negotiated, engaged with, and performed by both the local and the wider Sámi community, making the festival a site of *searvedoaibma* (Danbolt et al. 2022).

In the Meadow by the Boulder: Gállogieddi

For many festivals, the local context is the cornerstone of the event, with the location being both the material and symbolic basis of celebrations with a strong social dimension. This is the case for most Sámi festivals; thus, it comes as no surprise that Márkomeannu is celebrated in a place that holds symbolic meaning for the Márku-Sámi culture: Gállogieddi. When Márkomeannu began in 1999, the festival took place in Gamle Dyrskueplassen,[6] a convenient site near to the Evenášši/Evenes airport and the local main road, E10,

5 During the interview with Skåden, I resorted to photo-elicitation (Richard & Lahman 2015) to address specific art installations. Photographs helped my interlocutor to visualize and contextualize the installation. I then addressed these materials through the lenses of cultural anthropology and linguistic landscape studies, as delineated by Landry and Bourhis (1997) and developed by Cenoz and Gorter (2006), Gorter (2018), and Puzey (2009). I also relied on spatial analysis, as outlined by Cocq et al. (2020). Such an approach was essential in understanding the meaning-making process behind the linguistic signs pertaining to the *Lihkahusak* project.

6 The strong farming tradition in the area is symbolized by the calves roaming around the festival area until the very last moment before the festival opening. This connection was renewed in the 2004 festival poster, where the symbol of the museum—representing Gállogieddi—and a cow are the only elements in the image. The very name of the festival site, Gamle Dyrskueplassen, evokes the small-scale farming dimension of the once local mixed-subsistence economy (see Storm 1993).

with easy access to transportation and facilities, including bus connections to Romsa/Tromsø, Áhkanjárga/Narvik and Hárstták/Harstad. The nascent festival was located on summer grazing land for cows and sheep belonging to a local farmer, who allowed Stuornjárgga Sámenuorak to assemble a temporary stage for the duration of the festival. Before the stage could be erected, the area had to be cleaned up after the cows. The local farmer agreed to move the cattle on the festival weekend, on the condition that the association members would restore everything to its pre-festival state—a promise the members maintained, demonstrating their trustworthiness. The opportunity granted to the association of having an organized gathering at Gamle Dyrskueplassen shows that Stuornjárga Sámenuorat enjoyed the support of at least part of the community. Despite some community members openly opposing the festival, what it represented, and what it wanted to show (i.e., local Sámi identity and culture in the public sphere), many others showed support by offering help, land, and entertainment and by buying tickets for themselves and for relatives and friends. In the late 1990s, the Márku socio-cultural context was characterized by frictions within the local community over the public display of the area's Sámi identity. In that context, just showing up at a gathering with a marked Sámi profile such as Márkomeannu was an open statement recognizing the value of Márku-Sámi culture and the importance of having an event celebrating the local Sámi culture, language, and practices. As in other márku-sámi areas, farming has had a pivotal role in shaping the Stuornjárga's Márku way of being Sámi (Skåden 2020: 51).

Despite the difficulties involved in organizing an event such as a music festival, Márkomeannu enjoyed lasting success, and soon Gamle Dyrskueplassen was no longer a suitable location to host the expanding festival. Talks were initiated between the festival staff and local institutions to identify a suitable location for holding Márkomeannu and its growing public. The choice soon fell on Gállogieddi, a Márku-Sámi open-air museum[7] tucked away on the hills of inner Stuornjárga. The idea of moving the festival from an easily accessible

7 In 1990, the local Sámi association Iinná ja Biras Sámiid Searvi/Hinnøy og Omegn Sameforening (IBSS), established in 1977, worked with the then-owner of the old and dilapidated Gállogieddi farm to restore the long-abandoned buildings and turn them into an open-air museum celebrating Márku-Sámi history and heritage.

and ready-to-use area to a more secluded and less accessible location on one of the gently rolling foothills of the Márku may seem counterintuitive; but, as Sigbjørn Skåden stated during an interview, the choice of Gállogieddi was grounded in the cultural value embodied by the farm and museum:

> [Gállogieddi is] a place that is close to our identity. Even if it is a bit [of an] unpractical place for a festival. […] It was a way to introduce the festival guests to our local history. And, also, local peoples were able to feel connected [to the festival through its location]. (Skåden, interview, 14/2/2019)

Gállogieddi was chosen as the festival site for its intrinsic value in local Sámi history, as it holds an important place in the symbolic geography of the local landscape. The open-air museum is a key cultural point of reference for the local people: Its buildings and collections provide tangible historical evidence of a local way of being Sámi that does not correspond to the stereotypical and homogenizing image of the Sámi people as reindeer herders (Mathisen 2004). Moreover, the members of Stuornjárga Sámenuorak had an emotional attachment to Gállogieddi, rooted in personal relationships and family connections. The farm had belonged to the ancestors of some of the first festival organizers, many of whom were the children of (or otherwise related to) cultural activists engaged in the preservation of local culture, who played a pivotal role in preserving the abandoned farm and transforming it into a museum. Many of the festival founders had worked as guides at Gállogieddi, had relatives and friends working there during the summer, and/or had visited it in their school years. Furthermore, the old and once-abandoned farmyard had been the site of many youthful adventures and a sort of historical playground for local kids. To the festival founders, these personal connections of individual and shared experiences and family ties made Gállogieddi the location of choice for a festival celebrating the local Sámi heritage and culture.

Lihkahusak: Movements in the Márku

In 2010, Márkomeannu hosted an art installation that was a programmatic language project and, ultimately, a language protest designed by the Márku-

Sámi author and cultural worker Sigbjørn Skåden, photographer Kenneth Hætta, artist Hilde Skancke Pedersen, and graphic designer Sigurd Kristiansen. Skåden, who comes from the Márku-Sámi village of Lántdievvá/Planterhaug, not far from Gállogieddi, curated the linguistic part of the project, which was entitled *Lihkahusak*. The project's two sets of installations included a selection of words that were transformed into pieces of art made of recycled or common materials, as well as written texts that were later printed on boards, banners, posters, and signs and installed across the Márku. Together, the installations contributed to the local linguistic landscape, concretizing the (Márku-)Sámi language and culture-specific concepts. The title of the project, *Lihkahusak*, is the Márku-Sámi version of the North Sámi word *lihkadusat*, meaning "movements"—a culturally charged concept with origins in the Laestadian milieux. Associated with intense spiritual experiences, *lihkadusat* refers to the uncontrolled body motions that Pulkkinen (2005: 197) considered powerful physical and emotional semi-ecstatic manifestations that were regarded as the physical manifestations of "sensations of Grace."[8] First recorded among Laestadius' parishioners in 1845, lihkadusat appear to have been quite common in the early stages of Laestadianism; however, according to Pulkkinen, as the years passed and the congregation grew, these phenomena became less common and less marked (Pentikäinen 2005), although they did not disappear.[9] By naming the project *Lihkahusak*, using the Márku-Sámi spelling, Skåden openly referred to the Lutheran Pietistic movement through which *lihkahusak* emerged. In doing so, he affirmed the connection between the Márku and its cultural and spiritual heritage. At the same time, Skåden endowed this term and the concept it enshrines with new meanings, as he explained during an interview:

8 Especially in its earlier phases, Laestadianism contained many features of typical charismatic and pietistic movements: the primacy of the Bible, the stress on the Lutheran doctrine of justification, visions, uncontrolled body motions inspired by divine Grace, revelations, trance preaching, glossolalia, and other ecstatic phenomena (Ruohomäki 2009).

9 Italian traveller Brocchieri witnessed an episode of *lihkadusat* during Christmas of 1930 in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino: He described this episode in his travelogue Dall'uno all'altro polo (Brocchieri 1934).

> The title *Lihkahusak* comes from the Sámi word for *rørelse* (Norwegian) or…in English, I guess, "religious tremors." The Laestadians, they go into kind of a religious trance. That's called the *lihkahusak*. So, we were, we were kind of comparing the festival experience and the joyous trance of people in the festival with the kind of joyous trance of the Laestadians (Skåden, interview, 13/8/22).

Laestadianism was introduced in the Márku region around 1848.[10] Although this spiritual movement is no longer actively practiced by many members of the community today, and especially not by the younger generations, Laestadianism is still regarded as a historically relevant part of the local cultural heritage, as demonstrated by the Gállogieddi museum's display of Laestadian texts. Skåden articulated this connection as follows: "[Laestadianism] is a cultural heritage for most of us. Most of us come from those families who were Laestadians" (interview, 13/8/22). By choosing the cultural-specific and meaning-loaded term *lihkahusak* as the name of the Márkomeannu festival's 2010 art installation, Skåden played with words, amusingly bestowing Márkomeannu with an almost spiritual aura. He compared the excitement and joy sparked by the festival with the ecstatic episodes manifested by many during Laestadian preaching:

> In our families, we may no longer experience the *lihkahusak* tremors as a religious thing, but we experience it more at places like Márkomeannu…that kind of joy and ecstasy. So, that was the idea. (Skåden, interview, 13/8/22)

The *Lihkahusak* project was a homage to local Sámi language and culture. It was also a highly visual and provocative form of linguistic protest against local

10 The well-established network of contacts and family bonds between the small-scale Márku farmers and the reindeer-tending Sámi who spent their summers in Stuornjárga provided a channel for disseminating the revivalist movement from the pulpit of Laestadius in Gárasavvon/Karesuando or the meeting house in Guovdageaidnu to the turf huts in the coastal inland settlements of the Márku (see Bjørklund 1988). The first known contact between the people of Stuornjárga and Læstadianism dates to 1848, when Jerpe Gaddja Karen, a Sámi girl from Rivttàk/Gratangen, visited her family in Gárasavvon for her confirmation. There, she was "awakened," receiving the Grace. Upon returning home, she introduced her fellow villagers to Laestadianism (Kristiansen 2009; Myrnes, Olsen & Myrnes Balto 2006). According to Kristiansen, from the 1850s to the 1870s, most of the followers of Laestadianism in the Márku were in the Sámi community; however, by the late 1860s, an increasing number of Norwegians chose to embrace Laestadianism as well. According to local traditions in Stuornjárga, "Christianity came with the reindeer herders" (Minde 1998: 16); it is worth noting that, among Laestadians, "Christianity" is often synonymous with Laestadianism.

attitudes opposing the public engagement with (Márku-)Sámi language and culture.

Buorragit Boahtin

In mid-July 2010, just before the festival began, signs started popping up in strategic, highly visible positions around the Márku and as far as Hárstták and and Áhkanjárga. Márkomeannu's 2010 producer, Ellen Berit Dalbakk, worked together with Sigbjørn Skåden and Liza Amundsen to mount 46 signs and seven banners[11] at preselected outdoor and indoor sites.[12] The road signs and banners were similar in concept but varied in material: Against a white or neutral background, colorful curlicues crocheted Sámi words and sentences in materials including plastic, hard paper, and metal. These signs punctuated the area with Sámi expressions by making Márku-Sámi visible in the local linguistic landscape, while also guiding people to Gállogieddi. As people traveled toward Márkomeannu, they were welcomed to the Márku-Sámi area and the festival site by boards with texts in Márku-Sámi that grew in number by the mile. A banner hanging on the E10 bridge at Elvemo even spelled it out directly: *buorragit boahtin*, welcome (Myrnes Balto 2010). The Elvemo bridge banner—which would have been seen by many, as it was placed on one of the few roads leading into the Márku—offers an insight into an unequivocal aspect of the *Lihkahusak* art project: As Skåden explained to me, each of the more than 50 monolingual Sámi text installations were not only meant to be visible but, even more importantly, site-specific and connected with the place in which they were set up, so that "the specific word on that poster or that banner would be connected to the place" and address this connection in Márku-Sámi. Thus, the sign next to Evenesvika's lovely bay read *Stunželáddu*—swimming pool—and the evocative sentence placed at the Evenášši airport said *doalvvo mu apmasiidda*—take me to strangers. While the meaning of the signs was probably lost to the majority of locals unfamiliar with the Sámi language, Sámi speakers would have easily grasped the puns and/or cultural "inside jokes" reproduced on the signs and banners.

11 The signs were relatively small (A2/16.5 x 23.4 inches and A1/23.4 x 33.1 inches) laminated boards. Much larger than the signs, the banners were made of a plastic-like cloth and were hung in highly visible locations. Given their dimension, they were visible from a distance.

12 Among the indoor locations in Hárstták, posters were hung at the Havnekafeen, Cafè de 4 Roser, Galleri NordNorge, Røkenes Gård and Gressholmen.

Describing the large plastic-cloth banners, Sigbjørn Skåden recalled the one he installed on the footbridge at Kanebogen, along the road to Harstad:

> We had a banner hanging over the bridge to Harstad. Maybe you went to Harstad and saw it. There is a bridge with a text that now says *Velkommen til Harstad* [Welcome to Harstad]. Before 2012, the bridge didn't say anything. We made a banner with something related to Harstad.[13] (Skåden, interview, 13/8/22)

One of the project's signs was positioned on an iconic telephone booth in Harstad's city center, located right next to the ferry dock, where dozens of tourists and locals transit every day. The stark contrast between the bright red of the telephone booth and the white sign made the latter stand out, highly visible in the grey rainy days preceding the festival. According to Skåden, this sign, whose short text, *Ringe siidii,* simply meant "call home," was inspired by the Hollywood movie *E.T.* (1982). The telephone booth sign, which was both simple and effective, had the power to make Márku-Sámi visible while also familiarizing locals with the presence of the Sámi language and with daily words in this language. This element of linguistic activism recurred on the festival's Facebook page. In 2010, the posts on the official festival account all closed with the introduction of the "daily Sámi word," followed by a Norwegian translation. These words related to the contents in the Facebook posts, and the festival's followers were encouraged to learn the words—one each day—to enrich their Sámi vocabulary. The words included everyday phrases and festival-specific terms, including *nuorra* (young), *oaidnalit!* (see you!), *Ruoŧa bealde Sámis* (Swedish side of Sápmi), and *Prográmmagihpa* (program folder).

If posting Sámi words on the festival social media page was a relatively immediate act of linguistic activism, hanging banners and setting up posters required a long preparation time, beyond the selection of words and locations. Since the signs were to be positioned in both private and public locations, the festival producer had to apply to the relevant institutions to gain permission to carry out this performative site-specific art project.

13 The banner referring to the town of Hárstták/Harstad read "Ođđa nagir boahtá."

The Márkomeannu 2010 producer, Ellen Berit Dalbakk, had to ask for permission from the municipality and other offices to put banners and signs in public spaces. As Skåden explained:

> As producer, she had to communicate with 100 different institutions and people to get to put them up in different places, also in public places! It was quite a big work, actually, because we had to communicate about which places we would try to make place-specific kind of installations. And what each installation, each sentence, meant. (Skåden, interview, 13/8/22)

The widespread reach of the *Lihkahusak* project was evident in Tom Inge Andersen's article about the project in the local Norwegian newspaper Harstad Tidende, with the evocative title: "Márko-kunst inntar Harstad" (Márku art takes over Harstad) (Andersen 2010). Featuring an interview with Sigbjørn Skåden, the article's tagline read: "This year, the cultural festival Márkomeannu is visible far beyond the borders of Evenes and Skånland" (Andersen 2010, author's translation). This line illustrates the purpose of the *Lihkahusak* project and the power of Márkomeannu in propagating (Márku-) Sámi culture and language within Norwegian-dominated geographic, cultural, and symbolic contexts.

The *Lihkahusak* project established this language visibility in places where—just a few decades earlier—it would have been unimaginable to speak Sámi or publicly display Sámi language and culture. As a consequence of Norwegianization, since the 1940s, most Sámi-speaking parents in the Márku-Sámi settlements of inner Stuornjárga not only actively relegated Sámi language and identity to the private sphere but also socialized their children in Norwegian. The underlying language ideology of that time viewed Sámi languages as a source of shame and Norwegian as a language that would ensure better opportunities in life. Furthermore, because of the heavy stigma associated with anything Sámi, in coastal areas and towns such as Áhkanjárga or Hárstták—which became major local economic centers following the immigration of people from all over Norway with various ethnic backgrounds—the Norwegian(ized) majority had long displayed negative attitudes against anything Sámi. It was this historical background that made *Lihkahusak* break new ground in ways that made even the newspapers take notice.

Báhkiniid Beassi

Traveling from Gállogieddi to Ráhka/Bjerkvik today, some 15 km from Evenášši airport, people encounter a bilingual sign carrying the Sámi and Norwegian toponyms: Rádna/Bogen. This recognition of the village's Sámi identity and cultural heritage on the official road sign is a relatively new element in the local linguistic landscape. As a widespread practice, Norwegian authorities had wiped out Sámi place names from maps and official documents in an attempt to obliterate local Sámi identities. Sámi scholar Kaisa Rautio Helander defined this practice as "toponymic colonization" (2009), in her development of Harley's concept of "toponymic silencing" (2001). In many places, this pervasive form of colonization reinforced the negative stigma associated with Sámi cultures and contributed to pushing Sámi identities of places and peoples further away from the public sphere. At the same time, Sámi languages and customs were actively forgotten, as many people did not want to be associated with their ancestors' cultural heritage and did not want their children to grow up facing all the challenges Norwegian society posed to Sámi people. The inner-fjord coastal settlement of Rádna/Bogen was one of the villages experiencing this form of cultural assimilation. In the early 2000s, local articulations of Sámi identity and culture in public were frowned upon, and the village's Sámi heritage and past were neither discussed nor validated, as many residents publicly self-identified as Norwegian.

Years before the bilingual Rádna/Bogen sign was presented, the team working on the *Lihkahusak* project decided to put up one of the project's banners on a main local road in this Norwegian(ized) settlement. The banner was hung on the eastward face of the bridge over the E10, just a few hundred meters from Bogen's Chapel. Anyone driving into the village from Bjerkvik would have seen the white standard bearing the words *báhkiniid beassi*. During my interview with Skåden, he explained the specific meaning of this intervention:

> *Báhkiniid beassi* means "heathens' nest." It's the breeding ground for heathens, or hive or something like that… And we made the banner because that's what the missionary Thomas von Westen said about that

> place when he first came there [in the early 1700s]. He said he'd never set his foot in such a heathen place, a Sámi heathens' den or something like that. You know, it was the place of heathens! And, of course, they did not like to be Sámi in that place. So it was like reminding them of the history of the place. Of course, people in Bogen didn't necessarily know what the banner meant, but it was of course explained to the authorities. I guess we applied to Evenes Kommune at the time, explaining what the sign said and why it was relevant… the heathens' nest. (Skåden, interview, 13/8/22)

The *báhkiniid beassi* installation created a stark contrast between the church's profile standing out behind the trees and the historical verdict of this place as "heathen" by the influential Norwegian missionary von Westen. Towering over the road, the banner established a connection between a part of the local past many would rather forget—and that many did not know about—and contemporary debates on the status of Sámi language and heritage in the region.

The Shape(s) of Words

Lihkahusak was not only the name of the art project but also one of the words Sigbjørn Skåden had selected to be transformed into highly visible art installations designed by Hilde Skancke Pedersen at the Márko-meannu festival site. Skancke Pedersen used different everyday materials to spell out words such as *njannji*, *čiermmis*, *áŋku*, čirga and *lihkahusak*. These large-scale word signs functioned as physical points of contact between the Márku-Sámi language and the festivalgoers. Each word installation was a world in itself, with the different installations being positioned in strategic places across the Gállogieddi meadow. Close to the stage, people's sight was captured by pieces of foam tubes in the Sámi colors of green, yellow, red, and blue, arranged to form the word *čiermmis* (goosebumps). *Čiermmis* was installed on a concrete shack, once the basement of a barn, which was later transformed in 2022 as part of a site-specific art installation/playground within the *naturlekeplassen* (nature playground) art project. While *Čiermmis* was positioned next to the festival's focal point,

> We had one [installation] down that was called Áŋku, which means "miss," "missing"... there's a better word for that: "longing." That's the one you could see when you walked out of the festival, down the hill, the last thing, kind of, so. The word was written using water bottles and empty water tanks ... stuff like that. (Skåden, interview, 13/8/22)

The Márku-Sámi words *čiermmis* and *áŋku*—materialized in two installations—expressed two opposite and complementary feelings the Márkomeannu festival is intended to evoke.

The installation with the word *njanni* comprised a large wooden swing painted light blue. As Skåden explained, *njannji* is the local word for "fling or sweetheart, like a passing fling or a summer romance" (interview, 13/8/22). In an interview with a journalist covering the *Lihkahusak* project, Skåden explained the specific nuance of this term in the following way: "At festivals, you meet many new people and maybe you also find a *njannji*. In Norwegian, you can probably call *njannji* a *festivalkjæreste* (festival girl/boyfriend)" (Nystad 2010; author's translation). Skåden recalled the discussion of the specific form of the installation: "it was supposed to have two swings, you know, so two people could sit within it, but it ended up with only one swing which is just ... well ... So, you had to sit there alone, being your own sweetheart" (Skåden, interview, 13/8/22).

The *Čirga* installation (fig. 2), which remains positioned next to the museum's toilet on the eastern border of the main festival area, is made of large iron panels that spell out the five-letter word. In this case too, the installation was meant to embed the language in the landscape, connecting festivalgoers with Márku-Sámi through art in a playful way. As Skåden explained, trying to hide a smile: "*čirga* means … diarrhea," which was "fittingly placed next to the toilets" (Skåden, interview, 13/8/22). Putting the installation next to the toilet was a fun invitation to festivalgoers to learn vernacular words that locals still use in their everyday life.

The word *čirga* was selected for Lihkahusak because it holds an extraordinary position in the linguistic fabric of the Márku:

Fig 2. *Čirga* installation in its current location at Gállogieddi. Foto: Erika De Vivo 2023

> This word is known in the village because they still use it also in Norwegian speech. It is one of the words, of some few words still kind of lingering in Norwegian speech. People that don't necessarily know that much Sámi anymore … but they have this word. That's one of them. Everybody knows it in the Márku, no matter how little Sámi you speak, you know that word. Čirga. (Skåden, interview, 13/8/22)

Through *Lihkahusak*, the Márkomeannu festival demonstrated that numerous locally specific Sámi terms are still in use, and that the "standard" North Sámi that most students learn is only one of the multiple Sámi languages and dialects that exist. *Lihkahusak* was designed to acquaint festivalgoers with "the local vocabulary that people coming from other areas wouldn't necessarily know. But maybe, by being at Márkomeannu, they would learn a number of local words at the same time, [including them] in their own vocabulary" (Skåden, interview, 13/8/22).

Linguistic Artivism in the Outer Fields

Most of the textual elements at Márkomeannu—from the menu to the festival waymarks, instructions, and so on—are intrinsically temporary: They are used and displayed only during the festival week and are then taken away and stored for the next year's festival. During the festival, however, the Sámi language dominates the visual field, establishing a Sámi profile not only within the festival and among the people connected with it but also throughout the area. Although the *Lihkahusak* installations were less transitory than other festival signs, they slowly disappeared over time. As of 2022, only *Čirga* is still present, even though many festivalgoers do not know the origin of the huge, eye-catching, iron sign by the toilets. It has transcended the temporal boundaries of the festival to become part of Gállogieddi's (linguistic) landscape.

In 2010, the same year as the *Lihkahusak* project, a new festival stage was built, not far from the museum's main house. As previously mentioned, this permanent stage—built to resemble a barn to fit harmonically into the landscape—bears the name of the festival in big capital letters carved out of colorful wooden panels. The sign "Márkomeannu" symbolically stands at the center of the stage's tympanum and dominates Gállogieddi from that vantage point. In 2012, a further permanent element was erected: the waymark (which was also reproduced on the festival poster for that year) (fig. 3). This wooden structure reports Sámi toponyms and the distance from Gállogieddi to each, with the name Gállogieddi positioned on a wooden plaque at the very top of the waymark. Today, the waymark has become one of the symbols of the festival and of the place it stands for (see De Vivo 2024 forthcoming).

The *Lihkahusak* project acquires further significance when examined in relation to the Márku's historical and political context and to the formal practices of linguistic assimilation and toponymic silencing long carried out by Norwegian institutions. Signposts, banners, posters, and signs are inscriptions in the territory, marking places and—through the official display of their names—demarcating the power of the authorities that installed them. Road signs in particular are expressions of authority: They symbolize the presence of the state in the landscape and constitute "a material object fixed in place, where the placename itself meets the landscape" (Puzey 2009: 1). Through their public display of Sámi words, the *Lihkahusak* banners, the Gállogieddi

Fig. 3: The waymark (as of 2022) located next to the main stage at the festival.
Photo: Erika de Vivo.

waymark, and the annual festival posters scattered across the region subvert the Norwegian toponymic silencing and linguistic assimilation by attributing authority to the indigenous Sámi language and place names. As Skåden pointed out, through *Lihkahusak*, "we wanted to make the Sámi language in the area visible. At the same time, it was also a protest against the language policy, the policy carried out there back then" (Skåden, interview, 13/8/2022).

The Márkomeannu-related artivism projects did not develop in a cultural vacuum: Activism in the Márku has had multiple manifestations prior to the establishment of the festival, including the establishment of a Sámi kindergarten, the introduction of Sámi language as a subject in local schools in the late 1980s, and the founding of the Márku-Sámi museum at Gállogieddi in 1990. Not everyone was supportive of these initiatives, and campaigns were organized promoting diverging interests from people in the community. This tense climate was closely connected to both the political debates on the presence or absence of Sámi place names in institutional settings and the public sphere at the time, and to the broader conflict over the acknowledgment of Skánik as a Sámi area.

During the early summer of 1999, a signature campaign in the villages of Nipen/Hoanttas and Kjønna/Vuopmi, regarded as Sámi by the Sámi association IBSS,[14] collected 50 signatures from locals who did not acknowledge the active use of Sámi languages in the area at the time of the campaign, and who did not want the area to be associated with anything Sámi (Mathisen 2002). On June 7, 1999, 50 signatures were sent to the local municipal council along with a short text bearing a telling heading: "Protest mot å likestille skilting på Norsk og Samisk" (Protest against equating signs in Norwegian and Sami).[15] Soon after, several homemade signs bearing Sámi toponyms such as

14 IBSS played a central role in forwarding the cause of Sámi place names in the region. In 1993, IBSS proposed the juxtaposition of Sámi and Norwegian names in official maps and road signs, as prescribed by the Norwegian Place-Names Act. After 3 years of harsh debates, commissions, and deliberations, a committee recommended giving equal value to Sámi and Norwegian names. This recommendation was to be brought to public attention through a referendum organized by the concerned municipality. Although the majority of voters supported the equation of Sámi and Norwegian place names, an appeal was filed by its opponents. This led to an administrative impasse that lasted until 2020, when the municipality formally became part of the Sámi administrative area, with consequent immediate equal value of Sámi and Norwegian languages.

15 Today, this document is held at the Arctic University Museum of Norway in Romsa, as part of the permanent exhibition *Sápmi—Becoming a Nation*.

Hoanttas (in Norwegian, Nipen) appeared in the dead of night all over Skánik/Skånland. A few months later, in October 1999, the event was followed up by the distribution of a leaflet to numerous households in the area. The leaflet, signed S.A.G. (Sámisk Aksjons Gruppe; in English, Sámi Action Group)—an anonymous local Sámi activist group—read: "This is just a small reminder of the villages in Skånland's actual place-names and identities" (Mathisen 2002: 81). Below this statement, readers found over 40 local Sámi toponyms with their Norwegian counterparts. These performative forms of linguistic protests, which took place during the same summer when Márkomeannu was first held, contributed to heated debated on Sámi toponyms in the Márku by materializing the Sámi placenames denied by so many in the community.

The author, politician, and Sámi language expert Asbjørg Skåden has also been central to the preservation and valorization of Sámi place names in Skánik. In 2013, she published an edited volume with her son, Sigbjørn Skåden, that includes close to 1300 Sámi place names in the region, sourced from the decade-long collaborative efforts of more than a hundred local people and culture-bearers (Skåden & Skåden 2013). Such efforts on the part of local activists paved the way for the official inclusion of the Skánik region in the Sámi administrative area in 2020, which coincided with the merging of Skániid' suohkan/Skånland Municipality into Dielddanuori Suohkan/Tjeldsund Municipality.

Conclusion: *Lihkahusak* as *Searvedoaibma*

Returning to *Lihkahusak* in light of the reflections presented above, the artistic interventions in Márkomeannu's linguistic landscape emerge as a decolonial strategy that contributes to the long tradition of language activism in the region. This instance of artivism epitomizes how art and activism in Sámi contexts are often intertwined and how making a distinction between the two may not reflect Sámi epistemologies and history. In the multilingual and multicultural context of Stuornjárga, as in many other places across Sápmi affected by Norwegianization policies, the Norwegian language had long epitomized social prestige process, while the Sámi language was put under social stigma. Both Sámi and non-Sámi language-bearers are encouraged to use the Márku-Sámi words in the festival context, even if they do not

master the language. Being surrounded by these words, which are literally written into the landscape in which they are usually used (e.g., the food list in the festival kitchen, the word for "water" close to the fountains, the term for "toilet" near the portable toilet), helps people to memorize them, promoting language knowledge among festivalgoers and instilling pride in their speakers. This is especially valuable in a community such as Skánik, where the Márku-Sámi language has long been a divisive issue (See Minde 2000). By creating a place where people can listen to and speak Sámi languages in an informal context, the festival offers an opportunity for people to be surrounded by Sámi in ways that those living far from the Sámi core areas seldom enjoy in their daily lives.

Festivals like Márkomeannu are often acknowledged for their safeguarding role, as they protect Sámi cultures and cultural heritage and transmit it to new communities and generations. Yet, the *Lihkahusak* project is not only about cultural revitalization. It can also be seen as an expression of what Danbolt, Kramvig, Guttorm, and Hætta have described as *searvedoaibma* (2022). In their work on the role and function of art at cultural festivals in Sápmi, they use the Northern Sámi term searvedoaibma as an analytic to examine how social communities are enacted and created through relational and aesthetic processes. Combining the Northern Sámi term for an organization or group one participates in (*searvi*) with the word for performance or practice (*doaibma*), the term *searvedoaibma* speaks to "the negotiations, displacements, and openings created when different Sámi actors, languages, and expressions participate in forms of artistic *communal (inter)actions*" (Danbolt et al. 2022: 267, author's translation). Combining art and linguistic activism, the Lihka-husak project epitomizes the capacity of festivals such as Márkomeannu to shape and continuously generate new social communities through the use of Sámi language and the display and performance of Sámi artistic expressions. By granting visibility to the Márku as a Sámi community and to Gállogieddi —and, by extension, Stuornjárga—as a Sámi place, the project offered a platform through which a multiplicity of otherwise oft-silenced words and voices were made present. In this way, *Lihkahusak* is an important example of how Márkomeannu has worked to create space for the negotiations of social communities across established ideas of Sámi identities, as festivalgoers are bound together by a shared experience of public enactments of the Sámi

language. More specifically, the project reflects how Márkomeannu has contributed to a transformation of both Norwegian and Sámi public culture by providing an arena in which contemporary artistic practices are expressed and political issues are tackled in critical ways that both address and question the history and configuration of local and national communities. The project is thus more than just a public celebration of Sámi identity and language; it is also an expression of a resistance and resilience that reflect the continued existence and creative expansion of a culture and community that have been violently oppressed and persecuted over a long period of time. As an example of Sámi artivism, *Lihkahusak* demonstrates how a venue like Márkomeannunot only functions as a platform for exhibiting Sámi art but also incorporates such art as an integral part of the festival landscape. At Márkomeannu, politically engaged artivism is both displayed and negotiated, while being performed in new and creative ways.

*

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Abstract
Among Sámi cultural events, the Márku-Sámi festival Márkomeannu has proved to be an exceptional site of Sámi artistic creativity and experimentation. In Sámi contexts, art has become an emancipatory tool against hegemonic narratives and colonial attitudes. Art has also proved to be a powerful instrument with the potential to tackle issues within Sámi society by expanding and challenging what a Sámi community is and can be. With their potential to push the limits and create spaces for local and alternative ways of being Sámi, artistic exhibitions and experimentations contribute to celebrating local cultural heritages and various articulations of Sámi identity. They also allow for meaningful engagement with local and collective pasts. Art as a decolonial practice is epitomized by the installations hosted throughout the years at Márkomeannu. This paper addresses the site-specific art project *Lihkahusak*, which was set up at the Márkomeannu festival in 2010. I argue that *Lihkahusak* contributed to making this festival an arena where politically engaged cultural-artistic activism was not only displayed but also negotiated, engaged with, and performed by both the local and the wider Sámi community, making the festival a site of *searvedoaibma*.

Keywords: Artivism, Linguistic landscape, *Searvedoaibma*, Sámi festivals, Site-specific art

Rehearsing Reconciliation: Frictional Dramaturgies and Postcolonial Moments in Ferske Scener's *Blodklubb*

Mathias Danbolt & Britt Kramvig

In 2018, the Norwegian Parliament established a Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) to investigate the Norwegianization policy and injustice against the Sámi, the Kven, and the Norwegian Finn peoples. The Committee was given three main tasks. Besides a historical mapping of the policies and ideologies behind the forced assimilation measures against the Sámi, Kven and Norwegian Finn, the Committee was also asked to examine the repercussions of these policies today, and propose "measures that can create greater equality between the majority and minority population".[1]

In February 2023, four years into the work with TRC, the Committee's chairperson, Dagfinn Høybråten, dropped what was described as a "Sámi bomb" in a newspaper interview, when expressing in no uncertain terms that the political process of Norwegianization was still ongoing: "People have no idea. Of the scale and how serious this has been. The story of Norwegianization must become part of the Norwegian narrative" (Høybråten in Legland 2023). This was one of the first public statements from the TRC on the content of the Committee's report that was handed over to the Norwegian government on June 1, 2023. The sensational framing of the chairperson's statement in the media could be seen to confirm one of the central critiques that has been raised against the working process of the TRC since the beginning, namely that the Committee has been unable to activate and include the Norwegian majority population in their examination of past and present injustices, and thus not managed to prepare the public for the long overdue truth and reconciliation process (Fredriksen 2020a, 2020b; Broch Johansen 2020).

The ongoing impact of Norwegianization was no news bomb to the organizers of *Blodklubb—Klubben for alle som har blod* [Blood Club—The

1 The quotes from the Truth and Reconciliation Committee is taken from the official home page: https://www.stortinget.no/en/In-English/About-the-Storting/News-archive/Front-page-news/2022-2023/the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission/. Accessed March 2, 2023.

Club for All With Blood], a club that was established concurrently with the TRC in 2018. *Blodklubb* is a still ongoing performance project produced by the experimental performance group Ferske Scener (Kristin Bjørn, Bernt Bjørn, and Kristina Junttila)[2] in collaboration with the author Sigbjørn Skåden, and takes the form of public assemblies where the audience is invited to participate in a collective "search for the ultimate feeling of togetherness", as the club organizers describe it, "with special focus on the relationship between Sámi and Norwegian culture".[3] With an explicitly playful approach to troublesome notions of blood, DNA, and genetics, *Blodklubb* deploys interactive performance strategies in order to carve out spaces for negotiating the constitution of affective, social, and political communities in a time where questions of truth and reconciliation is ongoing, and where public debates on identity, racism, and decolonization are increasingly marked by political polarization.

In this article, we analyze *Blodklubb*'s club meetings and suggest to see this performance project as a creative response to TRC's search for "measures that can create greater equality between the majority and minority population". Our choice of framing *Blodklubb*'s performance through the work of TRC might need some explanation, given that the organizers of *Blodklubb* have not (yet) framed their so-called "search for the greater WE" in relation to the work of the TRC. Despite the fact that *Blodklubb*'s high-spirited club meetings stand in stark contrast to the official Committee's solemn and subdued public hearings, the club meetings not only include a number of striking personal testimonies on the historical and present effects of the history of Norwegianization from both Sámi and Norwegian perspectives, the testimonies are also presented in ways that actively impel the audience to take part in collective acts of witnessing and reworking ideas of identities and communities in response to these stories. Building on Kramvig and

2 Ferske Scener was started in 2004 and has since then developed a series of multilingual, interactive "context-specific performances" with emphasis on Arctic histories and peoples. See more on Ferske Scener, "About Ferske Scener": https://www.ferskescener.no/en/organisation-2/

3 See Ferske Scener, "Blood Club": https://www.ferskescener.no/en/forestilling/blood-club-2-2019/. *Blodklubb* has so far had five assemblies. The first *Blodklubb* performance was held at the independent art space Small Projects in Romsa/Tromsø in the spring of 2018 during Vårscenefest: Tromsø Performing Arts Festival in Tromsø. *Blodklubb* #2, that we are focusing on in this article, took place at the Arctic Arts Festival in Hársták/Harstad on June 29, 2019. Since then, *Blodklubb* has organized four other assemblies. *Blodklubb* #3 took place at Mydlandsgården in Romsa on April 28 2022 as part of Vårscenefest 2022, *Blodklubb* #4 was held at Black Box theatre in Oslo on March 10 2023 as part of Ušllu Álbmotgaskasaš Teáhterriemut (Oslo International Theatre Festival), *Blodklubb* #5 was held at Skansen in Romsa on April 28, 2023 as part of Vårscenefest 2023, and *Blodklubb* #6 took place in Aarhus, Denmark on June 13, 2023 as part of IETM International network for contemporary performing arts.

Verran's (2020) proposition that art and performance practice can play an important role in processes of reconciliation, we suggest that *Blodklubb*'s experimental performance format create space for communal interactions where encounters between minoritized and majoritized populations are negotiated in ways that call attention to the frictions between different worlds.

Our analysis of *Blodklubb* is structured in two parts. In the first section, "Blodklubb's Frictional Dramaturgies", we set the scene by bringing the reader to *Blodklubb*'s second club meeting at City Bar & Diner in Hárstták/Harstad during the Arctic Arts Festival in June 2019. Our description of some of the main happenings that took place during the meeting forms the foundation of our formal analysis of *Blodklubb*'s dramaturgical strategies. In dialogue with Siemke Böhnisch's (2022) work on performances that work with "dramaturgies of disagreement", we discuss how *Blodklubb* establishes what we call frictional dramaturgies that hold space for tensions and frictions that are central to ontological politics aimed at telling differences and sameness in new ways.

In the article's second part, "Rehearsing Reconciliation with *Blodklubb*", we invite other audience members into our analysis in an attempt at discussing how a performance such as *Blodklubb* can contribute to processes of reconciliation. The choice of bringing other voices into our analysis reflects our investment in forms of "pluriversal storytelling" (Guttorm, Kantonen, Kramvig 2019), a concept that addresses the challenge of creating and sharing stories which bring us together in difference. We see our collective discussions of *Blodklubb* as an occasion for theorizing through pluriversal stories and thereby shed light on the productive encounters between different worlds that the event enacts into being. Here we also discuss how *Blodklubb* provides space for what Verran describes as "postcolonial moments" (Verran 2002). Postcolonial moments, Verran argues, happen when disparate knowledge traditions abut and abrade, enmeshed, indeed often stuck fast, in power relations characteristic of colonizing (2002: 730).

In this article, then, we follow the advice by scholars including Gayatri Spivak (1990) and Rauna Kuokkanen (2019) by situating our knowledge claims as not only ethnographic fieldwork but also as a form of

homework in order to address the power dynamics in the context of Norway's settler colonization of Sápmi that we are imbricated in and that informs the creation and sustaining of identities and communities around us (Danbolt & Pushaw 2023). Following Kuokkanen's reminder that colonial politics emerge from specific geo-political and historical pasts as well as the present tense (2019: 67), we argue that *Blodklubb* can function as a learning site for forms of "participatory reciprocity" that allows for new and different engagements with ourselves and others.

Fig. 1: *Blodklubb* logo at City Bar & Diner in Harstad. Photo: Mathias Danbolt.

Part 1: *Blodklubb*'s Frictional Dramaturgies

An Evening with *Blodklubb* in Hárstták

It is the last night of the week-long cultural festival Arctic Arts Festival in Hárstták, and we have tickets to the performance *Blodklubb*. We don't really know what to expect as we step into the large sports bar City Bar & Diner that is the venue for the event. The place is packed with people buying drinks and chatting like a normal bar night. Two large screens on each side of the room show a projection of a red logo in the style of a football club badge that says "Est. 2018 / Blodklubb / Vara Valvi" (fig. 1). The chatter quiets as four persons step up in front of the bar reciting a verse in Northern Sámi and Norwegian that is projected onto the screens:

Varra golgá	Blodet renner	[The blood flows
varra goaiku	blodet drypper	the blood drips
varra čohkke	blodet samler	the blood gathers
vara valvvi	blodets flokk	the herd of the blood]

The chant is followed by an official welcome to the second meeting of *Blodklubb* by a disembodied voice-over that the four club organizers subsequently introduce as our "pathfinder" that will guide us through the club meeting. The four club organizers go on to introduce themselves with their names—Sigbjørn Skåden, Kristina Junttila, Bernt Bjørn, and Kristin Bjørn—before giving a brief recap of the history of *Blodklubb*. The club was established two months prior in April 2019 at an event at the art space Small Projects in Romsa/Tromsø. The inaugural assembly was centered around the opening of DNA tests that the club founders had taken in order to map their estimated ethnic ancestry. Their genetic profiles, which show percentages of their ethnic estimates, matched by and large with the organizers' established identifications both within and beyond *Blodklubb* as respectively "the Sámi activist" (Sigbjørn Skåden), "The Norwegianization victim" (Bernt Bjørn), "the carrier of Norwegian guilt" (Kristin Bjørn), and the "neutral researcher" (Kristina Junttila). Although the genetic heritage tests did not radically change the *Blodklubb* organizers' identities, they explain that they were surprised by how the

audience at the first *Blodklubb* reacted with loud cheers when the DNA charts revealed high percentages of Indigenous Sámi ancestry, while booing when the tests showed majority of Scandinavian ancestry. While the first *Blodklubb* meeting gave attention to how blood is used to trace and create difference, the second club meeting centers on how to create commonality and community across borders.

The "neutral researcher", Kristina Junttila, starts out by noting that "research suggests that 37% of a community's 'we-feeling' stems from sharing strong emotional experiences". The club leaders have therefore invited the hardcore band Ondt Blod [Bad Blood] to perform a song that can bring us together, and have also given them the task of writing a club anthem that they will debut at the closing of the event. But common aesthetic experiences are not sufficient to bring us together, the organizers continue: "The criteria for membership in *Blodklubb* is simple: This is a club for all with blood. But we have a challenge. Extensive research suggests that in order to create communities, one needs strict borders. Given that we are a club for all with blood, it is only zombies that are not allowed access. This doesn't work." A small person jumps into the bar dressed in a large brown sock covering everything but the shoulders and head which is adorned with a scanty "Indian" headdress with feathers. The figure, played by Bernt Bjørn, is introduced as a "real Læstindianer", who suggests solving the problem of community building by dividing the club members into smaller subgroups to enhance the feeling of belonging. The club organizers follow the advice of the Læstindianer, and suggest using physical characteristics to divide us audience members into subgroups. All are therefore asked to cut off a lock of hair and join one of the four following groups: "the tall and dark", "the short and dark", "the tall and fair", or "the short and fair" (fig. 2). A special group is formed by six gray-haired audience members who are deemed "The Elders". After all of us, a good hundred or so, have moved across the room to sit with our new-founded groups, we are told that although physical characteristics can create "natural bonds" between people, our task this evening is to develop spiritual bonds within the subgroups. The four club organizers will therefore function as team captains with responsibilities of delivering pep talks to formulate the team spirit of the groups which will bring us together. After the pep talks, we are told, there will be a brief "transfer window", where group members can "betray their natural community and move to another group".

Fig 2: The audience is divided according to their identification with physical characteristics. Photo: Jamie Michael Bivard.

The leader of "the tall and fair", Kristin Bjørn, starts the series of pep talks with "a story of the colonization of the inner parts of Troms" in the 19th century, as she formulates it. We learn that her great-great grandfather arrived in this "cowboy land" as a traveling salesman, and was confronted with the repeated violent conflicts between settlers and the Indigenous Sámi. Her family history's entanglement with Norwegian settler colonialism creates the foundation of Bjørn's desire to turn her subgroup into a "cowboy collective" of people embodying the spirit of "anti-establishment" underdogs. While the white people in this group, like Bjørn herself, unavoidably have grown up with the privileged "support of the state" and thus are the "collective bearers of Norwegian guilt", the "cowboy collective" should be a place for people who dream of "escaping the embrace of power" and "stop being hostage to the system" and instead—like cowboys—"feel the freedom and the right to stand on our own".

Sigbjørn Skåden's pep talk for the group of "the tall and dark", that the two of us are part of, takes its starting point in a story of the "layers of layers of lives and deaths" that mark the ancestral landscape of the Mark Sámi community that he grew up in on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. Skåden tells about the effects of Norwegianization politics on his family, and about his mother's fight to keep the Sámi language in the face of discrimination and fierce resistance. Skåden explains that although he learned to stand tall as a Sámi in an area where Sámi presence was sought to be erased, now the situation is different. For how can he continue to identify as Sámi when he has moved away from the land of his foremothers and into a city whose soil he has no blood ties to, and where he no longer is able to mediate the locally embedded Sámi stories of the land to his son? Is moving oneself away from the land "not also to say goodbye to the history of us?" he asks, as he takes off his gákti and replaces it with a dark blazer (fig. 5). "I have removed my gákti that represents the land and the blood that I come from", he continues as his voice breaks, and he pauses to fight off the tears that chokes up his voice. "I annul myself. I sacrifice my 'I'", he says, as he proposes a community model for our team where we cut the ties to our ancestors and leave history behind in the hope that it can be a way to "let everyone be able to become the one they can become" in the future.

Fig. 3: Bernt Bjørn representing "the short and dark". Photo: Tom Rune Angell-Storö Juliussen.

Bernt Bjørn, speaking on behalf of "the short and dark", talks about his life-long history of feeling inferior, embarrassed, and ashamed of being small (fig. 3). Growing up in the Sea Sámi village of Lyngen, it did not come as a massive surprise when he opened his DNA tests that his genetic map consisted of Sámi-related trails in addition to trails of multiple other indigenous groups from all over the Arctic. The time for being ashamed of being small—which historically has been a stereotypical indicator of Sáminess—is over, Bjørn explains, as he describes how he "will joik myself out of this feeling of shame". Bjørn is ready to embrace his "short-grown foremothers" and recognize with pride the resourcefulness of his indigenous ancestry and their knowledge that have survived against all odds. "We are small, but we are many", Bjørn expresses, as he mobilizes his team members to "dress up in the robes of indigenous foremothers" to reconnect with nature and indigenous knowledges from all around the world.

Kristina Junttila's pep talk to the "short and fair" starts with a confession of her disappointment with the results of the DNA tests at the first *Blodklubb* meeting that confirmed her white Finnish and Norwegian ancestry, and thus destroyed her childhood dream of being adopted from an exotic nation. The collective spirit Junttila is seeking is one that can give whiteness color by drawing inspiration from exotic otherness. Junttila invites her group to tap into the power of cultural adoption and reconnect with the childhood excitement for "all that is exotic" that debates on cultural appropriation seem to suppress. This group spirit is centered around the work of "becoming global" and being open to the other and to the "otherness within ourselves". As she says, "We must say yes to all that life has to offer".

After the four pep talks, the voice-over announces that the transfer window is temporarily open. But only two from each group are allowed to plead their cases of transfer, and there is little time to act, as the groups are simultaneously given seven minutes to develop and prepare a one-minute performance that embodies the team spirit, which will be judged by the panel of Elders according to levels of creativity, inclusion, risk, and costumes. After hectic minutes of group negotiations and preparations, each group takes to the dance floor stage one after another. Kristin Bjørn's "cowboy collective" performs the introductory *Blodklubb* chant "Varra golgá" dressed in cowboy

hats, bandanas, and colorful bomber jackets. We "space travelers", in Skåden's team, are dressed in dark blazers with metal antennas on our heads, and dance as if we are leaving the earth behind for another planet to reset history and start anew. Kristina Junttila's group of "adoptees" are dressed in clothes with references to different global cultures while covering themselves behind colorful veils reading a text on embracing cultural diversity. Bernt Bjørn's group of small "foremothers" are dressed in garments referencing Indigenous Sámi and Native American cultures and perform a collective joik while standing in a circle. After the performances, the Elders come together to vote on which team evidenced the most convincing team spirit. After having announced that the "adoptees" are the winners, the voice-over asks the group leaders to perform a ritual of burning the "hair sacrifices" that we all have made, so we can "gather in the smoke that rises and spreads into the world". The club meeting ends with Ondt Blod's performance of the new *Blodklubb* anthem whose hardcore chords usher us into the bright summer night after a more than two-hour long club meeting.

***Blodklubb* as Social Laboratory**

What is *Blodklubb*? In our description so far, we have used terms such as "performance", "event", "assembly", and "club meeting". This undecidability is deliberate, for although *Blodklubb* is presented as a ticketed performance produced by an esteemed experimental performing arts group, and includes theatrical components such as stage, props, costumes, monologues, and music, it continually destabilizes expectations of genre. Its genre-bending mixture of elements from participatory community theater, comedy, sports club fan meetings, indigenous rituals, self-help workshops, political rallies, and Truth and Reconciliation meeting—to mention only some of the aesthetic formats referenced here—indicates that *Blodklubb* is not trying to establish any clear "contract" with the audience that delineates what to expect or how to understand what we are involved in. After all, the overarching idea of creating a club dedicated to the interest of all people with blood obviously borders on the absurd or ridiculous. The lightheartedness of the event is further enhanced by the placement of the club meeting in a sports bar and the aesthetic play with fan club sports culture. But the entertaining framework is quickly destabilized

by the fact that the club addresses controversial blood-related discourses of genetics, histories of racism, indigeneity, belonging, and settler colonialism, and furthermore, that it proclaims to be searching for bringing people together across these lines of difference. *Blodklubb* is, in other words, not only a performance that boldly seeks to address challenging topics, it also addresses these topics in ways that challenge established aesthetical, political, emotional—as well as analytical—repertoires.

Blodklubb's blurring of boundaries between the lighthearted and the serious, the staged and the improvised, and fact and fiction can be seen in relation to long traditions in both avant-garde theater and performance art for working at the threshold of art and life (Lehmann 2006; Junttila Valkoinen 2023). But the switch point between art and life does not figure as a problem that needs to be either resolved or transcended, as the undecidable status of the ideas, narratives, and positions that *Blodklubb* presents us with appear as a condition for its explorative approach to social and political processes. The fact that the four club leaders, for instance, use their own legal names, present their actual DNA tests, and deliver autobiographical testimonies that reference a shared social and political realities, clearly removes us from frameworks of dramatic fiction. But even if the club organizers do not appear as actors in *Blodklubb*, but act as themselves, the club format provides an opportunity for the organizers—as well as us audience members—to take on and examine different social roles and positions. The dramaturgical framework of *Blodklubb* seems to use the club meeting as a form of laboratory for the social and political production of identities and communities. The club meeting functions in other words as a test site where we are invited to partake in the rehearsal of social scripts for different group dynamics—from communities based on DNA tests and ethnicity estimates, physical characteristics (i.e., hair and height), to political and affective identification through the team leaders' pep talks. But what is the point of rehearsing these different forms of community formations?

Against the Romance of Communities

Blodklubb is clearly not a club for the lighthearted, and the models of communities that are being rehearsed in the "search for the greater WE" appear neither idealized nor romanticized. This much is clear after hearing their welcoming speech, where the club organizers discuss their use of DNA tests to establish their positions within the club. *Blodklubb* does not shy away from engaging with highly contested discourses on blood that historically have been connected to static understandings of bodies and identities, from previous practices of scientific racism and eugenics to contemporary discourses around blood samples and DNA testing (Berg-Nordlie 2018; 2022). Yet, the DNA tests merely provide an unsettling starting point and not an endpoint for *Blodklubb*'s search for a greater community. If the initial attempts at organizing the club meeting according to similarly essentialized features such as physical characteristics of height and hair activate feelings of vulnerability and unease among us audience members, the community values that we are presented with in the team leaders' pep talks do not necessarily alleviate the tenseness. The team captains deliver striking autobiographical testimonies that situate their desire to belong within a social and political landscape marked by settler colonialism, assimilation, and cultural normativity. While each of the team captains' personal testimonies come across as surprisingly heartfelt, the models of community that they introduce based on these stories appear far from utopian. One thing is that the suggestion of becoming cowboys, space travelers, adoptees, or indigenous "foremothers" all include compromised and complicated ideological approaches to collective identities and histories. Another thing is that we audience members have limited agency in choosing which of these community models we want to enlist under, as the subgroups we are part of were formed based on self-identified physical characteristics, and thus before we were presented with the ideological framework that the teams would gather around. Despite the initial talk of a "transfer window", we come to learn that only two from each group are allowed to plead their case to "betray" the collective and change groups, leaving most of us stuck with few options except to consent to our groups or leave the performance.[4]

4 The limit on the number of group members who could use this "transfer window" has been changed in subsequent versions of *Blodklubb*, and in later iterations of the club meetings all audience members have been allowed to change groups if they wanted to.

The "we-feeling" that *Blodklubb* is setting the stage for is in other words not one of unity and harmony—it is a community constituted by and through compromise and friction.

What is being rehearsed in *Blodklubb* is thus not the creation of idealized democratic communities, but rather our abilities of taking part in what we elsewhere have theorized as searvedoaibma (Danbolt et al. 2022). This North Sámi concept has no direct Norwegian or English equivalent. In North Sámi, "searvi" refers to something one participates in (like an organization or community group) while "doaibma" means a performance or practice. Searvedoaibma is, in short, an active concept which moves the focus from understanding of community as a noun, something which exists, to the practice of communal (inter)actions, and is thus a term that puts pressure on how communities are negotiated into being through dynamic and relational processes (267). The dramaturgical structure of *Blodklubb* operates through a practice of searvedoaibma, as it rehearses our ability to take part in, listen to, and negotiate—temporarily—communal (inter)actions whose values we might not necessarily subscribe to, and with people we might not necessarily recognize as belonging to "our" own. While the act of bringing people together in difference is an essential component of all collaborative arts such as theater and performance, that are dependent on the co-presence between the performers and audience (Fischer-Lichte 2008), *Blodklubb* explicitly exploits and explores this relational forcefield by actively deploying friction as a dramaturgical device in the formation and rehearsing of communities. To further unpack what we call *Blodklubb*'s "frictional dramaturgy", a comparative discussion with Siemke Böhnisch's conceptualization of how theater can work with "dramaturgy of disagreement" might be of help.

Frictional Dramaturgies

In the article "Hyperteatral og paradoksal uenighetsdramaturgi" (Hypertheatrical and Paradoxical Dramaturgy of Disagreement) (2022), theater scholar Siemke Böhnisch analyzes experimental theater productions that invite and work with disagreement between the audience as central components of the work. In a discussion of the contentious "hypertheater project" *Sløserikommisjonen* (*The Wastefulness Commission*) by the Norwegian experimental

theater company Traavik.info,[5] Böhnisch draws on sociologist Lars Laird Iversen's discussion of the value of "communities of disagreements" to democratic forms of interaction. Iversen develops this concept in a critique of Nordic consensus culture, which he argues privileges communities of shared values over and against open disagreement. The concept of "communities of disagreement" is an attempt to foreground the importance of dissensus in democratic culture, and to support modes of belonging based on "shared challenges that we need to solve together" (Iversen 2014: 127 in Böhnisch 2022: 372). Böhnisch builds on Iversen's work in her examination of how theater can be used as a "laboratory for disagreement in areas where it for different reasons is difficult or impossible to create communities of disagreement in a larger public" (374).

Böhnisch's interest in disagreement provides a useful comparison to our focus on friction in *Blodklubb*. The topics that *Blodklubb* engages with certainly have the potential of revealing conflicts. And yet, both the format and the framing of *Blodklubb* indicate that the performance, in contrast to for instance *Sløserikommisjonen*, is not invested in conflicts or disagreements as such. The club organizers' explicit claim that the goal of *Blodklubb* is to find the ultimate "we-feeling" is in itself an indication of this. Furthermore, the lightheartedness that characterizes the rather chaotic set-up in the sports bar also brings people together physically in an amicable way. The intimacy is further enhanced by the fact that the four team captains speak from radically different positions in their discussion of the personal effects of colonial dynamics, which complicates the widespread polarization of minority-majority relations that often structure these debates. The vulnerability that each of the team captains display in describing personal and collective feelings of guilt, shame, mourning, and defeat related to the ongoing effects of the Norwegianization politics also provide multiple entry points of identification and disidentification that cuts through and disarms established fronts of conflict and disagreement.

Rather than a dramaturgy of conflict, *Blodklubb* set the stage for communal forms of inhabiting friction, as we are brought together to listen to and remain in proximity with different and partly incommensurable histories, narratives, and positions that activate questions related to the truth and

5 In *Sløserikommisjonen*, artist Morten Traavik invited one of Norway's most controversial and vocal critics of public funding for the arts, Are Søberg, to take his critique from his infamous Facebook group Sløseriom-budsmannen [The Wastefulness Ombudsmand] to the theater stage.

reconciliation process in a settler colonial context. Even if one might not be convinced by or agree with the suggested models of community that our team captains present, the "we-feeling" that *Blodklubb* aims for is not dependent on agreement or homogeneity, as the club meeting's frictional dramaturgy provides opportunities for collective acts of witnessing across difference.

While we in the first section of this article have focused on the role of friction in the aesthetic structure of *Blodklubb*, in the next section we shift focus to discuss the role and effects that storytelling holds in the performance. Our focus on storytelling does not only engage with the testimonies that the club organizers share in their pep talks, but also the stories that we audience members produce about and around *Blodklubb*. Building on Kramvig and Verran's (2019) argument that storytelling as an epistemic practice can be used as a tool for reconciliation, the following section seeks to show how not only *Blodklubb*'s performance itself, but also our collective work on reflecting around its effects, can contribute to the act of rehearsing reconciliation.

Part 2: Rehearsing Reconciliation with *Blodklubb*

Pluriversal Storytelling and Postcolonial Moments

To broaden our understanding of the effects of *Blodklubb*'s frictional dramaturgies, we invited three Norwegian artists and academics that attended the club meeting in Hárstták separately to reflect on how they experienced their participation in the performance. We explicitly framed these individual open research interviews, undertaken online, as a form of digital "debriefing", where we asked our fellow "club members" to share their retrospective memories of what stayed with them from the performance. Our three conversation partners—"Siri", "Mari", and "Tone"—all self-identify as Norwegian women who either have lived or still live on the Norwegian side of Sápmi and who thus arrived to *Blodklubb* with different knowledges of and experiences with Norwegian and Sámi art, culture, and politics.[6] Their cultural competence in navigating spaces of interactions between Norwegian and Sámi communities was an important factor for our invitation, as we were interested in expanding our perspectives on how *Blodklubb*'s frictional dramaturgy gave

6 We have anonymized the three conversation partners and have edited their responses with an eye to remove references to specific markers that would make them easily recognizable.

space for the appearance of new differences—and new acknowledgments of differences. Besides functioning as an opportunity for collective reflections on what we had experienced together-in-difference, these conversations also functioned to bring the method of "pluriversal storytelling" (Guttorm, Kantonen & Kramvig 2019) into our own analysis of the performance.

Guttorm, Kantonen and Kramvig have described "pluriversal storytelling" as an important epistemological and ethical principle in indigenous research. "Pluriversal storytelling", they write with reference to Blaser (2009), "not only means 'multiple perspectives on THE ('one') world', but acknowledging the existence of multiple, different worlds and expanding the space for different worlds (and stories), so that they may be allowed to be performed in public and political (and academic) debate" (Guttorm, Kantonen & Kramvig 2019: 150). Similar to how *Blodklubb* uses storytelling as a strategy for transforming private and local knowledges into public forms in ways that alleviate disempowering circumstances, we argue that the stories we create about events in the past—including performances—might aid the search for knowledge of ways to live well and respectfully with human and non-human beings. Our operationalization of "pluriversal storytelling" is as such inspired by Blaser's argument that we need to search for methods and storytelling that produce and sustain bridges across lines of ontological difference that do not reproduce the "impositions of the modern regime" (Blaser 2010: 20).

The method of "pluriversal storytelling" also provides an entry point for examining what we describe as "postcolonial moments" in *Blodklubb*. We borrow this concept from Verran (2002), who developed it to address the differences between environmental scientists and indigenous landowners' thinking and practice of firing land as resource strategy which remains an ongoing conflict in Australian conservation politics. The "post" in "postcolonial moments" does not suggest that settler colonialism is over, but references friction-filled situations that interrupt established colonial power relations in ways that redistribute authority and transform relations between majorities and minorities. The friction at play in "postcolonial moments" represent openings where the world of both partners expands and partly entangles each other. These moments become occasions for telling differences and sameness in new ways. As Verran notes, "a postcolonial moment involves both making

separations, and connecting by identifying sameness. But 'sameness' here is not a dominating universalizing. On the contrary, sameness in a postcolonial moment enables difference to be collectively enacted" (Verran 2002: 730) and unearths a glimpse of the ontological work that others must do to enact differences (Verran 2021).

Verran's concept of "postcolonial moments" is helpful to the stories we tell about and around *Blodklubb* that are not only concerned with differences, but which also grow out of an understanding that "not knowing" is a requirement to think ethnographically with others in the present (de la Cadena 2021), as objects, events and their knowers are not given ontologically before experience (Verran 2021). When writing "ethnographic stories", to use de la Cadena's description of research narratives such as ours about *Blodklubb*, Verran (2021) reminds us that we need to be careful in our choices of words and concepts—as writing involves negotiating tricky passes, as not only people but also other forms of "physical stuff" can act as lively participant in the situation. When considering how we are to take responsibility for the ways our stories not only are representing but also re-presenting, Verran's work on "postcolonial moments" is helpful, as it enables us to recognize difference as a dynamic quality, rather than a stable relation between given entities (Brichet 2018).

In/Visible Belongings

In our meeting with Siri, a Norwegian academic, she explained that although she was familiar with Ferske Scener's previous productions, she did not know what to expect when entering *Blodklubb*. While the informal pub setting and familiar faces among the audience made her feel relaxed, this was quickly replaced by a mixture of excitement and nervousness as the organizers asked us to cut parts of our hair and choose a group based on identification with physical characteristics:

> The club organizers immediately brought tensions to the front by engaging with the question of how we get categorized and how we categorize each other. I am 'only' Norwegian, and it felt weird being asked to choose which group to join. When I normally take part in Sámi

communities, for instance at festivals such as Riddu Riđđu, I am very conscious of the fact that I am there as a non-indigenous person. It was both interesting and uncomfortable to be asked to identify with physical characteristics. Especially given that questions of visible difference remain such a vulnerable topic in this context. It makes me think of something [the Sámi author and playwright] Siri Broch Johansen has written that some Sámi are able to choose whether to appear visibly Sámi or whether to remain invisible by not emphasizing their Sáminess. Since most Sámi and Norwegian people appear as "white", it is not necessarily given who is Sámi or Norwegian in a room such as *Blodklubb*. Often the only visible markers of difference are connected to items one deliberately takes on, such gákti, scarfs, or jewelry. The importance given to these signals of belonging was also something the *Blodklubb* crew explicitly worked with, as Kristin Bjørn was wearing her bunad and Sigbjørn Skåden his gákti. Their use of clothing to display identity called attention to the changes that have taken place over the last decades pertaining to visibility in Sápmi. Just a decade ago, one would hardly see people wearing gákti in Harstad, even during the Arctic Arts Festival. But now there were many people in the audience wearing gákti and other Sámi items. I don't remember what I was wearing that day, but it was probably something casual and bland like today [laughter], but I do remember that I found the act of choosing a group quite challenging, as it was difficult to know whether the organizers implied a connection between physical and ethnic characteristics with their differentiation between groups with "dark" and "fair" people. And moreover, it was difficult to know whether the choice of group identity was something we were supposed to take seriously or not. The organizers clearly played with our uncertainties, warming us up to the even more challenging conversations and choices ahead. The fact that the organizers placed themselves on the line by, for instance, displaying their genetic test results, made it easier for me to step into these "frictions", as you call them. Their play with genetic heritage maps surely felt like a risky move, for although these maps cannot necessarily be trusted, such tests are often used to verify or problematize the heritage stories we have grown up with. Artistically, it provided an interesting jumping off point for voicing topics and stories that for long have been silenced.

Siri's reflections address how *Blodklubb* creates a space for engaging with topics that are difficult to talk about, including the role that visible markers of difference hold in the formation of community, and what it takes to "pass" or refuse to "pass" as a member of the Norwegian majority.

The question of silence also came up in our conversation with Mari, a Norwegian cultural producer. Mari explains that she is well versed in the world of experimental theater, so the interactive format of *Blodklubb* did not challenge her as much as the content of the performance and the way the performance addressed the vulnerable relationship between visibility and belonging in such a direct and explicit way:

> The media debates on Norwegian and Sámi identities are so extremely polarizing these days. The fact that we were gathered at a pub and listened to people discussing things such as blood and genetics felt risky. When they started showing their genetic maps, I got really anxious. There has been so much violence in how genetics have been used to define identities and belonging, and I had a hard time imagining how genetics can be used in progressive ways. But the club organizers managed to get us on board in engaging with many things that would normally disturb and provoke me, from dealing with genetics to the final group exercises where we were asked to dress up in clothes from other cultures—something I really don't like and find unpleasant and appropriative. But the organizers took responsibility for their means of action in a way that allowed me to engage with these difficult questions.
>
> It takes quite a lot of courage to open these issues in a performance, and I have been thinking a lot about how they were able to create a space where they could address so many painful topics without opening old or new wounds. I think this has a lot to do with the fact that *Blodklubb* leans into a thousand-year-old tradition of using theater as a transitional ritual where we get exposed to the vulnerable aspects of life, and where we come out on the other side with new perspectives on ourselves and our communities.

Mari brings attention to the role of ritual at play in *Blodklubb*. For although the club meeting engaged explicitly with "reality" in many ways, the fact that it is framed as a performance with a dramaturgical structure of a beginning and an end gives both the organizers and us audience members a license to dare thinking, acting, and feeling differently.

While both Siri and Mari arrived at *Blodklubb* with some familiarity with the previous work by Ferske Scener, Tone, a Norwegian academic, had no idea what she was in for. Arriving at the event on her own, the initial group formation exercises that reorganized the room helped her to find her way into the performance:

> I often wonder whether I am really welcome to take an active part in Sámi cultural events as a Norwegian. But I remember *Blodklubb* as a very welcoming and inviting space, even for those of us without any family connections with Sámi. Or, I guess I didn't really feel included to begin with, but it changed when we were moved around and the artists started presenting themselves. I remember specifically Kristin Bjørn's introduction where she positioned herself as a Norwegian settler. I think that opened a space for me to feel included.
>
> Initially, I was a bit worried about their talk about creating a "big new WE", for although I am obviously invested in equality, we are not treated equally in this society, and this makes it difficult to create connections irrespective of backgrounds. But then I ended up sitting beside a young woman who was probably in her early 20s or something, and she had these socks on that said "FEMINIST". And it made me think, well, at least we have something in common! *Blodklubb* not only made me think of the relationship between Norwegians and Sámi, but also the relations across generations. It was such an intergenerational space, and that is pretty rare. But it was also challenging, for although the artists obviously had plans for how they wanted to discuss these difficult questions about identities and belonging with us, they couldn't know or prepare in advance how we would react. Just as they were unable to know how things would play out, as an audience member, I really didn't know how things would develop either. It felt quite risky.

Tone's description of the process of finding her place in *Blodklubb* points to an affective dynamic that was present in all three conversations that relates to the growing consciousness of representing the settler majority while engaging with indigenous communities. Tone's initial concern of whether she is entitled to be present at *Blodklubb* calls attention to a broader structure of feeling of respect, apprehension, and uncertainty that shapes the Norwegian majority's participation in processes of reconciliation. While Tone is clearly invested in breaking with "settler common sense", to borrow Mark Rifkin's (2014) term for the tradition of settlers always finding their presence to be natural, neutral, and innocent, and thus does not want to ignore the problem of power, she also expresses a desire to take part in *Blodklubb*'s search for developing new connections across difference.

Tone's description of how *Blodklubb* attempts at navigating in these affective forcefields feels "risky", also addresses an important point relating to our previous discussion of the performance's frictional dramaturgy. For although *Blodklubb*, as we have argued, does not explicitly invite conflicts and disagreements, this does not mean that conflicts were absent from the room. No matter the organizers' willed intentions, the effects of a performance cannot be predicted in advance, and this became particularly evident in the reactions to Bernt Bjørn's sketch with the "læstindianer" at the start of the *Blodklubb* meeting.

Cultural Competence: "Læstindianer"

Both Siri and Mari remembered vividly a particularly tense moment that occurred after Bernt Bjørn had jumped into the bar dressed up as a "læstindianer" in the start of *Blodklubb* (fig. 4). Siri described it in the following way:

> There were people that did not speak Norwegian among the audience, and for them it must have been difficult to understand what was happening. That brought about a strange tension. I remember specifically that an international indigenous artist got up and left the room after being exposed to what they must have seen as an "Indian joke". I thought it was so funny when Bernt Bjørn appeared as a "læstindianer",

Fig. 4: The ”læstindianer” (Bernt Bjørn) being interviewed by Kristin Bjørn.
Photo: Tom Rune Angell-Storö Juliussen.

but I also understand that it would not have been funny for someone who did not understand where the joke came from. I saw the sketch as an attempt to disarm the enduring influence of Læstadianism in Sápmi, and as a funny play with the strong influence of pietist Christian traditions. But to the person who left the room this was probably just another offensive and culturally insensitive misuse of Native American culture. It is difficult to avoid offending or provoking people when pushing so many buttons like *Blodklubb* does pertaining to ethnicity, identity, and heritage. It is not easy knowing where the line is. I think art needs to have room for trying things out that one afterwards might realize was a mistake. And perhaps that sketch was a mistake, perhaps not. I don't know, and I don't think I am the right one to judge that. I merely registered that it was something that didn't gel with everyone. It is not surprising, especially considering the debates on cultural appropriation where indigenous groups have taken a clear stance against being reduced to a Halloween costume. And it might also be a generational thing, that people in my generation and people younger than me have become more aware of. For those of us with some familiarity with Ferske Scener's work, we know that they would never consciously try to ridicule other indigenous groups. And if one knows a little bit of the Sámi area that Bernt Bjørn is coming from, I thought it was pretty obvious that the sketch was aimed at his own background and community, and not someone else. But you need to have quite a lot of knowledge of the context to get the nuances of a joke like that, and it is surely not easy to translate and explain that to someone in the middle of a performance.

Siri calls attention to how our encounters with stories, figures, and symbols do not simply occur in the present—each encounter reopens previous encounters. A performance such as *Blodklubb*, that explicitly addresses and reopens prior histories of colonial memories and pain, also sets the stage for being touched by the past in ways that force us to recognize the agency of absent others that becomes present in stories and objects. For audience members who do not have access to the historical negotiations that Bjørn's sketch involved, his use of a cheap "Indian" headdress might merely read as another colonial encounter with cultural appropriation, as Mari noted:

> The use of irony is a challenge, particularly across languages and generations. The "læstindianer" figure is a very localized response to a long and complex history of colonization. The critical edge in that sketch is probably not accessible to that many people, who instead might just see it as yet another comedy sketch using an indigenous stereotype as the butt of the joke.

For those who are familiar with the location that Bernt Bjørn is speaking from—a Sámi area historically marked by the Læstadian religion—his playful clash between stereotypes of Sámi Læstadianism and Native American "Indian" appears more nuanced. His mash-up between two different ontologies can instead be seen as an attempt to respond to the appropriation and stereotypification of indigenous histories perspectives.

Displaying Vulnerabilities

The topic of risk returns, as we have seen, in our conversations about *Blodklubb*. The term is used both to describe the risks that the club organizers took by putting themselves and their stories on the line, as well as in relation to the risk of addressing so many difficult and vulnerable topics to a participatory collective in the space of the performance. In our conversation with Mari, she pointed out that all the four pep talks felt risky, but each in their different ways. To Mari, one of the most striking points was the moment in Kristin Bjørn's monologue where she described feeling embarrassed by being a white Norwegian whose heritage is grounded in violence and settler colonialism. This was a feeling she had never heard voiced like that before. Another pep talk that came up in our conversations in relation to risk was Sigbjørn Skåden's monologue. While Skåden's pep talk started out as a story of resistance with reference to how his activist mother fought to pass on the knowledges of land from their Sámi ancestors to him and his siblings, this narrative changed radically as he started to ponder whether one can remain Sámi when one moves away from the land of one's ancestors, and thus are unable to transmit land-based knowledges across generations. When Skåden removed his gákti and replaced it with a blazer, the atmosphere changed radically at the sports bar. While Skåden himself interrupted his monologue to voice his surprise at

Fig 5: Sigbjørn Skåden removed his gákti during his monologue, replacing it with a blazer. Photo: Tom Rune Angell-Storö Juliussen.

the rush of emotions that got to him while reading his pep talk, his presentation also made tears run across both of our faces and many of the people around us. In her reflections on Skåden's pep talk, Siri noted that its impact probably also relates to how his narrative broke with everything one might expect from someone like Skåden who was introduced as *Blodklubb*'s "Sámi activist":

> Sigbjørn Skåden's monologue was devastating. Even though I was not in his group and was sitting at some distance, it was… hard to listen to. I know his novels and writings, and I know that he can be ironic, but this felt so different. Even though I know that his monologue was part of an artistic performance, his choice of undressing his gákti and presenting himself in such a vulnerable state felt like a brave thing to do. I am used to thinking about him as someone who has a very strong Sámi identity, as I have always seen him in contexts where he is talking about Sámi language and history. To me, and to many others I guess, he appears as someone who stands solid in his Sámi identity. To listen to his reflections on identity loss and to see him replace his gákti with a blue blazer felt like a really strong moment. It also worked as a reminder that what is visible on the surface does not necessarily reflect all that is going on inside. That points to another silent space that *Blodklubb* opened up, where even those we are used to seeing as strong and secure leaders are able to show and share vulnerabilities and insecurities.

Siri's calls attention to the way that the problem of disconnection from land, either by forced migration or by individual choice, are often silenced both within and beyond Sápmi as it is simply a topic too painful for people to put into words. Skåden's suggestion in his pep talk that the act of sacrificing his Sámi identity might be the only route to settle the historical and still ongoing injustices in Sápmi, felt less like a rhetorical than a depressingly realistic proposition of how processes of reconciliation have played—and risk continue to—play out. Even though Skåden's final proposition to erase history and start over might sound defeatist, his careful voicing of the affective, social, and political consequences of sacrificing the connection to Sámi local history and past/present community can in itself be understood as a form of resistance

and refusal, as it creates a collective space to share and hold some of the fears and worries that Sámi have but rarely share, not even between each other's—and especially not in publics with Norwegian people who might indeed welcome the suggestion to leave "identity" behind.[7]

The collective witnessing of Skåden's testimony can be described as a "postcolonial moment", where different world views and forms of understanding clashed in ways that allowed for new interactions and new ways of understanding differences (Verran 2002). Approaching Skåden's pep talk in light of Verran's formulation, it is clear that the pain of coloniality embedded in his story was felt by each of us present, although it was not felt in the same way. Similar to how the two of us writing about this moment reacted to the story in distinct ways, much due to our different historical experiences with the effects of settler colonialism as a Sámi-Norwegian woman and Norwegian man, respectively—none of us could escape the tension. Such moments of tension can be productive if we are able to cultivate a sensitivity to such disconcerted happenings, as these frictions may allow us to get a glimpse of the ontological and epistemic grounding of others (Verran 2021).

In our conversations with our fellow "club members", we return time and again to the question of how *Blodklubb* manages to address so many central topics that rarely otherwise get addressed in a public setting. In our attempt to understand how *Blodklubb* is able to create a brave space for both voicing and witnessing problematic feelings and feelings about problems of belonging in a colonial present, the conversation touches upon a variety of issues, from the dramaturgical structure's combination of the playful and the serious, to the club organizers' courageous presentations that place their own histories and positions on the line. We have suggested understanding the frictional encounters in *Blodklubb* as "postcolonial moments" that invite us to participate in and embody the uncomfortable space of the pluriversal.

7 In his recent article "Language Medicine", Skåden picks up the question that he raised in his pep talk, namely "if our use of and tactile knowledge of the landscapes are fading away, in what way are we then still Sámi?" His response is helpful to understand the special space of reflection that *Blodklubb* seems to open up: "I have no categorical answers to these questions. If they are put to me by a non-Sámi person I defend myself against them. I defend us. That we're not a museum people, that we cannot be expected to live like we did 150 years ago; that we, like all people, transcend and reinvent ourselves. And that the fact that the policies of the nation states that colonized us have moved a majority of us out of traditional Sámi livelihoods doesn't take away our rights to be Sámi and identify" (Skåden 2022: 39).

The stories that are being narrated both during the *Blodklubb* meeting and in our retrospective conversations involve a performative enactment of multiple, distinct ontologies or worlds (Blaser 2010) that are being sustained even as they collide, interact, and interfere with each other (Blaser 2019). It is the performance's ability to carve out a space that holds space for difference without glossing over the tensions and frictions which makes *Blodklubb* appear as an important format of rehearsing reconciliation.

Rehearsing Reconciliation

Let us in conclusion return to where we started this article, with the concurrence between the establishment of *Blodklubb* and the Norwegian government's launch of the official Truth and Reconciliation process to investigate the injustice against the Sámi, Kven, and Norwegian Finn, in order to unpack our claim that *Blodklubb* could be seen as an artistic response to the TRC's task of developing "measures that can create greater equality between the majority and minority population". To unfold our argument that *Blodklubb* provides us with opportunities to rehearse reconciliation, we need to first clarify what we mean by the term "reconciliation". When consulting English dictionaries, we can find the following brief definitions: "(1) Restorations of friendly relations; (2) The action of making one view or belief compatible with another; (3) The action of making financial accounts consistent; harmonization".[8] Although the English dictionary does not explicate the religious overtones that stick to the Norwegian word *forsoning,* the Christian tradition clearly ghosts the dictionary's reference to restoration, agreement, and harmonization. The problematic associations that the term "reconciliation" calls forth in the context of reckoning with ongoing colonial injustice has been clearly addressed by the chairperson of Canada Council for the Arts and an Ojibwe member of Serpent River First Nation, Jesse Wente, in his reflections upon the effects of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada that released its report in 2015. "Reconciliation", he notes, "is the wrong word for both the situation and the goal":

8 "Reconciliation", Dictionary (v. 2.3.0), Apple: 2022.

> To reconcile in this context would be to repair a once functional relationship. No such thing has ever meaningfully existed between Indigenous nations and the state of Canada, so reconciliation is impossible here, as it is impossible in any colonial settler state. What is truly needed, then, is the building of a functional relationship in the first place; to stop pretending that the current relationship is worth saving and to discard it and start over. […] Just as we've been exploited in the name of oil, uranium, timber, gold, and a good story, we're also exploited for forgiveness, for the elimination of white guilt (Wente 2020: 188).

Wente's emphasis on the need for an honest reckoning on the relationship between the settler state and minoritized populations is relevant to our discussion of *Blodklubb*'s rehearsal of reconciliation. The stories of settler colonization that *Blodklubb* holds space for could be said to support Wente's claim that reconciliation is the "wrong word for both the situation and the goal", in so far as the relationship between the Norwegian state and the Sami, the Kven, and the Norwegian Finns have arguably never been "functional". Yet, the rehearsal of reconciliation that we find in *Blodklubb* is not directly oriented towards repairing a dysfunctional relation to the Norwegian state. Instead, *Blodklubb* gives attention to the fact that there have indeed been long histories of attempts at establishing functional relationships between the Indigenous Sámi, the national minorities, and the Norwegian people in the north that have unfolded both against and beside the state. In contrast to the state centered work of the TRC Committee and its report, the rehearsals of reconciliation at play in *Blodklubb* examines the possibilities of developing functional relationships between people across differences: How can we find ways of living together and develop a "WE-feeling" that does not rely on cultural or national homogeneity? Can "we" become a "we" through—and not despite—difference?

Blodklubb rehearses these questions without neglecting the inherent complexities—and at times seemingly impossibilities—of establishing any

functional relationships in and between communities and political institutions in a settler colonial present. The fact that the models for alternative forms of belonging that *Blodklubb* presents us with in the groups' competition for "a greater WE" remain controversial and troublesome testifies to this. By setting the stage for collective experiences of postcolonial moments, *Blodklubb* complicates the political and emotional performance of indigenous and settler positionalities alike in productive ways. As Mari pointed out:

> *Blodklubb* taught me that theater can be used to make people talk together in new ways. They took these difficult debates into the theater space in a way that created new rooms for collective action. It is something I would want to work with as well. We all have a social responsibility for finding ways to address these challenging issues around belonging together.

Mari's comment speaks to how experimental theater and performance projects, such as *Blodklubb*, hold a special potential for bringing people together and facilitate difficult conversations on difference and belonging. In a time where the media debates on issues ranging from colonial history to indigenous rights remain not only highly polarizing and contentious but also unsafe and even violent, *Blodklubb*'s ability to establish brave spaces for searvedoaibma —communal (inter)actions—between minorities and majorities appear both valuable and important. Beside inspiring people, like Mari, to take active part in creating "new rooms for collective action", *Blodklubb* also demonstrates that *friction* is not an obstacle for such communal (inter)actions but rather a condition for coming together in difference around topics often considered too tense to bring into public space. *Blodklubb*'s rehearsals of reconciliation cultivates a space for collective trial and error, of reviewing and recapping ideas and suggestion, and for practicing togetherness and for continually changing these practices.

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Abstract
In 2018, the Norwegian Parliament established a Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) to investigate the Norwegianization policy's forced assimilation of the Sámi, the Kven, and the Norwegian Finn peoples. Besides a historical mapping of the policies and ideologies behind the Norwegianization process and an analysis of the repercussions of these policies today, the Committee was also asked to deliver suggestions for reconciliation with the aim of creating "greater equality between the majority and minority population". In this article, we examine the potential of art and performance in the ongoing reconciliation process in a Norwegian context. Our analytic focus is the ongoing performance project *Blodklubb* that was established concurrently with the TRC in 2018 by the experimental performance group Ferske Scener (Kristin Bjørn, Bernt Bjørn, and Kristina Junttila) in collaboration with the author Sigbjørn Skåden.

Blodklubb takes the form of public assemblies where the audience is invited to participate in a collective "search for the ultimate feeling of togetherness", as the organizers describe it, "with special focus on the relationship between Sámi and Norwegian culture". With an explicitly playful approach to troublesome notions of blood, DNA, and genetics, *Blodklubb* deploys interactive performance strategies to carve out spaces for negotiating the constitution of affective, social, and political communities in a time where questions of truth and reconciliation is ongoing, and where public debates on identity, racism, and decolonization are increasingly marked by political polarization. The first part of the article analyzes *Blodklubb*'s dramaturgical strategies, with a focus on how the performance establishes frictional dramaturgies that hold space for tensions that are central to ontological politics aimed at telling differences and sameness in new ways. The second part of the article is based on interviews with audience members of *Blodklubb* and argues that the performance functions as a learning site for forms of "participatory reciprocity" that allows for new and different engagements with ourselves and others.

Keywords: Performance, reconciliation, postcolonial moments, frictional dramaturgies.

Essays

A Recipe for Sámi Superpower

Christina Hætta

Afraid of the drum
If colonization hadn't happened
our libraries would be full
of old texts
our very own Ibsen
there'd be Strindberg
whose parents were Sámi

He would have learned Sámi
and definitely written
in the much richer Sámi language

We would read
Karen Anna Buljo's great-grandmother's
writings
on our exams we would be asked
about the books Lásse Piera wrote in his youth
and be asked to describe where in Italy he traveled as a young man

Our old poet and shaman
who in olden times wrote his feelings down in poems
and changed European literature
we would have a great portrait
of Olaus Sirma
Čearbma Ovllá
in our old Sámi library
where we would play
our very own Áillohaš, Nils Aslak Valkeapää,
around the clock

Every equinox
we would yoik
we would drum
we would gather power
because our own
Sámi worldview
would have been preserved
no one would have
brainwashed us into being afraid
of the drum

If colonization and the killings
had not happened

—Mary Ailonieida Sombán Mari (2020: 52–53).

Introduction

Sámi art and culture "are really standing on the edge of something big," proclaimed the Norwegian Minister of Culture at the time, Anette Trettebergstuen, at the launch of the Parliament Report No. 22, *Kunstnarkår* (Kultur- og likestillingsdepartementet 2023). She pointed to the large and growing interest in Sámi art, both in the Nordic countries and globally, which the Norwegian government now wanted to "support with all means." The interest in Sámi narratives and points of view is substantial. Sámi film and literature are award-winning; Sámi contemporary art, music, and *duodji* occupy major international exhibits and performance arenas. Artist and film director Elle Márjá Eira embodies one of many examples. In the podcast "Drivkraft," she describes how her market is primarily international, noting that she receives inquiries and invitations from countries such as Germany, the United States, Brazil, China, and Canada.[1] Sámi art and culture are primarily important for the Sámi people, and our artists have often stood on the front line in the fight for self-determination. At the same time, it is through art that we tell the story of who we are to others, showing what our values are and what we struggle to achieve. Today, others also consider these narratives important, which creates new opportunities for Sámi artists on the international stage.

1 Vegard Larsen, "Drivkraft: Elle Márjá Eira," *NRK Radio*, September 13, 2022. https://radio.nrk.no/podkast/drivkraft/sesong/202209/l_83f1c342-47a9-4f01-b1c3-4247a9cf01f7

Sámi art and culture have a strong international brand and the potential to become a significant export product. Increased market access offers our artists and cultural workers more predictable and reliable financial frameworks. At the same time, the artists and cultural institutions feel that they lack the necessary resources to both further develop the Sámi field and meet the growing demand. The Sámi field is dependent on the support and willingness of national institutions and general financial support programs. What consequences does this dependence have? Do Norwegian institutions possess the necessary knowledge to manage this responsibility? Does a lack of knowledge significantly affect Sámi artistic freedom? What is the potential of the Sámi art and cultural field and what level of ambition can we have? Moreover, does Trettebergstuen's promise to support Sámi art and culture "with all means" also apply to what Sámi artists and cultural institutions need to develop for the benefit of Sámi society?

Fig. 1: Katarina Barruk performing on stage. Photo: Ørjan Marakatt Bertelsen.

Cross-border Springboard

On a Friday evening in November 2022, the UmeSámi artist Katarina Barruk from Upmi/Umeå was a guest on the Norwegian talk show *Lindmo* on the Norwegian state television channel, NRK. This event was an important recognition of Barruk's artistry and the new national interest in the Sámi cultural field (fig. 1), not only confirming the growing national interest in Sámi music and culture but also giving a splendid example of the cross-border existence and practice of Sámi artists. Katarina Barruk was born in the ubmejesámie area, where access to the land on the coast has been lost due to border negotiations between the states of Norway and Sweden. These rights to Miärralándda are described in her latest album, Ruhttuo. Both artistically and cognitively, the consequences of national borders are present in her and other Sámi artists' stories about loss, longing, and homelands. As part of a colonized indigenous people who inhabit a homeland that is divided between Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia, it is natural for Sámi artists such as Katarina Barruk to be undefined or not limited by national borders. Like other Sámi artists, she insists on moving freely across country borders, depending on where in Sápmi and in which country the opportunity presents itself (Samtiden 2022). This mental freedom and broader area of natural impact is the invisible superpower of Sámi artists.

A Sámi artist is always connected with at least two nations: the cross-border nation in Sápmi and the nation in which the artist has a permanent address. As a result, it is often necessary to deal with differing institutions, laws, and guidelines in the respective countries included in Sápmi. Both privately and professionally, many Sámi experience these border challenges daily—problems that are directly caused by the lack of cooperation and harmonization between countries. The Sámi community extends across national borders in northern latitudes, meets Sámi and northern audiences, and is simultaneously connected to the strong global networks of indigenous peoples. The field of Sámi art and culture is characterized by few and poorly funded support programs within the Sámi community. These existing programs are even more important due to the weak infrastructure around established Sámi cultural institutions and the lack of Sámi-specific opportunities for support.

A Sámi artist is partly governed by national state priorities, which do not necessarily align with the needs of Sámi artists and are not based on Sámi worldviews. As a result, the programs and instruments developed at the state level are not necessarily aimed at the Sámi cultural field and the needs of Sámi artists. It is often challenging for both Sámi artists and cultural workers to find their place within state institutional programs and initiatives.

At the same time, it is a positive development that the level of knowledge of various national institutions is developing. The Sámi Parliament, the Saami Council, and Sámi NGOs are consulted to a greater extent than before, which opens up the possibility for more people to understand and accept the cross-border nature of the Sámi cultural field. Perhaps our invisible superpower will no longer be so invisible in the future but will become an actual power that can contribute to sustainable development for the field of art and culture in Sápmi.

Significant Global Interest in Sámi Stories

Another Sámi superpower is the international market value held by Sámi culture and art, both now and over several past centuries. Throughout history, the Sámi have been seen and described as "others"—as the exotic and wild—especially by the rest of Europe. Pictures, myths, and stories about the Sámi are often created by people other than the Sámi, for their own purposes. For example, Santa's team of reindeer actually originated in a publicity stunt in Alaska in the 19th century, in which two Sámi led a reindeer team with Santa Claus and a bag of gifts in a sled! The background to this story was that several Sámi families, with their reindeer, had been invited to Alaska to teach reindeer husbandry to the Inuit (Samuelsen & Norum 2007). Eventually, several Sámi and reindeer were used in an advertising campaign for reindeer meat from the Norwegian-American Lomen Company. The result is a story that the whole world knows today.

Walt Disney Animation Studios' giant success *Frozen* was inspired by Sámi stories and culture. In the work on the sequel, Walt Disney Animation Studios signed an agreement of cooperation with the Saami Council and Sámi parliaments in Norway, Sweden, and Finland to ensure a sensitive and appropriate use of Sámi cultural property. In this agreement, they also committed

to dubbing *Frozen II* into Northern Sámi, and Sámi youth received the opportunity to participate in Walt Disney's internship programs.

Disney+ has now started filming a drama series based on author Mikael Niemi's latest novel *To Cook a Bear* (*Koka björn*, 2019). Several other international and Nordic film production companies have approached the International Sámi Film Institute and are interested in Sámi stories and filmmakers. Interest particularly increased after the award-winning success of *Sami Blood* (*Sameblod*, 2016) by filmmaker Amanda Kernell. During the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), three films from Sápmi were selected (ISFI 2023). By way of comparison, only two films from Norway were selected. Recently, Netflix Original Productions also entered the Sámi film world with a film recording of Ann-Helén Laestadius' book *Stolen* (*Stöld*, 2021), directed by Elle Márjá Eira. This is the first time Netflix has produced a Sámi feature film. Behind the scenes of the Netflix film are the International Sámi Film Institute's hard-working team members, who have ensured that the film process involves Sámi expertise at all stages—in an excellent example of how important strong Sámi art and cultural institutions are. "Nothing about us, without us" is a concrete demand from indigenous peoples in all parts of the world that entails the acceptance that indigenous cultures are the cultural property of indigenous people and targets those who aim to use or commercialize indigenous knowledge, art, stories, aesthetic expressions, and other cultural property. This requirement is anchored in Article 31.1 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect, and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies, and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports, and traditional games, and visual and performing art. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect, and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

Indigenous people worldwide see their cultural property stolen, copied, or misused. The commercialization of indigenous people's cultural property is common and generally happens without their consent and with no benefit to them. This "trend" is in the process of reversing, but it still requires majority populations to accept our self-determination. Indigenous peoples around the world are asserting their right to tell their own stories and determine the use of their cultural property, including its possible commercialization. And it is the genuine Sámi stories, art, and products that we experience that have real market value.

The Tjállegoahte—Sámi Writers' Center reports an increasing demand for Sámi literature and stories. In recent years, several Sámi authors have been nominated and won Sweden's most prestigious literary prize, the August Prize, including Elin Anna Labba, Linnea Axelsson, and Moa Backe Åstot, to name just a few. Sámi literature has been sold to institutions in several countries, including the previously mentioned *Stöld* (2021) by Ann-Helén Laestadius. As another example, Tina Harnesk's novel *Folk som sår i snö* (2022) was sold to publishers in 13 countries only a week after publication. Both titles were awarded with the Swedish prize "Book of the year" in 2021 and 2023, respectively. On the Finnish side, Niillas Holmberg's debut novel *Halla Helle* (2021) has become a bestseller, and his novel has also been sold abroad. Recently, Holmberg received the national award *Eino Leino* for his writing (Kelemeny 2023). On the Norwegian side, author Kathrine Nedrejord, among others, has been praised for her novels. This is an impressive and far from complete list that shows that Sámi film, literature, and stories are of high quality, capturing audiences all over the world, and the demand for them is high. This great international interest has contributed to an increasing Nordic interest in Sámi art and culture. But how is the field of art and culture in Sápmi coping with these new opportunities?

The Status Quo for Kultur-Sápmi

There is virtually no research or statistics that can provide a picture of the current situation for the cultural field in Sápmi. However, the Saami Council's report from the think-tank Kultur-Sápmi provides some insight. The think-tank was established by the Saami Council and consists of individual Sámi

artists and cultural institutions. The report, which examines "the Sámi cultural field today with thoughts about a strengthened self-determination for the future Sámi art and cultural field," concludes that the Sámi field is characterized by a great and growing interest but also by severely underfunded cultural institutions and insufficient human resources. The think-tank Kultur-Sápmi believes that strong Sámi cultural institutions and a strengthened Sámi artistic freedom are fundamental prerequisites for the ability to work long-term and to strategically develop the Sámi field and, not least, the Sámi brand. The think-tank considers that the status quo of the Sámi field is an unrealized and great potential, and that sustainable development in the field consists of supporting Sámi art and cultural expression and institutions on the Sámi peoples' own terms.

The Tjállegoahte—Sámi Writers' Center is an example of the importance of establishing Sámi support programs. Since its creation in 2018, Sámi-language book publishing in Sweden has increased from 0.2 books per year in a 5-year period to 1.6 books per year—an increase of 700%. Through Tjállegoahte's activities, a home for Sámi literature has been established, and Sámi authors have been presented at festivals and to magazines, publishers, libraries, and readers. The center helps writers find support and grants and offers skill-enhancing courses and lectures. Sámi publishing houses are small, and many are run almost exclusively on a non-profit basis. There is a lack of resources and capacity to compete with national publishers and to market literature written in Sámi languages. There is also a lack of literary training, translators, lecturers, editors, support programs, and scholarships. The entire chain of the literary infrastructure in Sápmi needs a concentrated effort for Sámi literature to reach its full potential. The authors who achieve success outside of Sápmi are those who write in the majority languages and are published by large national publishers. The world wants to read Sápmi's stories, and Sámi authors want nothing more than to tell their stories. Despite Tjállegoahte's impressive results, it struggles to obtain full financing for its operations. Most of its activity is project-funded, which means that a considerable amount of resources goes to project administration, instead of actively supporting Sámi literature.

Sápmi: A Project-Financed Nation

Like many sectors in Sápmi, most Sámi cultural institutions are project-financed, and Tjállegoahte's everyday life is transferable to the Sámi cultural field as a whole. This is a structural challenge and a direct result of the Sámi Parliament's cultural budget alone lacking the muscle to support and develop the cultural field in Sápmi in accordance with the existing needs. The Sámi community is simply unable to meet the community's needs on its own while simultaneously responding to a growing demand from an external market. This makes Sámi art and culture workers very vulnerable and increasingly dependent on state support programs—with their associated consequences—to succeed.

The International Sámi Film Institute (ISFI) is a good example of the current situation of Sámi cultural institutions. Before the establishment of ISFI in 2009, only a few Sámi feature films had been produced, including *Ofelaš—Veiviseren* (1987) by director Nils Gaup. Today, however, the field of Sámi film showcases over a hundred new Sámi films in various genres. A new generation of Sámi filmmakers is making an international mark and winning awards at the largest and most important of the world's film festivals. ISFI has supported these new Sámi film talents since its inception and has established a strong international film network. Film is expensive to produce and often requires a significant budget to be realized. ISFI's annual budget is 20 million SEK, which has been built up slowly but surely since the institution's inception in 2009. In comparison, the Norwegian Film Institute, regional film centers, and various film-related foundations had a budget framework of 930 million NOK in 2023.

Many people might argue that these state and regional funds are also available to Sámi films. Nevertheless, few Sámi filmmakers have managed to pass through the eye of the national needle. This fact was highlighted in a panel debate on artistic freedom during an international summit, the Indigenous Film Conference 2023: Reconciliation and New Futures, held in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) in August 2023.[2] The problem of the Sámi support programs being insufficient to provide the cultural field in Sápmi with the lift it needs was discussed during the conference as a real threat to artistic freedom

2 The program for the conference can be found on ISFI's homepage: isfi.no/article/ifc23-program.

in Sápmi. "I am free in the creation, but not in the production phase," said filmmaker Márjá Bål Nango during a panel discussion in which several other indigenous filmmakers participated.

There can be a significant difference in perspective between the majority community's view of what cinematic stories people want to support and the stories Sámi filmmakers want to tell. The right to tell the Sámi story cannot depend on whether those who control funding want to hear the story. To receive national funding, filmmakers must adapt to the majority's perspective and the Norwegian, Swedish, and Finnish national narratives far too often.

In her keynote address during the conference, the director of ISFI, Anne Lajla Utsi, stated:

> Since 2015, with limited funds, ISFI has supported new Sámi feature films. We have 10 new feature films that will go into production in the next few years, and several new drama series. Sara Margrethe Oskal's feature film *Eallogierdu—The Tundra Within Me* (2023) was produced with only funds from ISFI, the Sámi Parliament, Filmfond Nord, and the filmmaker's own investments. We can't wait to celebrate this film in Toronto in September. The Norwegian Film Institute rejected this production application five times. This shows the importance of increased production financing for ISFI. It is crucial for the Sámi future that we Sámi have control over our own narrative landscape. We know what stories our people need, and they come from an authentic place; and as such they become universal and world audiences now embrace our stories.

Because ISFI does not currently have the means to provide Sámi film with full funding, it is essential for ISFI to establish good collaborations with others and to develop Sámi professional expertise to support these collaborations. Through these measures, ISFI has sought to realize the goal for it to be the Sámi artists themselves who tell their own stories. ISFI currently collaborates with various recognized international players in the film industry, such as Netflix, Disney Animation Studios, NRK, the Oscar Academy, the Cannes

film festival, and the Canada Media Fund, to name just a few. In this way, ISFI is opening up completely new and exciting international opportunities for the Sámi film industry, with the concrete result of several upcoming Sámi feature films and series. The need for international partnerships, however, reflects an underlying systemic criticism of the Nordic funding system for film.

The Sámi artist network Dáiddadállu was established in Guovdageaidnu in 2014, with the aim of forming an autonomous art collective grounded in Sámi values, practices, and knowledge traditions. Dáiddadállu recognized the need for Sámi artists in Guovdageaidnu to work and develop in an artistic environment, while acknowledging the need to support each other's business development. Both aspects were based on a mobilization of Sámi collective solutions. Dáiddadállu struck an important pulse in both the Sámi and the international art world. Today, Dáiddadállu consists of 21 artists and companies, and artists from all over Sápmi are on a waiting list to be accepted as full members of the artist collective. Dáiddádállu quickly discovered the growing international interest in Sámi art and the need for artistically competent support structures with the knowledge to disseminate and develop Sámi art on their own terms. In line with many inquiries from both the Sámi community and national and international actors, this small organization has been pushed to its limits, attempting to answer the inquiries with limited funds and staffing. Today, Dáiddadállu is a well-known name in the global art world and has contributed to establishing Guovdageaidnu and Sápmi on the map as valued art destinations for art communities worldwide. The potential of this artist network is still unfulfilled. Dáiddadállu appreciates both the need and opportunities in the cross-border catchment area and has the ambitious intention to open up membership throughout Sápmi. Financing such a goal requires administrative resources, as there are few programs that support such activities. This brings us back to the Sámi society's lack of muscle for building strong, stable, and necessary cultural institutions in Sápmi.

From Border Obstacles to Limitless Opportunities?

In their report, Kultur-Sápmi's think-tank makes the following comment about border obstacles:

> Even with a broad catchment area in the market, the market potential is still felt to be untapped, especially due to the various border obstacles such as customs, VAT, and the lack of support programs that stimulate mobility. For example, it is both demanding and expensive to travel with theater and performing arts productions across borders, to sell your products across borders, to participate in sales fairs across borders, and the like. (Kultur-Sápmi 2022: 6)

All Sámi festivals and institutions work across borders, even though this is rarely part of the national commitment letters, which tend to focus on activities within the respective national borders. This is challenge for cooperation in the Sámi field, as national support programs force Sámi institutions to either prioritize their activities within the respective national borders or work beyond their resources for something that is a necessity for them.

There are currently two Sámi national theaters: *Beaivváš Sámi Našunálateáhter* on the Norwegian side and *Giron Sámi teáhter* on the Swedish side. *Beaivváš* regularly tours Finland and Sweden without financial support from those countries. The Sámi national institutions are found in several locations in Sápmi, which corresponds to an infrastructure that the cultural field in Sápmi needs, since Sápmi is so large in area. But there are few funds to facilitate strategic collaboration between cultural institutions, and there is a great unfulfilled potential for the theaters to collaborate on the recruitment and education of Sámi professionals in the performing arts.

Despite these structural challenges, the festivals and cultural institutions try to maintain and strengthen cooperation, closeness, and a common knowledge-building for the whole of Sápmi. The immediate cross-border activities of the Sámi cultural institutions help to bring together and strengthen the Sámi cultural field as a common cross-border community, and thus help to strengthen Sámi society. A future goal for Sámi cultural institutions and artistic support programs should be to reduce the effects of borders and strengthen the cross-border area of reach for Sámi artists and artists. In an interview with *Samtiden,* Barruk explained that her Norwegian connection started in 2012, when she was chosen as the young artist of the year at the indigenous festival Riddu Riđđu: "Since everything started there, it was as if

all the contacts I made and built on were on the Norwegian side of Sápmi" (Samtiden 2022).

In addition to creating opportunities for young Sámi artists with initiatives such as the "young artist of the year," the Riddu Riđđu festival started an internationalization program with the aim of bringing Sámi music and culture to the world and formalizing the indigenous networks between the Sámi and other indigenous peoples. This in itself is an effective way of reaching out to the world. In the absence of governmental dissemination and internationalization bodies that include the Sámi field, Sámi festivals have played an important role as facilitators of the export and dissemination of Sámi art and culture. This role and accompanying knowledge building should be mapped, formalized, and supported as a key endeavor toward strengthening the Sámi cultural field's ability to accommodate the great interest in Sámi art and culture in a sustainable way. There is a need for a solid knowledge base in order to be able to form strategies and prioritize areas of effort. These must be anchored in Sámi society's values and sustainability principles before being raised to a strategic level; only then will the Sámi understanding of sustainability be incorporated into management tools. Today, there are many questions that Kultur-Sápmi needs answered—and we need to be in dialogue with all the players in a very diverse field before launching a joint venture. Do all Sámi artists and cultural actors want to break through internationally, or what values are found in the Nordic area of influence? What are the Sámi cultural field's ambitions and requirements for export? What does it mean to be export-ready, and what instruments can strengthen the cultural industries in Sápmi? Do these instruments differ from those that are functioning well in the Norwegian cultural industries? What basic infrastructure must be established to support the Sámi field? How can we achieve a strengthened alliance with already-established national support programs based on the requirements of the Sámi field?

In 2022, a historic Sámi event occurred when Sámi art became the center of attention during the world's most important art exhibition, the Venice Biennale, with the Sámi Pavilion produced by the Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA). For the first time, the Nordic pavilion was devoted exclusively to Sámi art, showcasing the artists Máret Ánne Sara, Anders Sunna, and

Fig. 2: *Girjegumpi: The Sámi Architectural Library* by Joar Nango and collaborators at the Venice Biennial for Architecture in 2023. Photo: Knut Åserud.

Pauliina Feodoroff. Great hopes were pinned on the ripple effects the Venice Biennale could have for Sámi art, culture, and tourism. Government politicians also raised the topic of what ripple effects the Biennale could result in and how Sápmi would be able to manage the subsequent demand. There is no doubt that the Sámi Pavilion contributed to increasing attention to Sámi art and culture. The Sámi Pavilion was named by many international art journals as one of the most interesting pavilions at the Biennale, and the OCA reported on widespread international press coverage by *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *Financial Times*, and *Art News*, among others. The international focus on Sámi art continued with the selection of Joar Nango and his project *Girjegumpi: The Sámi Architectural Library* for the Nordic Pavilion at the 18th Venice Biennial for Architecture in 2023, produced by ArkDes: Sweden's National Centre for Architecture and Design (fig. 2). Unfortunately, this fascinating

consideration of a strategy for the internationalization of Sámi art remains an idea that, to date, has neither been successfully initiated nor developed.

The Future is Freedom

In the poem "Afraid of the drum," artist and writer Mary Ailonieida Sombán asks what Sámi art would look like if colonization had never taken place (2020: 52–53). While this is an impossible question to answer, it is an important question to ask, precisely because such a rewriting of the past can create new collective visions that are essential for the future of the cultural field in Sápmi. Who are we without colonization, and who can we become? We must create our own visions and our own goals to build a future anchored in Sámi societal values, knowledge, and premises for sustainability. If we considered only our own needs, challenges, and solutions, what would the support structure—which appears to be largely absent today—look like for the field of Sámi art and culture? What prevents the further development of these concepts?

While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's work in Finland and Sweden is still in the initial phase, the Commission recently concluded in Norway, presenting a 700-page report that illustrates the brutal consequences of Norwegianization for the survival of the Sámi language, culture, and people (TRC 2022–2023). The report sadly confirms that Norwegianization is still ongoing. The Commission provides us with a background from which to understand the present. The report demonstrates that art and cultural institutions have been central in uniting the Norwegian population into a collective "we" across the country. One of the important elements in building the Norwegian cultural nation was a community founded on a common language and a common cultural heritage. In this image, the Sámi were incorporated into the Norwegian community, were completely absent, or were assigned the role of "foreign nations" or "others." Therefore, art and cultural institutions must bear their share of the responsibility. Recognizing their responsibility could lead these central institutions to develop decolonialization strategies to address these past and present structural challenges and thereby rectify the differential treatment that Sámi artists and cultural workers continue to experience.

Today, the existence and development of Sámi art are largely held hostage by the majority's definition of what counts as relevant Sámi art and by what the majority considers to be the best way to facilitate the development of Sámi art and culture with both artistic and commercial potential. A critical debate is needed on the role national institutions and support programs could play in strengthening Sámi artistic freedom. Paradoxically, Sámi are still understood to be the "others" within the national collective, treated as an exotic addition that makes the total more colorful and stunning. Imprisoned in this paradox, it is not so strange that budgetary priorities that should include the Sámi remain within national structures, since Norwegian measures ostensibly include the Sámi. It is true that an increasing number of Sámi artists are receiving national support. However, since the field of art and culture in Sápmi lacks adequate Sámi support programs, our artists are forced to adapt to the nation states' priorities in the field of culture. This is an example of how active assimilation—by every definition a colonization process—still takes place in the Nordic countries.

The main premise in the fields of Nordic art and culture is artistic freedom, but the fact that artistic freedom for the majority "we" is not the same as that for the Sámi nation's art field is not taken into consideration. Today, the Sámi art field and Sámi society itself have far too limited power, influence, and freedom to develop Sámi art according to Sámi wishes and requirements. If we are to see our future in a new and different light, we need the nation states to change their understanding of the reality of the majority's "we" and to support and enable the Sámi to take power and responsibility for developing our art and cultural field ourselves.

As a reader, you might be a bit confused now, wondering whether national support programs should no longer support Sámi art. The answer is that the state and regional support programs naturally have a responsibility for the Sámi field. However, as long as funding for Sámi support programs and institutions comprises little more than decorative words and empty promises in state party speeches, rather than offering real opportunities for the support and development of the potential of Sámi art and culture on Sámi terms, we still lack real artistic freedom.

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About Sámi Realities: Is Sámi Knowledge Important for the Management, Interpretation, and Communication of Sámi Art and Duodji?

Gry Fors Spein

Is Sámi knowledge important for the management, interpretation, and communication of Sámi art and duodji? While this is obviously a rhetorical question, it has a double meaning—like many questions that originate in the Sámi world. As both a Sámi duodjár (master craftsman) and a curator, I am seeing a troubling tendency. At the same time as Sámi art and duodji have become more visible in arenas outside of Sápmi, expertise in Sámi language, culture, and duodji is diminishing in national and international institutions' interpretation and communication of Sámi art and duodji. What are the consequences of this tendency to not regard Sámi competence in curation, language, and culture as being critical for the management of Sámi art and duodji?

In this article, I reflect on what the term "decolonialization" means within curatorial practices in relation to the management, interpretation, and communication of Sámi art and duodji. The focal point of this article is the current increased visibility and interest in Sámi art outside of Sápmi. Since 2016, Office for Contemporary Art Norway (OCA) has been one of the leading institutions working to bring Sámi art into new national and international arenas. OCA argues that decolonization should be an ethical imperative for the entire art field, involving radical changes in the composition of personnel, activities, and the public (Falkenås 2017). In just a few years, OCA has established itself as an important institution in the field of Sámi art, not least by facilitating the invitation of Sámi artists to exhibit at important national and international art venues. However, who these exhibitions of Sámi art are intended for is one of several issues that needs to be discussed in Sápmi, together with questions such as: Is bringing Sámi art and duodji to new national and international arenas important for developing art that reflects

Sámi philosophies, is based on Sámi knowledge, and reflects questions that are important in Sápmi? And, if so, how? What are we to make of the fact that, while Sámi art is being promoted internationally, expertise in Sámi language, culture, and aesthetics seems to become less and less important in the curation of Sámi art and duodji? Are there Sámi practices and areas of knowledge that have been overshadowed by the important national and international interest in Sámi art? What understandings of decolonialization can be conveyed by exhibitions that lack curatorial competency in Sámi language, cultural history, and duodji? Are changes in the composition of staff, programs, and activities in majority institutions sufficient tools to effectuate a real decolonization?

In this essay, I argue that, in order to achieve Sámi artistic, curatorial, and duodji autonomy, it is necessary to focus on Sámi historical traumas as intergenerational traumas that need to be addressed. Measures that include the Sámi and emphasize the Sámi language, culture, traditions, and philosophy constitute decolonization. To prevent decolonialization from being reduced to a rhetorical term used to whitewash art arenas and established majority curators unwilling to relinquish power and influence, we must bring questions of Sámi self-determination to the forefront in discourse on Sámi art.

Sámi Art and Philosophy

In 2017, OCA launched a program titled "Indigenous Art and Thought" as a central pivot for their focus on Sámi art, activism, and philosophies (OCA 2017). The connection between the work of the hand and philosophy has long historical roots in Sámi thinking and practices. Material extraction from nature, decor, design, spirituality, and the use and meaning of duodji objects are not separate but are part of something much larger in which respect and understanding for culture, traditions, and nature come into play. This is reflected in both duodji and *dáidda*, as well as in Sámi writing and storytelling. In 1910, the book *Muitalus sámiid birra* by Johan Turi was published (Turi 2010). This book is Turi's unique attempt to communicate the Sámi world to the majority population in order to enable others to understand the Sámi better. Despite the unfinished legacy of the Norwegianization policy, with its silent ambition to eradicate Sámi culture, generations of Sámi artists and duojarat have followed in Turi's footsteps and continued to insist that Sámi knowledge and aesthetics are central to Sámi existence.

Carola Grahn is one of several Sámi artists who have contributed to public discussions on the strategies that majority institutions in the Nordic countries have for Sámi art. In her article "The delicate difference between 'thinking at the edge of the world' and thinking about the edge of the world" (2017), she writes:

> To frame Sámi art as political and tied to a world radically altered from the rest of Scandinavia is to confirm an already narrow idea of our community. To do so is to tuck the Sámi people (and artists) back into the box that many of us are trying to crawl out of. Gestures of this sort enhance the idea that we exist, that we live, as a radical "other" that is significantly different from the norm. (Grahn 2017: 32)

Grahn underscores the importance of having a Sámi curatorial practice that reflects Sámi knowledge and traditions rather than catering to the ideas and whims of the majority culture. How can curatorial practices address historical traumas and the established power relations that exist in encounters between Sámi art, curators, and national and international art institutions? How can the attention directed both previously and presently toward Sámi art and duodji in majority contexts help to formulate new visions built on respect for Sámi philosophy, knowledge, and cultural understanding?

The questions and reflections that I bring up in this text are rooted in my own experience as a Sámi duodji practitioner for 40 years. Following Iver Jåks, duodji is far more than just a way to make a living (which is described in Sámi by the concept of *birgen*). Duodji expresses a belief that there is a future for the Sámi people (Gaski & Guttorm 2020: 131). For me, as it was for Jåks, duodji is a way to get closer to my family's knowledge and traditions and to be involved in shaping a Sámi future. Knowledge, practice, and the experiences I have from duodji and duodji philosophy have given me a deeper understanding of how to convey the stories of artists and duodji practitioners. This knowledge is integrated into my curatorial practice.

Duodji refers to creative acts in a broad sense; the term is difficult to translate into another language because the concept consists of many different approaches to design, techniques, materials, and spirituality. Duodji termin-

ology is rich and is an important part of the knowledge tradition. My thinking about duodji practice as bodily knowledge can be seen in relation to philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's use of art as a reference point to examine the body's importance for consciousness (Merleau-Ponty 1994). His philosophical texts have been important in shaping thinking around the embodied mind and how the world of life is shaped by encounters with other people and, in part, in accordance with other people's experiences. Merleau-Ponty argues that the complete meaning of a language cannot be translated into another language, partly because an expression can contain bodily knowledge. Tore Nordenstam (2013) also reminds us to be careful when translating specific concepts from one language to another. In translation, important knowledge and connections can be lost.

This perspective influences how I think about duodji and the transfer of knowledge about duodji. The idea that bodily knowledge is related to local practices of historically shared knowledge is useful for understanding how duodji design can indicate a practitioner's regional affiliations. An expert eye can also identify civil status and family affiliation through pattern, color composition, or ornamentation on the object. In addition, it is possible to identify the renewal that Sámi knowledge traditions allow. In his book *Den levende erfaring* (The living experience), Jens Ivar Nergård (2006) writes that Sámi stories belong to a practical and oral tradition of knowledge that is the backbone of practical knowledge. The stories are living materials that bind together traditions, ways of life, and insight. The narratives serve different purposes that are important for common understanding and a collective memory of Sámi traditions and the interpretation and course of events. Sometimes the stories present morals and rules for living; at other times, they illustrate concrete experiences and practical insight and knowledge. The stories tie together ways of life, insight, and tradition (see also Nergård 2019). Interpreting and curatorial mediation of duodji requires special insight into the complex contexts and implicit narratives that are embodied in duodji. This knowledge is also place-specific; there are different aesthetic expressions, memories, ornamentation, color combinations, and so forth in different Sámi areas and among different Sámi groups, which have been developed over time and tell local stories.

Through my own practice of duodji, practical experience, and knowledge, I help to care for and pass on duodji traditions from my own region, Láhppi gielda/Loppa municipality. In this way, traditional knowledge and stories are maintained. According to silversmith and duojár Petteri Laiti, duojár is a recognized status an individual receives after an apprenticeship of at least 10 years.[1] A duojár is especially skilled, has the right "eye," possesses Sámi cultural expertise, and has a participant's cultural perspective. A duojár must have an extensive register of knowledge that has been acquired through generations and through the individual's own experiences. During the extraction of materials or work with duodji, there can be a spiritual dimension that must be considered. An individual receives recognition as a duojár from others. When someone does not know the term duojár and applies the term to people who have only worked superficially and minimally with duodji, it can be experienced as a rejection of the recognition that should belong to a collective of practitioners who qualify a person to be a duojár. As resource persons and supervisors with experience-based knowledge, elders in Sámi society have played the important role of passing on culture and traditions. Continuity in the transfer of professional knowledge forms the basis for competence, understanding, and insight into Sámi culture.

The Living Colonial Legacy

In 2017, the Norwegian Parliament appointed a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the Norwegianization policy and the injustices committed against Sámi, Kven, and Norwegian Finns. The Commission's task was to investigate and document the ideology and goals that formed the assimilation policy, the means used to implement it, and the effect it has had on individuals and groups. The Norwegian Truth and Reconciliation Report, presented in June 2023, reveals that the policy of Norwegianization resulted in experiences of loss and trauma that are felt even in our time (TRC 2023).

In the book *Dialoger med naturen* (Dialogues with nature), Jens Ivar Nergård (2019) reflects on how trauma is internalized and transmitted between

1 Sámi Center for Contemporary Art, "Kunstner i fokus: Petteri Laiti." https://samidaiddaguovddas.no/kunstner-i-fokus-petteri-laiti-01-10-15-11-2020/

generations. He describes the internal effects of the external colonization of Sápmi from the middle of the 18th century. Loss of land and loss of language and culture are closely woven together. The colonization and forced displacement in Sápmi led to small and vulnerable language groups being threatened; in this way, the inner landscape of the affected individuals was also threatened. The internal colonization of Sápmi, with the general attitude that Sámi language and culture were worthless, led to both language and culture disappearing in many places. Today, Sámi languages are on UNESCO's list of the world's most endangered languages (Kommunal- og distriktsdepartementet 2022). During the official period of the Norwegianization policy, which started gradually in the 1850s and intensified in the decades leading up to the 1960s, Sámi cultural heritage was not prioritized in Norwegian public policy or in the state's budgetary priorities. It was not until the 1970s that the first Sámi artists' organization was established.

The policy of Norwegianization—which is still ongoing today—continues to leave its mark on the Sámi population and Sámi society. The policy's everyday racism and an extensive underestimation of the harm the policy has inflicted on individuals have left a deep mark on both those affected by it and their descendants. Negative comments and harassment of the Sámi are still experienced today. Norwegianization has affected several generations, and many Sámi carry with them the sense that their culture and language should be suppressed (Dahl 1957; Lund, Boine & Johansen 2005). Today, it is recognized that we—the descendants of those who directly experienced the worst and most serious episodes of this process—are burdened with grief and anger due to what our ancestors experienced. In the international research literature, the term "historical trauma" is used to shed light on the long-term effects of colonialism on indigenous people (Smallwood, Woods, Power & Usher 2021).

Clinical child and youth psychologist Elisabeth Gerhardsen and psychology specialist and researcher Anne Silviken have clinical experience with historical trauma and have worked on documenting and finding treatment methods for the psychological remnants that have persisted and are transmitted between generations because of Norwegianization. In Gerhardsen's 2018 lecture "Når spor av krenkelser går i arv" (When traces of violations are inherited), given under the auspices of SANKS: Sámisk nasjonal kompetansetjeneste—psykisk

helsevern og rus (Sámi national competency services—mental health and substance abuse), she relates clinical experiences that illustrate how the events of the past still affect and interweave with the present (Gerhardsen 2018). The content of the lecture included historical traumas in Sámi contexts, how the experiences of the past still affect Sámi today, and the psychological traces observed in clinical experiences.

Psychologist Cecile Kolflaaht Larsen (2022) uses the term "structural violence" to describe colonialism as state abuses against people. Larsen, who is employed by the National Sámi Competence Center (NASÁG/NASAK), argues that Norwegianization has resulted in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among many Sámi. She also points to epigenetic research on intergenerational trauma, which several researchers claim leads to genetic changes in the DNA system. In this way, traumas from the past are experienced today, without the affected person being directly exposed to the specific traumas. In addition, trauma does not just remain in the psyche and the body of the victim; it also affects the psyche and body of the abuser. According to Larsen, if structural trauma is not repaired, this transfer of effects continues for generations.

Making Sámi Art, Duodji, and Culture Visible

The political and embodied effects of colonialism are central in the work by the Sámi artists Pauliina Feodoroff, Máret Ánne Sara and Anders Sunna exhibited at the international art exhibition, the 59th *La Biennale di Venezia* in 2022. As the commissioner of the Nordic pavilion, OCA decided to transform the platform into the Sámi Pavilion. Katya García-Antón, the director of OCA at the time, was the leading curator of the Sámi Pavilion, working with a curatorial team comprised of co-curators Beaska Niillas and Liisa-Rávná Finbog and curatorial assistants Liv Brissach, Raisa Porsanger, and Martina Petrelli.

During the opening week of the Sámi Pavilion in Venice, OCA collaborated with the Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art (SDG), the Saami Council, and the Sámi Parliament in Norway in what they called "a Sámi curator kick-off programme," presented as a "lifetime opportunity" for "all with an interest or experience in curating concerning dáidda, duodji, yoik, story-telling and other areas, and their interconnectedness to land" (OCA 2022). García-Antón,

Kristoffer Dolmen (the then-director of Sámi Centre for Contemporary Art), and Silja Somby (adviser to the Sámi Parliament) were responsible for the selection of participating candidates; they chose a group of young Sámi curators who were engaged in art, culture, and music. Established Sámi curators with curatorial training were not invited to participate in the project. While the Sámi adherence to the principle of "the elders" as important teachers for new generations was highlighted in the Sámi Pavilion, with the three selected artists being connected to elders who functioned as mentors during the development of the project and who were invited to the grand opening in Venice, this was not the case for the curatorial kick-off program. No experienced Sámi curators were invited to participate and exchange knowledge with the new curators-to-come.

This tendency to ignore Sámi curatorial competence is also reflected in recent institutional projects and commissions. In 2022, KORO: Public Art Norway encouraged Sámi curators to apply for the job of curating the decoration of a new building in Kautokeino housing both the Sámi National Theater/Beaivváš Sámi Našunálateáhter and the Sámi High School and Reindeer Herding School/Sámi joatkkaskuvla ja boazodoalloskuvla, designed by the architectural firm Snøhetta in collaboration with architects from 70° North (Romsa/Tromsø) and the Sámi architect and artist Joar Nango. However, the curatorial assignment was not awarded to a curator with competence in Sámi language and culture, although KORO had presented these criteria as central in its call for proposals. Instead, the task went to a curator with experience from festivals and art spaces in the North, including art by the national minority Kven. In fact, Kven art and culture is far from identical to Sámi art and culture. KORO's decision, which ignored its own criteria of having competence in Sámi language and culture, raises many questions. I was a member of a curatorial team consisting of Sandra West (duojar, former festival manager and current adviser to the President of the Sámi Parliament), Leif Magne Tangen (former director of the Tromsø Center for Contemporary Art, with 25 years of experience as a curator), and myself that applied for the assignment. Together, our team had significant and complex professional expertise in Sámi language, culture, art, and duodji, as well as more than three decades of practice and education in the curatorial field. When our proposal

was rejected, we appealed this decision and requested an explanation for the reasoning behind it. The response we received from KORO director Sigurd Sverdrup Sandmo stated the following:

> A complaint has been made about the appointment of a curator for the co-location project Beaivváš Sámi National Theatre and Sámi High School and Reindeer Herding School, dated 14 June [2022] this year. It is correct that you point out that KORO has worked purposefully to recruit Sámi curatorial expertise for this work, partly through the initial project with Joar Nango, partly through the call for proposals you also refer to. The selection of a curator for the assignment took place after an overall assessment of the status of a project with many stakeholders, with an emphasis on both curatorial expertise and experience from similar projects. In addition to a relevant curatorial professional background, it was particularly important to ensure good processes between the client, recipients, architect, and other stakeholders, as well as with the Sámi art field.[2]

My aim in calling attention to KORO's decision and Sandmo's response is not to cast doubt on the competence or regional knowledge of the curator who was chosen for the task. Rather, I wish to point to how the call for "Sámi language and cultural competence" originally emphasized in the call for proposals was devalued and superseded in relation to "curatorial expertise and experience from similar projects." I interpret this to mean that experience working with Kven art is regarded as equivalent to experience working with Sámi art. To think that experience with art by a national minority is equivalent to expertise in Indigenous Sámi art shows a complete lack of respect for and understanding of Sámi art and its uniqueness.

Several other exhibits similarly illustrate the point that projects and exhibitions with Sámi artists are curated without the involvement of Sámi curatorial competence. The influential art exhibition Documenta 14, which was held in Athens in Greece and Kassel in Germany in 2017, gave special

2 Letter from Sigurd Sverdrup Sandmo, June 27, 2023: KORO Ref. 21/00169-34 / SSS.

attention to minoritized and Indigenous artists. OCA and Katya García-Antón were instrumental in facilitating a visit to Sápmi for the curatorial team from Documenta. One of the visitors was Candice Hopkins, a curator and writer of Tlingit descent from Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada. Six Sami artists ended up being invited to exhibit at Documenta: Hans Ragnar Mathisen, Máret Ánne Sara, Britta Marakatt-Labba, Synnøve Persen, and Joar Nango. But Sami curators were neither consulted nor invited to contribute to the installation of the show.

In 2017, the national Sámi anniversary Tråante 2017 took place, marking and celebrating the first meeting of political representatives from across Sápmi, which took place in the Trondheim Methodist Church on February 6, 1917. Common challenges and matters affecting the Sámi in Sápmi were discussed there. One hundred years later, the topics discussed during the meeting in 1917—from questions on Sámi political organization, school systems, information work, and the struggle for land for reindeer herding—are still relevant (Sámediggi 2018). Several events in 2017 focused on Sami art and duodji. OCA followed up their program on "Indigenous art and thought" with the ambitious traveling group exhibition *Let the River Flow* (2018), which focused on the protest movement against the damming of the Áltá-Guovdageaidnu water system, and its legacy today. The exhibition included archival material and works by predominantly Sámi artists and was curated by OCA's director, García-Antón, in collaboration with Antonio Cataldo. Sami curatorial expertise was not involved.

In November 2016, Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum/The Art Museum of Northern Norway (NNKM), then under director Jérémie McGowan, and Riddo-DuottarMuseat (RDM), with director Anne Mai Olli, entered a collaboration on a project entitled *There Is No* to mark the lack of a Sámi art museum. On February 15, 2017, the NNKM was replaced by the fictitious *Sámi Dáidda-musea*[x], which was filled with Sámi art and duodji from the Sámi art magazine in Karasjok. The exhibition was presented as a "museum performance" which, in addition to McGowan, involved the curator Charis Gullickson, the Duksun carpentry workshop, and Anne May Olli, who represented Sámi expertise as the director of the four Sámi museums and the art collection that is part of RDM.

There Is No received considerable attention. It focused on the differential treatment of Norwegian and Sámi art and the obvious fact that both the Sámi Parliament and the Sámi population want Sámi art to be safeguarded and disseminated by a Sámi institution and in line with Sámi philosophy and culture. The exhibition emphasized that a Sámi art institution should be a place where work is done to formulate what Sámi art is, what and how Sámi art and duodji should be communicated, how it is discussed, and—not least—for whom Sámi art should have value. These points were reflected in the exhibition catalog from NNKM:

> A high-quality Sámi art museum is invaluable for Sápmi and the northern regions. […] The provisional fictitious museum will be a boundary-breaking institution, a carrier of culture and an arena for cultural exchange, knowledge, research, and development. The museum will make visible and disseminate knowledge about Sámi and other indigenous art, not least through its targeted investment in interpretation and education for both children and adults. (NNKM 2017)

Paradoxically, the needs and concerns of the Sámi people are not mentioned in this description. Moreover, the exhibition mainly presents Sámi art as part of a larger "arena for cultural exchange" and tourism, which every nation considers to be important.

What Is Sámi with a Sámi Art Museum?

The Sámi Parliament contributes to the establishment and operation of important Sámi institutions. Behind the Sámi Parliament's funding of these institutions are language and cultural policy goals, among other motivations. In the Sámi Parliament's report on Sámi cultural institutions, the latter are described as organizations that function in a Sámi context and for a Sámi public, and that safeguard Sámi language and culture. The purpose of most Sámi cultural institutions is to use, make visible, develop, and communicate Sámi languages (Sámediggi 2015). Considering this purpose, it is interesting to consider what skills the Sámi Parliament requires when management of the Sámi Parliament's art collection—currently managed by the Sámi museum RDM—is discussed.

In a commentary article on the process of establishing a Sámi art museum, Sámi Parliament Council member Maja Kristine Jåma decribes her position regarding the skills necessary for handling the Sámi Parliament's art collection:

> The Sámi Parliament Council believes that the institutions and museums supported by the Parliament must be capable of implementing their social mission. The Sámi Parliament's policy in the museum field is founded on the principle that the Sámi have the right to own and manage their own cultural heritage as part of indigenous rights. It is important to have a good knowledge of Sámi relations, history, and the present so that the content is interpreted correctly and thus communicated in a correct and considerate way. That is what makes the Sámi museums unique. We have confidence that our institutions have the necessary competence, both professional and linguistic competence, to manage our cultural heritage in a good way. These institutions are also important in their local communities, both as meeting places and language arenas. They contribute to the visibility of language. (Jåmå 2022)

She also emphasizes the responsibilities of Norwegian institutions:

> It is not only the Sámi community's responsibility to document and communicate Sámi art and culture. Norwegian institutions also have a responsibility as part of their social role and mission. Therefore, we work to ensure that national and regional museums and cultural institutions have Sámi art and culture as part of their activities. The Sámi Parliament has been and is still concerned that collections are disseminated to the Sámi people, but also to other interested parties, primarily through lending. (ibid.)

There are currently two employees at RDM who manage and hold responsibility for the Sámi Parliament's art collection. Neither of them speak Sámi languages or have any formal or professional expertise in duodji. What significance does this lack of Sámi cultural expertise have for the collection management, the provenance of the objects as site-specific ornamentation,

and the dissemination of the collection? What consequences does it have for posterity, the archive, and collaborations with external partners and institutions who borrow and curate art from the collection? These questions have not been systematically investigated, and there is a critical need for research in this area.

The political leadership in the Sámi Parliament emphasizes the importance of interpretation skills and sound knowledge of Sámi relations in the past and present. At the same time, they strive to ensure that these principles are implemented in specific projects and the institutions they support. Sámi museums have a mandate to safeguard Sámi language, culture, art, and duodji. But how will the Sámi community be able to protect its language and cultural heritage and have its own voice when no provision is made for the opportunity to use it? Can information be lost and misinterpreted when Sámi knowledge is missing? How can Sámi institutions that work with Sámi art and duodji develop terminology within art and curatorial practices if competence in Sámi culture and language is absent in those who work with the collections?

Employment in which academic competence is perceived as more valuable than professional competence is very unfortunate for Sámi institutions with a social responsibility to safeguard Sámi language and culture. Managing Sámi traditions in a responsible manner is important for the collection management, interpretation, and communication of Sámi art and duodji. Therefore, it is essential that expertise in Sámi language, culture, and duodji be emphasized by those who work in Sámi institutions with administrative responsibility for Sámi art and duodji. Sámi art terminology in the Northern, Lule, and Southern Sámi languages is little developed. When Sámi art is registered in the national digital museum database, PRIMUS, there is a lack of terminology within several artistic genres and forms. Sámi art is often described as just *dáidda* (art), regardless of the technique used. When institutions lack Sámi language competence in work with the art field, the result is undeveloped Sámi art terminology.

For example, in 2017, the Sámi artist Keviselie/Elle Hánsa/Hans Ragnar Mathisen decided to donate his artworks to the Árran Julevsáme guovdásj/Lule Sámi Center. This is a collection of approximately 10,000 to 15,000 objects, including works of art, books, archival materials, and other items.

The agreement between Árran and Hans Ragnar Mathisen was approved by the Center's board on December 15, 2017. In clear text, Árran commits to manage and store the collection in a responsible manner according to current standards in art museums for knowledge-based custodianship.

The registration process of the donated material requires competence in Northern Sámi language, tradition, and culture, as this is needed to be able to describe and read the symbolism and motifs on Mathisen's printing plates, paintings, and graphic works. One of the printing plates, for instance, depicts a figure lying on a *luovvi* (Northern Sámi) or *suoŋer* (Lule Sámi), surrounded by symbols from Sámi drums. The artist himself has registered this as *"Oaffar/offersene"* (Sacrificial scene). If one lacks Sámi cultural competence and does not know the traditions, how can one recognize a luovvi? A lack of knowledge of Sámi culture, language, and traditional knowledge impairs curation of the work and leads to insufficient registration of Sámi art and duodji collections. Hans Ragnar Mathisen believes that it is a prerequisite that those who will work with his collection possess Sámi language and cultural competence.[3] At present, there is no one at Árran with the professional expertise to care for or move the collection. The collection is of national and international importance; therefore, it should be in the care of people with the necessary professional competence to organize, register, and exhibit the collection.

Valuing Sámi Expertise

In many indigenous areas in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, ethical guidelines for research are a prerequisite for studies in indigenous areas. In Sápmi, guidelines have been established for Sámi health research, and there is an ongoing discussion on the need for other research guidelines led by the Sámi Council. In the ethical guidelines for Sámi health research, it is emphasized that respect must be shown for the Sámi language, culture, values, and traditions. The Sámi community and informants must be involved from the beginning of the project. Project groups must document that they have sufficient knowledge of Sámi traditions, history, and traditional knowledge, among other things (Sámediggi 2019). The same ethical principles of research that apply in relation to indigenous peoples in many countries

3 Private communication with Hans Ragnar Mathisen, May 16, 2022.

should apply to Norwegian institutions, to students without Sámi affiliation who want to document Sámi relationships, and to curators who want to curate Sámi art and duodji.

Institutions responsible for managing and disseminating Sámi art and duodji should have employees with Sámi cultural competence who possess education, competence, and knowledge in duodji and art. In addition to knowledge of craftmanship, they must be able to interpret Sámi symbols; understand the Sámi tradition of the object; have knowledge of the Sámi use of materials, decor, and design; understand Sámi belonging to a place; and know about the maker of the specific work. In addition, Sámi language competence is extremely important because information can be lost or misinterpreted when this knowledge is lacking. It is a difficult—even impossible—task for people who lack Sámi culture, language, and duodji expertise to successfully work with the collection management and dissemination of Sámi art and duodji.

The Sámi duojar and scholar Maja Dunfjell (2006) maintains that there are several levels of Sámi knowledge, some of which cannot be expressed in words; these occur primarily in practical actions. Practical Sámi knowledge is embodied, and the inherent understandings are carried with us as a resource. This field of knowledge consists of the artist's or craftsperson's insight and understanding, and includes doing the right things at the right time and in the right order. It is also about being able to make the right judgments and exercise "taste" based on common cultural norms.

Respect for Sámi culture is based on the involvement of those concerned. In this context, it is imperative to understand that the involvement of Sámi professional expertise in projects that concern Sámi conditions is necessary in order to gain and maintain legitimacy. Art historian Hanna Horsberg Hansen discusses this question through an analysis of NNKM's exhibition *There Is No*. By asking the question "What is a Sámi art museum?," she examines whether a Sámi art museum should be designed according to Western standards and perspectives and what principles are needed for Sámi artistic practices to become visible on Sámi terms (Horsberg Hansen 2022). In her analysis of the *There is No* exhibition, which sought to "perform" a possible future *Sámi*

Dáiddamusea[x], she pays special attention to the presentation of duodji. She notes that the exhibition's clear-cut distinction between duodji and *dáidda* appeared outdated and reflects on the effects of presenting duodji in a separate space without any explanatory texts about the duojár and the stories behind individual objects (Horsberg Hansen 2022: 235). The exhibition suffered from this lack of competence and expertise in Sámi language, culture, and duodji. Given that the exhibition was not grounded in dialogues or involvement with a broader Sámi art community, the exhibition ended up mirroring a Western understanding of what a Sámi art museum could and should be (Fors 2017).

Indigenous models for organizing art museums do exist. Hansen highlights the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA, as an example of operating an art museum centered on the involvement of Indigenous populations. The museum's effort to interpret and contextualize indigenous art and culture as part of the present is an essential model for indigenous representation. Examples such as these emphasize the importance of including Sámi in projects dealing with Sámi art and culture in all steps of the process of building new models, institutions, and structures.

Decolonization or Colonization?

Research shows that the Norwegianization policy has left its mark on the Sámi population for several generations. Today, Norwegian institutions, along with many individuals without Sámi language or cultural competence, desire to contribute and help to make Sámi culture, art, and duodji visible. This is important and beneficial. Nevertheless, it is critical for this work to remain clearly anchored in Sámi expertise in order to ensure and contribute to the preservation of knowledge traditions. Unfortunately, it is often the case that, when established Norwegian institutions, art arenas, scholars, and students want to contribute to decolonization, they do so by taking ownership of Sámi culture, art, and duodji themselves. When Sámi professional expertise or the Sámi community is not invited to take part in both the development and implementation of a Sámi-related project, that project becomes a continuation of colonialization. The same applies to Sámi institutions that favor academic qualifications over cultural competence in Sámi language, culture, art, or duodji. What significance does it have for the Sámi population when

Sámi knowledge and competence are abandoned or—at best—considered to be secondary in importance?

Research shows that trauma is inherited, and the continued exclusion of Sámi competence confirms that colonialization is still ongoing. It is important to uncover the injustice that has been and continues to be done to the Sámi community, whether it occurs within the coastal Sámi culture, the reindeer herding culture, or in Sámi art and duodji.

How Sámi curatorial practice can reflect the Sámi traditions of knowledge and what that might look like can be communicated by Sámi curators, with their cultural expertise and insight into their own culture. The Sámi Parliament should therefore enforce well-defined requirements for the institutions that receive monetary support, so that Sámi language and cultural competence are clearly protected and cultivated in Sámi institutions that manage Sámi cultural heritage, art, and duodji. Sámi language and cultural competence should be a prerequisite for employment in Sámi institutions that work with and safeguard Sámi cultural heritage, art, and duodji. The same requirements should apply to Norwegian institutions that receive funding from the Sámi Parliament and Norwegian institutions that purport to manage Sámi art and culture.

Hopefully, we will see the initiation of concrete measures in future that set requirements and are based on ethical guidelines that ensure Sámi participation and competence—institutionally, in communication, in research, and in the management, interpretation, and communication of Sámi art, duodji, and culture.

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Yielding to the Cry: Birgejupmi and Reconciliation in *Vástádus Eana* and *Birget*

Aslak Heika Hætta Bjørn

On June 1, 2023, the Commission to Investigate Norwegianization Policy and Injustice against the Sámi and Kvens/Norwegian Finns presented its report to the Norwegian Parliament. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in 2018 by the Norwegian Parliament to investigate the Norwegianization policy the Norwegian state subjected the Sámi, the Kven, and the Norwegian Finns between 1800 and 1965. Through historical studies, as well as 760 interviews and testimonies taken all over Norway, the commission collected stories about racism, injustice, and abuse carried out as part of—or as an effect of—the Norwegianization policy. In addition to revealing what happened—that is, the truth about the Norwegianization policy—the commission presented political proposals that could promote reconciliation both between the minorities and the majority, and with the Norwegianization policy and its consequences.

While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission put the final touches on the report in the spring of 2023, Sámi activists shut down the government buildings in Oslo for a week. For 8 days, the activists blocked entrances to several ministries and prevented government employees from going to work. Young Sámi were arrested by the police because they protested the lack of implementation of the Norwegian Supreme Court's judgment stating that the development of wind power on the Fosen Peninsula was in violation of the Southern Sámi's human rights. Today, more than 800 days after the Supreme Court verdict, the wind turbines are still turning on Fosen. The government's inability to act in accordance with the Supreme Court's verdict and its seeming lack of respect for the law make the prospect of reconciliation between young Sámi and the Norwegian authorities unlikely at present.

Shortly before the protests turned Oslo upside down, in February 2023, the dance performance *Birget—Ways to Heal*, *Ways to Deal* premiered at the

Norwegian Opera and Ballet. The performance, which was created by choreographer and film director Elle Sofe Sara and artist and architect Joar Nango, directly focused on the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and functioned as a critical kick-off for the media and public opinion on what to expect from the forthcoming report. This was not the first time Sara and Nango had addressed issues on colonialism in their work. Reconciliation and strategies to heal the wounds after the Norwegianization policy and the question of how Sámi society and Sámi individuals can grow and cope in the aftermath of Norwegianization and colonization run as central threads through both Nango's and Sara's artistry. In this essay, I compare Sara and *Nango's Birget—Ways to Heal, Ways to Deal* with Elle Sofe Sara's previous project, *Vástádus Eana/The Answer is Land* (2021), and discuss how the method, message, and choreography explore how Sámi can "heal and deal" with the after-effects of the Norwegianization policy.[1]

Fig. 1. Black clothed actors joik outside the theater at the start of *Vástádus Eana/The Answer is Land.* From the premiere at the Arctic Arts Festival. Photo: Antero Hein.

1 This essay is partly based on my review of *Vástadus Eana* from the Northern Lights Festival in Romsa/Tromsø on January 29, 2022 (Bjørn 2022a).

Unity, Activism, and Joik behind Megaphones

Vástádus Eana/The Answer is Land premiered at the Arctic Arts Festival in Hárstták/Harstad in the summer of 2021, with Elle Sofe Sara as a selected festival profile. The work is a cross-genre performance that combines joik, dance, and song; according to Sara, it is inspired by activism, formation dance, and Sámi spiritual practice. After the premiere in Hárstták, the performance toured in Sápmi and Norway. In January 2022, I saw it during the Northern Lights Festival in Romsa/Tromsø, where it was performed at Hålogaland Teater.

The performance started at Teaterplassen, the plaza outside of Hålogaland Teater. In –7 °C weather, the audience formed a circle around the square before the actors arrived: marching, dressed in black, and wearing traditional women's hats from various Sámi areas. Equipped with megaphones, the actors unfolded the opening number like a polyphonic joik (fig. 1). Both the aesthetics and the sound of the Sámi women joiking through megaphones quickly brought to mind demonstrations and human rights struggles. The activist-like expression gave the performance a sense of importance and immediacy, while simultaneously imparting the feeling that the audience was participating in the performance together with the actors.

The dark January night supported the performance, and the cold, still air intensified this outdoor sequence. Sara has stated that she wanted to give the audience a physical experience of standing together, of being a mass, and this is exactly how I felt when the actors led us into the hall. The sound of shoes against snow reinforced this vision. For the first half minute—before the crackle of a hundred pairs of shoes on the brittle snow was replaced by natural chatter—I experienced the audience and actors as a herd and a collective movement.

The rest of the performance occurred indoors, on a stage framed by beautiful draperies designed by the artist Elin Melberg. The textiles had associations with both the *liidni*, the Sámi women's scarf, and the woven Mandal rugs that were formerly used on the outside of the lávvu but now often hang on the wall in Sámi homes. Over the course of an hour, the audience enjoyed both expressive dance and formation dance and listened to the performers perform polyphonic joiks and songs.

Rhythms for a People on the Move

Although *Vástadus Eana* was developed by the dance choreographer Elle Sofe Sara, the performative entanglement of song, dance, and joik—as well as the fact that the cast consisted of exceptionally talented singers and joikers—means that the performance was experienced almost as much as a concert performance as a dance performance. In addition to the dancers, Nora Svenning, Julie Moviken, and Emilie Marie Karlsen, the 2022 cast consisted of the singers Olga-Lise Holmen and Grete Daling and the joikers Kajsa Balto and Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska. Balto is a Sámi artist and joiker who has released three albums and played with the Norwegian Broadcasting Orchestra, KORK. Gaup Beaska is recognized as one of the most acknowledged traditional joikers of her generation. Among other roles, she plays in Arvvas together with bassist Steinar Raknes and in Ozan with her sister, Risten Anine Kvernmo Gaup. Together with Lawra Somby, Gaup Beaska formed Adjágas, a central group in the Sámi and Norwegian music scene in the 2000s that defined Sámi popular music. In other words, the musical cast of *Vástádus Eana* is made up of established artists.

The performance consists of both original music and traditional joiks from all over Sápmi. The audience hears well-known joiks such as the Ume Sámi *Stuora várrie—The Great Northern Mountain,* which Kajsa Balto joiks with such verve and sincere expression that tears come to your eyes. It is difficult not to draw associations with territorial disputes in southern Sámi areas, such as that over another Stuorra várrie, Storheia på Fosen in Trøndelag, which was the background for the great Sámi uprising in Oslo in the spring of 2023.

The performance also contained joiks that were previously unknown to me, such as *Baze dearvan Báhčevea duoddariid*, a joik to the tundra on the Russian side of Báhčeveaijohka/Pasvikdalen in the borderland between Russia, Finland, and Norway. Gaup Beaska says that she learned this joik from Ivvár Niillas/Nils Ivvár Porsanger, and that it was composed by Skolt Sámi who were evacuated during the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union in 1939–1940, and forcibly moved from their homes in Báhčeveaijohka, on what is now the Russian side of the border, to Čeavetjávri/Sevettijärvi in Finland. In this way, the performance is a collection of both well-known and

relatively unknown joiks; however, as a common denominator, all are location joiks that emphasize the performance's message about the connection between people and land.

All original music is composed by Frode Fjellheim, who also arranged the joiks. The polyphonic arrangements in particular fit well and remain as some of the most musically effective parts of the performance. Even in the opening number, where the joik must work within the audio limitations of a megaphone, I managed to both attach myself as a listener to the individual voices and float along in the chaotic cacophony of the distorted voices through the megaphones.

It is tempting to perceive links with Fjellheim's other catalog of projects, in which he plays with and borrows from Sámi musical tradition. But where Fjellheim experimented with finding the symphonic element in the joik in the magnificent Nils-Aslak Valkeapää-inspired project *Beaivi áhčážan. Eanni eannážan* (Earth, my father. Earth, my mother) from 2021, it is another part of Sámi musical tradition that is explored in *Vástádus Eana*.[2] Here, the explored tradition has few instruments and arrangements; it is based on voice use and the rhythm of a single drum and involves joiks to places and persons, made by a traveling people.

Trembling Movement and Dancing in the Room

In the first part of *Vástádus Eana*, following the opening outdoors, the choreography was characterized by stomps, punches, and lunges. The dancers played against each other, not together. They ran, jumped, and pushed each other away; at times, they almost fought with each other. Choreography and music came together in one unit, and the stomping and breathing formed the supporting rhythmic element for the songs and the joik. The fact that the dancers often used their own bodies to create the accompanying music required the choreography to be tight and precise. This meant that, even though *Vástadus Eana* is about community, it was simultaneously driven by the actors' individual achievements. Both the dancers and the musicians were perfectly synchronized, and the choreography consisted of time signatures and syncopations recognizable from Sámi traditional music, rather than from the

2 For a discussion of Frode Fjellheim's *Beaivi áhčážan*, see Bjørn 2021

Western music tradition. Svenning, Moviken, and Karlsen were precise, and their movements shook at times with tense muscle power and energy—so much so that I felt the exhaustion of their tension in my own muscles.

Where this part of the performance showed tensions, neuroses, and disenfranchisement, the last parts of the performance were marked by the choreography entering a more collective pattern characterized by interaction and joint movements. The dancers gathered toward the center of the stage, and the dancers, singers, and joikers danced with—not against—each other (fig. 2).

Fig. 2: The choreography enters a more collective pattern, as the actors dance with, rather than against, each other in Vástádus Eana/The Answer is Land. Photo: Antero Hein.

Much of the performance is devoted to dance as a social expression, as we know it from folk culture. Where modern dance often uses choreography and movement as aesthetic or narrative expressions, there is room in folkdance for play, flirting, and the joy of movement. As a result, the audience members are sometimes more at a venue or a party than at a theater. The actors invite

each other—and sometimes the audience—to dance with nods and glances; they move in rewritten company dances, seemingly with their own rules for movement and changing dance partners.

In a panel discussion in connection with the premiere of *Birget* at the Norwegian Opera and Ballet, Sara stated that she found it strange that folkdance does not have the same central position in Northern Sámi culture as it does in many other cultures. Although dance has its place in the Skolt Sámi tradition, no folkdance tradition is known in Northern Sámi culture. In *Vástádus Eana*, Sara explores what a Sámi dance tradition might look like and links it to other Sámi cultural traditions through the joik and costumes based on traditional dress. The performance explores and emphasizes the interaction between the land we walk and grow on and the culture and life of the Sámi, as well as the activism that has been vital in maintaining this connection and interaction. The revitalization of suppressed cultural expression, the interactions between land and people, and the vibrant political activism of *Vástádus Eana* are all aspects that were built upon and condensed, together with Joar Nango, in the spring of 2023 in *Birget—Ways to Deal, Ways to Heal.*

Fig. 3: A sled and plastic bags make a section of the scenography in *Birget—Ways to Deal, Ways to Heal* at the Norwegian Opera and Ballet in Oslo. Photo: Øystein Grutle Haara/Carte Blanche.

Champagne and Reconciliation at the Opera

Amid champagne glasses, idle conversation, Sámi cultural elite, and men in suits, a sleigh was pulled through the foyer of the Norwegian Opera and Ballet in Oslo in February 2023. It took a while before the mingling people caught up with the sleigh, which was filled with snowplow markers, fence posts, and tarps as it was drawn through the crowd (fig. 3).

Birget—Ways to Deal, Ways to Heal is a dance performance commissioned by the Norwegian Opera and Ballet; it is a collaboration between Carte Blanche, the national company for contemporary dance, Elle Sofe Sara, and Joar Nango. Sara is responsible for the choreography, Nango is responsible for the scenography, and together they are responsible for the idea and concept. Unlike *Vástádus Eana, Birget* is a pure dance performance. Like *Vástadus Eana, Birget* started with the audience being led into the stage space. Where we were led in with joik in *Vástádus Eana*, here we were led in accompanied by a portable speaker playing King Harald's speech at the opening of the third Sámi Parliament in 1997. This speech has a special place in recent Sámi history, largely because of one sentence: "Norway is founded on the territory of two peoples; Norwegians and Sámi" (H.M. King Harald 1997). In the speech, King Harald acknowledges the Sámi's place in Norwegian history and apologizes for the abuses committed in the name of the Norwegian authorities.

Behind the dancers pulling the sleigh, the audience was led into Stage 2 of the Opera, where we found our seats. The stage was framed by a large, slightly odd tarp covering the back wall, as well as rectangular tarps in green and yellow plastic. The stage was well lit, much like a gymnasium, bare except for a birch trunk in the middle, toward which the sled we followed from the foyer was dragged. Against a background of the king addressing the Sámi Parliament (and the assembly in attendance at the Opera), the dancers unpacked costumes and props from the sleigh. A confused and chaotic world was slowly built up on the stage: a world of snowplow markers, senna grass, ski jackets, suitcases, boots, and tarps. The dancers dressed themselves in eclectic and seemingly improvised costumes. Crocs, plastic ponchos, headbands, furs, fishnet stockings, pumps, and pastel training shorts created a kind of pastiche of 80s dance films such as *Flashdance* (1983) and a posh post-apocalypse chic à la *Mad Max* (1979). The costumes also referenced everyday life in the arctic, with Rappala boots, Ski-doo scooter jackets, and Sámi clothing, such as

a *luhkka* sewn from a scooter jacket. It appeared like we were going to ride a snowmobile down Fury Road.

The way in which both the costumes and the scenography were seemingly built up in a random fashion from plastics such as tarps and snowplow markers and from organic material such as fur and wood led to thoughts about natural destruction, littering, and consumption (fig. 4). In Nango's scenography, however, this setup can also be seen as a tribute to *birgejupmi*, a Northern Sámi word that can be translated into "coping" or "salvaging"—a necessity for life. Houses, entire villages, and the landscape on the tundra itself are characterized by the fact that people have used what they had on hand to solve practical problems. A black plastic bag attached to a road stake may look like litter but may be deliberately set up to scare the reindeer off the road. Many of the elements that make up the scenography were collected during a trip to Inner-Finnmark that Nango and Sara made with the cast early in the process.

Fig. 4: The costumes, seemingly a random collection of artificial and natural materials, link to the concepts of both natural destruction and birgejupmi or scavenging in *Birget—Ways to Deal, Ways to Heal* at the Norwegian Opera and Ballet in Oslo. Photo: Øystein Grutle Haara/ Carte Blanche.

A Dance with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

King Harald's speech eventually ended with a blessing of the Sámi Parliament's conscientious actions, and a change of pace occurred that seemed to indicate the start of the performance. The Kings speech is replaced by sounds from a debate in the Norwegian parliament, and we were taken to October 12, 2022. On the 1-year anniversary of the Supreme Court verdict on the Fosen case, the Socialist Left Party was using the Norwegian Parliament's Question Time to pose questions to a collective government apparatus about the lack of follow-up on the verdict. The debate was played from the same portable speaker that had conveyed the King's words, which was now attached to the back of a dancer, moving from dancer to dancer. The dance on stage was accompanied by the words of the Minister of Industry, Jan Christian Vestre, the Minister of Health, Ingvild Kjerkol, and other government ministers, giving vague and evasive answers as to why the government was not following the Fosen verdict and considering the Sámi's human rights. The politicians' evasive answers, explanations, and talk stood in stark contrast to the message of mutual respect and conscientious action in King Harald's speech.

Both *Vástádus Eana* and *Birget* follow a pattern in which the dancers start out physically scattered on stage, symbolically lonely and alone, before "falling into" a more synchronous choreography. *Birget* is a much larger production, however, with fourteen professional dancers; thus, there are several groups of dancers to follow at all times. For a long time, the audience's natural focus was on the dancers who pulled the sled, as they handed out props and built the scenography in *Birget* with these.

Looking away from the sled and observing what the other dancers were doing on stage, it was noticeable that each dancer was telling their own story. The dancers' movements were not distinctly rhythmic, and the dance was accompanied by political debate in the Norwegian Parliament, rather than rhythmic music. The dancers either walked, long-limbed and lanky, or tiptoed, as in a waltz, around the stage, in and out of each other's paths.

At the start of the creative process, as previously mentioned, Sara and Nango took the entire cast to Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino and Kárášjohka/Karasjok to experience the landscape and Sámi culture and to meet people who had lived through the Norwegianization process. Daniel Mariblanca, one

of the dancers in Carte Blanche and the driving force behind the company 71BODIES, spoke in the panel discussion at the performance's premiere about how the stories from those who had lived and still live through a phase of Norwegian colonial history made a big impression and shaped the development of *Birget*. Mariblanca also talked about the importance of experiencing the landscape and how the climatic conditions affect the body. The climate truly sets the framework for life, work, and dance in the north. How does breathing, body, and movement feel at –40 °C?

Stories of degradation, confusion, and alienation characterized the choreography. Some dancers were literally shaking with neuroses. One aggressively wrapped his arms over his chest, as if performing resuscitation and trying to restart his own breathing. Another frantically stuffed senna grass into his ski boots, as if to illustrate the duality of positioning Sámi clothing and survival traditions within a modern context of plastic and technical materials. As Mariblanca pointed out, although the stories about the humiliations and personal tragedies of the Norwegianization policy inspired the choreography, the performance—which was largely improvised—gave room for the dancers to act out their own stories and experiences of marginalization and liberation.

Heartbeat and Forming a Herd

Yet another change occurred in tempo and expression when the Norwegian Parliament's Question Time was replaced by electronic noise and beats on the loudspeakers. In the middle of the stage, several dancers gathered in an aerobics-like choreography. The dance, the gymnasium-like scene, and the pulsating beat set up a rhythm and tempo and shifted the performance into a higher gear. Although there were many strong individual performances among the dancers, both physically and in terms of audience contact, it was not individual numbers and individual performances that defined the performance of *Birget*, unlike *Vástádus Eana*. *Birget* was defined by the community, and it was the common movement of the "herd" that made up the supporting element. From the center of the stage, this movement gradually escalated as more and more dancers entered a collective circular run around the birch trunk. Some fell—or threw themselves to the ground—before being picked up and becoming part of the vortex again. The dancers shouted, not in words,

but in screams and grunts at the audience, while more and more entered the circle. It was impossible not to be reminded of reindeer running in circles inside the reindeer fence when calves are divided and marked.

The reindeer herding motif recurred toward the end and climax of the performance. The collective circular movement dissolved, and a group of dancers stepped forward toward the audience. Empty yellow plastic sacks—sacks that usually contain feed for reindeer—were hidden under the audience's seats. With glances and hand gestures from Mariblanca and Hanne Van Driessche, among others, the audience members came to understand that they should send the sacks down toward the stage. The yellow sacks matched the lighting, costumes, and scenography; like a sunrise after several months of darkness, they lit up the room on their way down to the stage. The sequence felt grand, human, and bittersweet. At the same time as there was a shared experience of "feeding" the dancers, the sacks brought to mind how climate change has led to such sacks being an increasingly common sight on the tundra. *Nealgedálvi*, the winters of starvation, and grazing crises are coming ever more frequent, as alternately thick layers of ice and extreme amounts of snow prevent the reindeers' natural access to life-giving reindeer lichen.

Fig. 5. Dancers join in a circular run around the central birch pole in a motif mirroring the movement of the reindeer in *Birget—Ways to Deal,* Ways to Heal at the Norwegian Opera and Ballet in Oslo. Photo: Øystein Grutle Haara/Carte Blanche.

It's the Land, Stupid

Both *Birget* and *Vástádus Eana* provoke a direct dialogue on colonization and Norwegianization in Sápmi and the effects of these processes. I interpret *Vástádus Eana* as a story about connection between people, between people and nature, and between people and places. The joiks that recall specific places and the costumes, which are black but for the different Sámi women's hats from each geographical area, display the Sámi's connection with their land areas. This connection includes the Sámi's shared relationship with the landscape as well as the individual, the group or the family's connections to the specific areas that have defined our lives and the lives of those who came before. The loss of land and the trauma and wounds this loss has created for the Sámi as a group and for individual Sámi are omnipresent in the performance. The longing for what was lost is palpable in both Balto's performance of *Stuorra várrie* and Gaup Beaska's joik to the vistas of Pasvikdalen.

In *Birget*, too, the loss of land is shown to be a decisive factor in the Norwegianization policy, concretely reflected in the reduction of the winter pastures at Fosen. The replay of the Norwegian Parliament's debate on the Fosen verdict makes the industrial development and the lack of follow-up of the Supreme Court verdict the centerpiece in exploring how the loss of land and the Norwegianization policy have led to wounds and trauma in the Sámi population across generations. By directly addressing the Fosen case, *Birget* heads straight into one of the central tensions in the work for reconciliation: How can the Sámi and the Norwegian authorities reconcile, when the Norwegian authorities are neither willing nor able to end the ongoing abuses against the Sámi? What true willingness for reconciliation do the Norwegian authorities show, when it remains impossible to resume the reindeer husbandry emphasized by the Fosen verdict in the Supreme Court? Meanwhile, a similar situation exists on Øyfjellet in Vefsn, and new wind-based power developments are planned in Finnmark.

In the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, this tension is referred to as an "implementation gap" (TRC 2023: 636). Although the Sámi have rights recognized in legislation, such as the right to education in the Sámi language and the right of reindeer herders to practice their own culture, the adopted policies and statutory laws receive minimal follow-up from

governing authorities. This implementation gap not only weakens trust in general; it also weakens confidence in the political and legal system, trust in the Norwegian authorities, and the will towards reconciliation.

In connection with the presentation of the report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Kvääniteatteri (the Kven Theatre), the National Theatre, the Bergen International Festival, and NRK produced the project *Norway Listens*, a 36-hour live reading of the commission's report from the National Theatre in Oslo. The reading project was finished by 11-year-old Villen Jakobsen from Nordreisa at 2 am on the night of Saturday, June 3, 2023. With a symbol of Kven identity in the form of a rose-shaped brooch on her chest, Jakobsen looked into the camera and read the last words of the report before she left the stage: "The will to reconciliation must be shown in action. Here, those in positions of power have a special responsibility, and major challenges await."

A common thread runs through the King's apology to the Sámi people, which was played at the start of *Birget*, and the conclusion of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report. In his opening of the Sámi Parliament in 1997, like the recent commission report, the King acknowledges the abuses committed against the Sámi people and the responsibility the Norwegian government holds to right wrongs and contribute to reconciliation. Now, 25 years later, violations are still taking place, and Sámi rights exist to a greater extent on paper than in everyday life. How can there be reconciliation?

Ways to Heal

Although both *Birget* and *Vástádus Eana* point to how conflicts around land hinder reconciliation, the dance performances do not answer how these political contradictions can be resolved, how to reconcile with the Norwegian authorities, or how to deal with the political conflict that comprises the relationship between majority societies and indigenous people. At the same time, both performances go further and deeper than describing the political and human problems of land loss; I would argue that, in addition to trying to provide strategies for healing processes, the performances seek to be cultural and interpersonal healing processes in themselves.

Part of this healing work is to explore and reveal Sámi cultural expressions

that have been suppressed and almost eradicated by the Norwegianization policy. Where dance has its place in the Skolt Sámi tradition, folkdance tradition is largely nonexistent in Northern Sámi culture. Part of Sara's artistic project is to explore and expose the traces of folkdance tradition in Northern Sámi culture and to develop it within a new context. In several short films, Sara has explored other Northern Sámi cultural expressions in search of traces of the dance. She has explored the rhythmic joiking hand (*Juoigangiehta/The Yoiking Hand,* 2011), the habit of lifting women by the belt (*Ribadit/Pulling the Belt*, 2019) and *lihkahusat*, which refers to the Laestadian trance experienced when in contact with the Holy Spirit (*Giitu Giitu/Thank You Lord,* 2019). Where in films such as *Giitu Giitu* and *Juoigangiehta*, Sara does archaeological work to uncover traces of dance in Northern Sámi culture, in *Birget* and *Vástádus Eana*, she brings these traces to life within a modern dance setting. Thus, the performances both collect and develop a Sámi dance tradition. Nango's artistry is also about identifying, building, and using a Sámi architectural tradition. The tarps, snowplow markers, ropes, and wood that make up the stage world in *Birget* are as central in Nango's world as the lávvu and goahti are in the Sámi architectural tradition. *Birgejupmi*—the art of survival through both traditional knowledge and improvisation with the elements and available tools—is not only the core of Sámi architecture (and perhaps culture in general); it actually is Sámi architecture.

In his essay "Can I Get a Witness? Indigenous Art Criticism" (2018), David Garneau writes that whether a work of art or cultural form is understood as an expression of indigenous culture and indigenous experiences or as an *exploration* and *deepening* will depend on the eyes that see the work. An audience from the majority population will often understand that indigenous art is about colonization, by recognizing themes of justice and struggles for justice. But a majority audience often overlooks what a work *does*—that is, how a work uses and explores indigenous culture and indigenous experiences to seek new knowledge, feelings, thoughts, and insights. For example, a performance may use healing ceremonies from the Blackfoot culture as a means of *conveying* a message about the wounds of colonialism and assimilation, but the performance may also seek to use the ceremony for actual healing or as an actual ceremony or medicine.

Garneau problematizes how the structures of Western cultural institutions cause indigenous art to be framed in a way that addresses the majority population, rather than indigenous cultures themselves. Criticism and curation will therefore seek to "translate" or "convey" indigenous cultural expressions and experiences to outsiders, while overlooking the exploration, deepening, and work that artworks do within their own culture (Garneau 2018: 18). I think a large part of what makes *Vástádus Eana* and, even more so, *Birget* interesting is how the pieces manage to function on several levels and address several publics and audience groups at the same time. Nango's and Sara's work conveys Sámi culture while simultaneously expanding, exploring, deepening, and challenging Sámi cultural expressions and traditions within dance, architecture, music, human rights struggles, and activism. The performances are filled with cultural references in music, scenography, and language, and portions of the performances' cultural message will likely evade a public that does not possess an insider knowledge of Sámi culture. At the same time, the performances address the audience on a relational and human level and therefore succeed in addressing an audience without a Sámi background, without necessitating that all the cultural references, codes, and expressions be translated for the audience. By succeeding on different levels for different audience groups, Sara's and Nango's artistry is never experienced as *translations* of Sámi culture to a majority audience, but is rather seen as an invitation to both a Sámi and non-Sámi audience to explore processes to discuss, process, and resist persistent colonialism.

About Movement and Healing

At the National Museum in Oslo, surrounded by the canonical national romantic paintings of Adolph Tiedemann and Hans Gude, a joik about a swan flooded my ear. In the summer of 2022, Elina Waage Mikalsen staged the performance *Mii golggahit joga*, *bálgá*, *njuvccaid*, *váriid* (We pour the river, the path, the swans, the mountains).[3] The project sought to showcase the Sámi joik tradition within a museum that Mikalsen considered made Sámi culture and history invisible. During a walk through the museum's collection, five performers joiked the river, the path, the swan, and the mountains, in addition

3 For my review of the performance, see Bjørn 2022b.

to a variety of landscapes, in an attempt to decolonize the museum's collection and to give Sámi cultural heritage the place Mikalsen believes it deserves.

The goal of decolonizing the National Museum of Art, in addition to the generally conservative museum structure, is of course a task that is far too massive for a single performance. I view Mikalsen's project as successful, however, because it allowed the audience to experience a process that several in the project's cast went through: the process of decolonizing themselves and becoming more secure in their identity as Sámi and Sámi artists. The cast consisted of both well-known and skilled *joikers*, such as Katarina Barruk, and musicians who had only recently become aware of their Sámi background and who had never performed joiks in public. The fact that the audience was able to participate in and witness how Norwegianized Sámi reclaimed their Sámi identity by joiking in public made the performance feel both intimate and liberating.

In contrast to Waage Mikalsen, neither *Birget* nor *Vástádus Eana* contain exclusively Sámi actors. As far as I know, Carte Blanche does not include anyone with a Sámi background. Although parts of the cast in *Vástádus Eana* have certainly had great experiences, grown as people and artists, and become better acquainted, in part, with their Sámi identity, this process does not appear to be the point or mission of the performance. *Vástádus Eana* focuses on how the ruptures between Sámi groups and their home areas have had a destructive effect on Sámi history and how the distance between modern life and land and nature has an alienating effect on people in general. The performance also highlights the unity between women: how women can make each other strong through solidarity and shared reality. In addition, I consider that the performance directly explores how dance and collective movement are a source of meaning and healing. In *Birget*, this perspective is even more apparent. The performers dissolve into an almost unified movement, causing the performance to refer even less to individual worldviews based on gender, ethnicity, and background. I believe that both performances not only highlight these ideas of community and togetherness as a basis for trauma treatment and liberation but also illustrate these ideas through the community between dancers on stage and the community between the dancers and the audience.

Fig. 6. The audience is invited to become a part of the herd in *Birget—Ways to Deal, Ways to Heal* at the Norwegian Opera and Ballet in Oslo. Photo: Øystein Grutle Haara/Carte Blanche.

Near the end of *Birget*, the herd gathered on stage again and began to move. The swirl of dancers threw the feed sacks up toward the birch trunk in the middle of the stage. The pile of sacks rose, like a midsummer bonfire, before the herd returned to the audience. With direct eye contact, we were invited to shout and call without meaning or language. Accompanied by rhythmic clapping, the dancers shouted meaningless words to the audience, while looking at us with inviting and affectionate eyes. Eventually, people in the audience joined in the clapping, and some even shouted along. Like the speaking in tongues and lihkahusat in the church building in *Giitu Giitu*, the sounds and cries did not make literal sense, but they aroused feelings of liberation and community.

Both *Vástádus Eana* and *Birget* are built on a foundation of Sámi history and the Sámi experience of colonization and survival in harsh and sometimes

hostile conditions. However, the performances are not about surviving the harsh winter; instead, they focus on how Sámi culture can be saved after Norwegianization. How are we, as individuals, to heal our trauma and grow, when many of our cultural practices have been erased by government policy? At the same time, the performances themselves are exercises in embracing community and energy. Perhaps an important part of the reconciliation with suppression and reconstruction involves putting these difficult problems squarely on the table and loudly joining the cry.

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Luondduláhka olbmuide láhkan

Jenni Laiti

Ohcejohkalaš Láidde Ánot Máhtte (1793–1866) dajahalai Ohcejoga báhppa Jacob Fellmannii *Sámieatnama álgoolbmuid birra*, man lei oahppan Lágesvuona sápmelaččas. Luohti muitala das, mo sápmelaččat ásaiduvve eatnamii, man gohčodedje Sápmin. Das lea oktan dajahussan: "*olbmot dáppe ovdal min jo, gos lea luonddu láhka láhkan olbmuin*".

Mun logan maiddái luonddulága máddun láhkái, danin go sii leat rávven mu dan dahkat, ja boahttevaš buolvvat leat bagadan mu dan dahkat. Riikkaidgaskasaš olmmošvuoigatvuođasoahpamušat eai anit servodahkamet juridihkalaš vuođđun, baicce luondduláhka dat ovddida Eanan Eadnámet ieštivrejumi ollašuvvama, vuoiggalašvuođa ovddideami buot eallevaččaid ektui, girjáivuođa áimmahuššama ja boahttevaš buolvvaid vejolašvuođaid eallit Sámis. *Buorre eallin lea dat go Eanan eatnisteamet lea buorre dilli,* ja vai das livčči buorre dilli, de galgá *luondduláhka olbmuide láhkan*.

Máddomet viisodat, árbevirolaš ealáhussamet, árbedihtomet, álbmogeamet árvvut, kosmologiijamet, geavadeamet, muitalussamet, vuoiŋŋalašvuohtamet, árktalaš guovllus eallin ja birgen, guvlomet hálddašeapmi ja vuohkámet eallit olmmožin – buot dat hábmejit luonddulága. Paragráfat paragráfaid maŋis, ehtalaš njuolggadusat, bagadusat, rávvagat, rámmaeavttut, geatnegasvuođat ja ovddasvástádusat. Áđamussan luonddulága bálggesčuovgan lea *nohkameahttun ráhkesvuohtamet* eatnamiiddáseamet, eallinvuohkáseamet ja olbmuidasamet. Eadnámet dat máhttá ja oahpaha luonddulága olbmuid láhkan.

Eallit olmmožin

Eallit olmmožin leamašan sápmelačča eallinbagadus ja buorre eallima vuođđoviggamuš, soahpamuš Eanan etniineamet *mo olmmožin eallit*. Galgá eallit soabalaččat, veahkálaš ja ráhkislaš oktavuođas Eanan etniineamet ja buot dan eallevaččaiguin. Eallit olmmožin lea soabadit eallimiin, ovddidit vuoiggalašvuođa, udnot buriid, veahkehit, juogadit eadnámet láhjiid nu, ahte juohke okta birge, maiddái heajumus.

Eallit olmmožin lea bargat dan guvlui nu, ahte dat, mii midjiide juolluduvvo, *galgá boahtit oktasaš buorrin*. Ávkkástallat govttolaččat ja geavahit dan maid fidne. *Váldit dan maid dárbbaša ja seastit dobbelii vai dat geat min maŋŋá bohtet maiddái birgejit.* Eallit olmmožin lea maiddái meaddit ja oahppat olmmožin, guovtti soabbái.

Eallit olmmožin geatnegahttá rabasvuhtii, rehálašvuhtii, buorredáhtolašvuhtii, utnolašvuhtii, veahkkáivuhtii ja iešráđálaš eallimii. Dat geatnegahttá, ahte *don dovddat eatnama ja ahte eanan dovdá du.* Ahte juolgát dovdet dan eatnama, man alde don váccát, giehtat dovdet dan, man dat ávnnastit ja nierrat dovdet dan biekka, mii bosoda. *Eadnámet eallá*, laggá ja veahkeha, jos mii fal astat guldalit. Ferte máhttit eadnámet giela, jaskatvuođa giela. Dat ii leat dušše soapmásiid hálddus, baicce juohke okta sáhttá dan oahppat.

Eanan eadnámet dat mearrida eallimeamet vuođđoeavttuid nugo jagiáiggiid, luondduvalljodagaid ja dálkkiid. Eatnisteamet lea iežas vuoigŋa, dáhttu ja áigi. Eallit olmmožin lea gudnejahttin, gulahallan ja áddehallan. Ráhkislaš oktavuođaid divššodat áiggiin ja luohttámušain. Ii heive hoahpuhaddat, daningo dakkár oktavuođat eai doaimma dušše ovtta guvlui. Olbmuid lassin su luhtte orrot buot eará eatnama eallevaččat nugo eallit, guolit, divrrit, sámmálat, vuoiŋŋat ja máttut. Váldit vuhtii buohkaid sin, danin go dat lea maiddái sin orohat. Mii eallit olmmožin.

Jearrat lobi lea olmmošvierru

Go guossái áigut, *mii jearrat lobi*. Heivego boahtit, lávu cegget, orrut oatnelanbotta, sáimmastallat, bivdit, murjet, ávnnastit dahje dola dahkat. Lobi jearran lea guovtteguvllot gulahallan: jus áiggožat jearrat, de guldaleaččat maiddái vástádusa. Jus biehttaleaš, de dalle ii leat eará go dohkkehit dan ja vuolgit eret ja go guossis leat, mii láhttet olmmožin.

Bivdit lea maid jearrat lobi. Dat lea konkrehtalaš dahku go bivdá sállaša, muhto bivdit lea maid sihtat, átnut dahje jearrat soapmásis juoidá. *Bivdit lea gažaldat. Gažaldat lea bivdit.*

Muhtin báikkiide mis leat nana čanastagat ja erenomáš oktavuohta. Gulahallan seahtá dáhpáhuvvat ovddalgihtii, dat lea dego ustibiin gulahallat galledaddama birra ja go čáŋadat, leat vurdojuvvon guossi. Lobi jearran sáhttá dáhpáhuvvat áigumuša ollašuhttimis, mátkái ráhkkanettiin ja báikái

mátkkoštettiin. Oahpes báikkiin lea álkit gulahallat go leat jo ovddežis verddežat ja dovdat guđet guoibmámet, dávjá báiki ieš maid bovde guossái. Galledettiin dikšut oktavuođaid, muitalat ságaid, gulahallat ja guldalat. *Báiki muitá min ja mii muitit su. Muitit su ja son muitá min.*

Eadnámet badjelmearálaš ávkkástallan, nuppi olbmo ruktui bahkken dahje nuppi olbmo njávkkadeapmi lobi haga ii leat heivvolaš láhtten ja lohpi leage dárbbašlaš olbmo juohke áidna dahkui. Lobi jearran oaivvilda, ahte ovttasbargu čađahuvvo gutnálaš ja vuoiggalaš vugiin. *Mii jearrat lobi*. Jus mii láhttet fasttet dahje meaddit, de mii bivdit ándagassii.

Go leat geargan bargguideametguin, mii čorget eatge guođe dárbbašmeahttun luottaid iežamet maŋis. Muhtimin niibi gahčča, guksi báhcá, fáhcca láhppo. Dalle lea diet galgat. Mii giitit ja leiket gáfiid dahje addit eará buriid ja guođđit háldái su oasi. Go vuolgit, vuolgit ráfiin. *Giitu. Eatnat giitu. Giitu, giitu.*

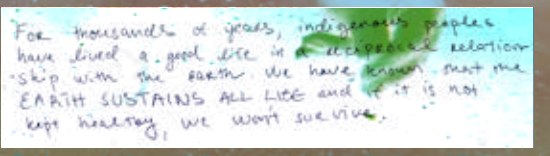
Čuovvovaš čieža sohkabulvii

Eanan eadnámet eallevaččat ellet eallingierdduset hárrái ja ollašuhttet galgamušaset. Dat riegádahttet, ođasmahttet, ovddidit, dorjot, suodjalit, várjalit ja ráhkistit eallima. Buot eará eallevaččat dan máhttet, earret olbmot. Oainnát, olmmoš dat gáttii lea buot eará eallevaččaid bajábealde.

Vajáldahtiimet, ahte mii leat unna oasážat stuorra ollisvuođas. Vajáldahtiimet, ahte buot gullá oktii. Ahte mii leat eanan, ja eanan lea mii. Vajáldahtiimet, ahte eallin dat ieš lei áđamus. Dehálamos. Olmmošgotti veahkaválddálaš, olmmošmeahttun ja nohkameahttun gáibádusat manne buot ovddabeallai ja morrašiin vásihat, ahte máilbmi man mii dovdat, jámada, dušša, jávká ja goarrána. Juohke beaivvi leat lagabus váddásut áiggiid. Dystohpalaš dáláš lea boahttevuođa oainnáhus maiddái. *Oainnáhus. Čieža sohkabuolvva oainnáhus.*

Eadnámet ii šat ráđđádala minguin. Dat lea alvvaheapme, lisas ja návccaheapme. Eadnámet badjelmearálaš ávkkástallan lea dagahan eatnameamet dillái, mas eallin eatnan alde lea sakka áitojuvvon. Dystohpalaš káos, katastrofa ja roasut leat min boahttevuođa duovdagat, iige oktage mis leat immuna dáláš ja boahttevaš máilmmiloahpaide. *Olmmoš dat gal birge. Vai birgego olmmoš?*

If the EARTH is not kept healthy, WE won't survive



* For thousands of years, indigenous peoples have lived a good life in a reciprocal relationship with the Earth. We have known that the EARTH SUSTAINS ALL LIFE and if it is not kept healthy, we won't survive.

BIODIVERSITY we witness the loss of biodiversity in our bodies, culture, language, indigenous knowledge and community because we are part of the ecosystem. WE ARE THE EARTH. Health of the Earth is directly tied to our health. WHEN SHE IS HEALTHY, WE TOO ARE HEALTHY. When she is sick, we too get sick.

COLONIALISM caused the climate crisis. The same system won't solve it. Current false green so-called solutions are just another way to gloss over the ongoing colonial exploitation. Green shift won´t save us. WE HAVE TO CHANGE OUR CONCEPTION OF A GOOD LIFE

LANDS inhabited by Indigenous Peoples contain 80% of the world's remaining BIODIVERSITY and this is for a reason. We know how to live a GOOD LIFE in, with and by our traditional territories. Our PLACE-BASED INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS are a key to design a THRIVING EARTH for all.

IF INDIGENOUS LANDS, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES and INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS are destroyed, the Earth's ecosystem will lose its last PROTECTION and means to sustain the Earth as we know it. You cannot achieve the global BIODIVERSITY goals without Indigenous peoples and their territories. Additionally, indigenous peoples must be involved in all decision making of biodiversity goals.

WE NEED healthy ecosystems to live a healthy life. If there is NO NATURE, there is NO FUTURE. Indigenous rights, LAND BACK and Indigenous governance are the REAL solutions to protect biodiversity and ensure the thriving of life on the Earth. LAND BACK is CLIMATE JUSTICE is LAND BACK.

TAKE ONLY WHAT YOU NEED, USE ALL YOU TAKE, SHARE IT WITH OTHERS, RECIPROCATE THE GIFT AND GIVE BACK.

Sarvedoaibma

Máilmmiloahppa ii vealttekeahttá dárbbaš leat min máilbmámet loahppa, baicce olmmošmeahttun máilmmi loahppa. Lea min geatnegasvuohta eallit olmmožin ja suodjalit, várjalit, áimmahuššat, veahkehit, divššodit ja dálkkodit Eadnámet, danin go su haga ii birge oktage. Áiggiid álggu rájes leat mii ráhkadan ođđa eallima ja máilmmiid. Mii máhttit oahppat ođđasiid, mii máhttit oahppat ohpit ođđasit. *Oahppat olmmožin eallit, oahppat mii lea buorre eallin.* Eadnámet dat oahpaha.

Leat álelassii boahttevuođa vuhtii váldán ja buorre eallindili maŋis-boahttiide láhčán vai birgešedje dat geat min maŋis bohtet. *Máddomet ja boahttevaš buolvvat jurddašaddet, gos lea min roahkkatvuohta, gos min ráhkesvuohta, naba min niegut ja dagut?* Áigumuššamet galget leat seammá stuorrát go hástalusat maiguin eallit. Makkár skeaŋkkaid mii háliidat juogadit boahttevaš buolvvaiguin, mánáidmánáiguin ja sin maŋisboahttiiguin? Lea áigi niegadit duohtan eallima nieguid ja dahkat buot maid sáhttit dahkat Eadnámet ja čuovvovaš čieža sohkabuolvva ovdii.

Ellot fal olmmožin ja ráhkisteadnot roahkkadit Eadnámet. Luondduláin leat eallán dáppe guovlluin duháhiid jagiid. Jus áiggožat duháhiid jagiid dás duohko, de luondduláhka galgá fas olbmuid láhkan. *Čuovvovaš čieža sohkabulvii.*

Fig. 1: Jenni Laiti, *If the Earth is not kept healthy, We won't survive,* Photo collage, 2022.

All the Things We Could Do

Petra Laiti

This text by Petra Laiti was presented at the fourth KulturSápmi conference during a scenario workshop on truth, reconciliation, and decolonization. Each presenter was given 10 minutes to respond to the following questions: "If assimilation had never happened, what would the artistic and cultural field in Sápmi look like today? Based on Sámi values and terms, what would our structural support systems look like? Please think outside the Western box and from our own point of view." KulturSápmi is an annual border-crossing meeting place for the Sámi art and cultural field. In 2023, it was held in Anár from September 19 to 22. (Photo: Heikki Isotalo).

Many, if not all, Sámi working in the cultural field have experienced what it is like to apply for cultural funds. A vast majority of Sámi cultural projects —from festivals, theater, and duodji courses to individual artistry—are at least partially funded by non-Sámi sources, including Nordic ministries, private funds, cultural institutions, and the like. We are well acquainted with the duality of applying for outside funding. While ministries of culture, institutions, and funds often grant funding to our projects, there is a hidden price. Outside funding sources always require the Sámi community to conform to an outside view of what kind of cultural work is worth funding.

We deal with the burden and frustration of having to explain our culture to these outside funders as a way of motivating why we should receive funding. At times, Sámi cultural work must completely conform to outside expectations of what our cultural events and projects should look like. This process of conforming is, in many ways, a price we pay to buy ourselves a place to meet,

to work, to enjoy, to live—all while tolerating the outside eyes that force themselves into our spaces, our lands, and our lives.

When KulturSápmi asked me to visualize what our cultural field would look like if colonization had never happened, this was the most central thought that came to mind. If colonization had never happened, what kinds of cultural resources would we have at our disposal, and how would we build cultural support systems for ourselves, on our own terms?

As a former cultural grant advisor, I have come to believe that the basic principles of cultural grants can be adapted into indigenous thinking very well. The idea of having a large pool of resources that a community member or group can apply for, use as needed, and then return the resource surplus to the same pool is essentially a cyclical way of thinking. It is an "only use what you need" type of thinking that surprised me when I worked with cultural grant programs. The problems for indigenous communities arise in the assessment process and the criteria for receiving said grants. I asked myself the question: If the Sámi cultural field could decide on its own criteria and its own methods for providing support for itself, what would that look like?

Firstly, and most importantly, it is an inevitable fact that—in addition to lands and waters—the Sámi have been robbed of lots and lots of money. It is uncomfortable to say this out loud, because we don't like to think about our culture and resources in terms of money. It is against our way of valuing things and is in and of itself a completely valid thing to take issue with. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, in addition to all the things colonial states have stolen from us, they have stolen the economic opportunities we could have made for ourselves on our own terms. The states have stolen those opportunities on an individual level through forced assimilation and educational trauma, which resulted in individual Sámi not wanting or being unable to pursue higher education. The states have gradually restricted and criminalized our livelihoods and cultural practices, which has obviously greatly affected the socio-economic wellbeing (and opportunities) within our communities. Various industries have also directly stolen our cultural property and sold it as their own. Lots and lots of money bleeds out from Sápmi every single day and, if we were to apply our own understanding of property to this colonial phenomenon, it is obvious that this money belongs to us and us alone.

In a Sápmi free from colonization, that money would be at the disposal of our society and, by extension, our cultural field. We wouldn't have to consider which national Sámi parliament had the largest budget and the most grants to give out. We wouldn't have to consider which grants we could apply for based on which state we happened to be born in. In a free Sápmi, that money, those resources, would come from Sápmi, would be used in Sápmi, and would return to Sápmi.

Secondly, it's worth asking how we would identify cultural activities worthy of cultural grant support. I will name Sámi events as a concrete example. Sámi events are vastly diverse meeting places and, currently, that diversity is split into many different cultural grant applications of various sizes. Every Sámi festival is an event for families and young children. Every Sámi conference ideally wants to include the knowledge and skills of our elders and experts. Every Sámi youth party is a chance to learn and strengthen language skills. The needs and potential of our events are so vast that there simply does not exist a cultural fund that would answer all our needs, whether monetarily or according to qualitative criteria. In a Sámi cultural support system, we would not need to present this diversity through a Western understanding of separate cultural sectors. We would already know how we want to gather—with our entire people, with people of all ages and all kinds of cultural ties—and thus, we would already know that we want our event to offer something to all attendees according to their needs and interests.

In addition to the cultural work traditionally supported by Western mechanisms, it is essential to consider what else we Sámi consider to be part of the word "culture." Could Sámi livelihoods also receive cultural grants? Could a Sámi person apply for a grant to go and learn about a Sámi livelihood they are not familiar with? Could a Sámi person apply for support to go on a language exchange to another Sámi area? I believe it is only natural to state that a Sámi cultural support system would consider the needs of our people holistically, instead of simply separating these different functions into their own categories.

Thirdly, I considered the role of concrete cash. Would a Sámi cultural system provide support only in monetary form? Not necessarily. A Sámi cultural support system could offer human resources and skills, traditional

knowledge, cultural mentors, language and interpretation services, and so forth. A Sámi cultural support system would not need to be "just" an amount of money; it would also be a holistic pool of resources built according to our needs.

This led me to the fourth question of working methods. Currently, art and culture funds emphasize the applicant's recognized status. Are you a professional artist? An organization? An established network? Can you prove to the funder that you are a trustworthy and stable applicant, that you can be entrusted with responsibility, that you will use the grant as expected from you?

While those are understandable criteria, they pose obstacles for Sámi applicants. We cannot establish an official structure for each of our cultural ventures. Our internal collaboration isn't built that way. We take lots and lots of time to get to know one another on both a professional and a personal level before deciding to work together. Even then, collaborative projects are often formed quite spontaneously and even by accident, through engaging with our community, making friends, enjoying ourselves and each other's work, and becoming acquainted with each other on a deeper level. We often collaborate and work with people we already know well, whose expertise and skills we appreciate, and whose way of thinking is well suited to whatever spontaneous idea we have come up with. A Sámi cultural support system would consider these unofficial ways in which our cultural field organizes itself, these spontaneous working groups, and the collectivism in our collaborative efforts. The practical implications of these premises would be vast.

A Sámi cultural support system would make it easier for us to try new things and to consider what methods work for us. We would not feel as much pressure to deliver perfection each time, and concepts would be allowed to grow and change according to community feedback, without pressure to conform to outside standards. A Sámi cultural support system would also provide support for the actual administrative responsibilities of managing the grant itself, so that more focus could be put on cultural production instead of the effort to conform to outside criteria. We would never have to explain why a project or an event was important to the Sámi community; instead, we could think more deeply about what we want, not just what we absolutely need.

A Sámi cultural support system could ease the burden of individual

people and provide a better means of communicating the community effort behind each project. No individual artist would ever have to feel uncomfortable with a spotlight put solely on them while ignoring the community helping and guiding them through their venture. We could acknowledge and proudly present those we consider to be a part of each venture, such as our teachers, our friends, and our colleagues—but also our ancestors, our lands, our songs, and other participants not appreciated in Western structures.

I firmly believe that the removal of this burden would also bring life to the non-existent world of Sámi cultural criticism. We wouldn't have to think about how our criticism and comments on various cultural ventures might be used against our community by outsiders. We wouldn't have to be afraid of limiting our chances of receiving Western grants, if we dared say that there was room for improvement. An emphasis on collective working methods would also make criticism feel less personally directed, both for the critic and the criticized, as we would be better able to see the collective effort behind each venture.

And, lastly, a Sámi cultural support system would force us to tackle very necessary questions within our community—particularly in terms of cultural diversity. As of now, any Sámi project can be used as a token for outside funders to point at. This completely limits the actual diversity of the Sámi community. If we were to steer our own resources, we would have to determine what parts of our community are in fact underrepresented. We would be forced to tackle our own existing biases, which we know exist, even though we don't speak of them. A Sámi cultural support system would uplift all Sámi languages, all Sámi livelihoods, all Sámi duodji and luohti customs, and so forth. It would also challenge us to uplift sexually diverse and gender-diverse voices, as well as multicultural Sámi people from a diverse Sámi or even non-Sámi heritage, and provide space for the types of dialogue we simply cannot afford as things are now.

As long as we are forced to completely, partially, or even in the most minor details conform to outside funding standards of our own culture, we are stuck in a loop of having to argue, rationalize, and explain what it is that

we desperately need and why each grant is so essential to us. It is exactly this culture of explaining ourselves that takes up the most space and time in our cultural field.

I encourage each of you to think: Just how much time would we have if we did not need to explain ourselves? And I challenge you to think: What would you do with all that time?

Goatnelle

Bihtáš Jalvvi Niillasa (Holmberg)

"Dáid geometralaš govaid njuođadettiin in leat álgage sillen daikke gidden fuopmášumi teknihkkii, illá sisdolluige. Mun dušše luoittán luovus. Dát lea veahá dego automáhtačála. Go govva olaha symmetriija, go bealli gávdná beali, munnje boahtá bottažii dakkár ráfi, ahte in hohpohala gosage."

"Leabat dus dasto muđui leabuhis dilli? Daikke muđui unohas?" Samu jearrá.

"Na ii!" Vai leago? Dohppen gova, mii lea seivon boasttobeliid láhttái. Guovdu gova lea stuorra jorba čázádat, mas luitet mohkohaddi jogat iešguđet almmiguvlui. "Mun in iskkage ráhkadit dáid čáppisin ja fiinnisin, mun dušše kanaliseren dáid. Veaháš dego luođi."

"Mun fas jurddašin ahte dát lea veaháš dego dat art brut, man don fánset", lohká Samu.

"Eastagiid haga olbmo psyhkas málengággásii, vai mobat don dan oktii govvidit? Dát du govvaráiduhan lea dego André Bretona Surrealismma manifesta", Samu buljarda.

"Dát lea luohti. Iešalddes dat mo luohti šaddá lea viehka lahka surrealismma prinsihpaid."

"Don leat ovdalge máinnašan dien. Guđe láhkai lahka?"

"Gii nu lea dadjan, ahte surrealista ii goassige heađuš siskkáldas sánuheaddjis." Samu smiehtasta.

"Surrealista niegada oađekeahttá ja addá nieguidasas jiena."

Muitalan sutnje mo otnábeaivve juoigamii gusket eanet ah eanet seammalágan gáibádusat go váldoálbmogiid lávlumii: nuohta ala galgá deaivat ja čavga ritmma doallat. Nu ii lean čuohte jagi dassái, go etnográfat johte dáppe romášeamen dán min issoras spitnjasa ja luoibmasa.

"Vaikke muhtumat dain áddejedje, ahte min jietnamáilbmi riegáda áibbas eará kriteraiguin, de eai dat gal gudnejahttán. Dasa lei dárbbašuvvot namalassii muhtun Breton daikke Dubuffet. Dološ juoigi ii ráhkadan luođi, baicce gaskkustii dan iežas birrasis", mun joatkkán. "Dat lea sullasaš luovvaneapmi go surrealismma metodatge. Gaskkusteaddji rollii mieđadettiin

olmmoš ferte muhtun muddui vajáldahttit teknihkalaš, estehtalaš ja morálalaš hárjánumiid."

Samu váldá sátnesaji ja bidjá mu govvádusa luohtegaskkusteamis psykoanalyhtalaš kontekstii, mii lei surrealisttaide oahpis.

"Surrealisttat vásihedje, ahte sii gaskkustit mielavuloža, man sáhttá jurddašit mikrokosmosin, muhto juoigit fas gaskkustedje–"

"Luonddu", mun dievasmahtán, "man sáhttá jurddašit makrokosmosin. Namalassii! Luođi maid galggašii dekoloniseret. Buorre lihkus gávdnojit vel dakkárat, geat máhttet luoitit luovus, dego vaikkeba Sofiinná."

Biographies

Aslak Heika Hætta Bjørn is an activist and artist, art critic and writer from Báhčeveaijohka, Sápmi. Bjørn writes about politics, music and performing arts for newspapers and periodicals as *Klassekampen*, *Scenekunst.no* and *Periskop*, and he is working on his first book on colonialism and reconciliation in 2024. Bjørn works as a political advisor for the Red Party in Stortinget, the Norwegian National Assembly. He is involved in campaigns against green colonialism and extractivism in Sápmi.

Mathias Danbolt is Professor of art history at University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Over the last decade his research has centered on the contact zones between art history and colonial history in a Nordic context, with special focus on memory politics, monuments, and art in public space. Mathias has been in charge of collective research project, including *Okta: Art and Communities in Friction in Sápmi* (2019-22), *The Art of Nordic Colonialism: Writing Transcultural Art Histories* (2019-23), and *Moving Monuments: The Material Life of Sculpture from the Danish Colonial Era* (2022-25).

Káre Petter Iŋgá Gunvor/Gunvor Guttorm is Professor in duodji at Sámi allaskuvla/Sámi University of Applied Sciences, Guovdageaidnu. In 2003 she completed her PhD in duodji at University of Tromsø, Norway. She is North Sámi speaking and uses her experiences in language and duodji practices in her research. Her research is interconnected with cultural expression in the Sámi and Indigenous societies, especially duodji.

Christina Hætta is a Sámi cultural worker from Guovdageaidnu. Christina works as head of the Cultural Unit in The Saami Council, a voluntary Sámi organization (NGO), with Sámi member organizations in Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden. In her work, Christina is passionate about the recognition of Sámi art and cultural as one common field across the national borders in Sápmi and bridging the knowledge gaps to strengthen the Sámi art fields' artistic freedom and self-determination. She is educated in creative project management (Produsentstudiet) at Harstad University College, and has worked as a producer for the Riddu Riđđu festival, the Sámi Easter Festival, and with various productions within the Sámi art and culture field.

Jalvvi Niillas Holmberg is an author, scriptwriter and musician from Ohcejohka, Sápmi. His works include prose, poetry, plays and a feature film. In the field of music, he works as a vocalist and lyricist. Besides working solo, he has performed with philharmonic orchestras and several genre-defying bands. For more than a decade, Niillas has been involved in several movements against extractivism in the traditional Sámi areas. The thematics of his works often encompass land-based knowledge and anti-colonial aspects.

Iŋgá Elisa Påve Idivuoma is a cultural worker and duojár who lives in Gárasavvon, but with roots in the sea-Sámi area of Porsáŋgu in Sápmi. She has worked for some years with education, research, and development of duodji and design education program at Sámi allaskuvla/Sami University of Applied Sciences. Currently she works for Dáiddadállu/Sami Artist Network's administration with different Sámi and Indigenous art projects.

Britt Kramvig works as Professor at UiT: The Arctic University of Norway. She is an interdisciplinary scholar interested in landscape, storytelling, archives and memories. Britt is a descendant of the sea-Sámi in Orjješ-Ráisa /Sørreisa that suffered under the weight of colonialism, and a scholar that reclaims and recalls her Sámi heritage.

Mihku Ilmára Jenni Unni Áile / Jenni Laiti is a Sámi Artivist, Duojár (traditional Sámi craftswoman), Indigenous Rights Activist and Climate Justice Advocate. She is a link in the millennial crafting of Sámi duodji (traditional crafts) and Arctic Indigenous living. The love for her land, justice for all creation and Indigenous futurism guide her at the end of the Arctic to world-build other worlds beyond.

Mihku-Ilmára Mika Petra / Petra Laiti is an activist, musician, and essayist. Laiti has previously been working as a political assistant at the Finnish Parliament and as a special advisor for cultural grants and Nordic Culture Point. Laiti currently works with just transition and green colonialism at the Saami Council.

Outi Pieski is a Sámi visual artist who lives and works in Ohcejohka/Utsjoki on the Finnish side of Sápmi. Her paintings and installations remain in dialogue with the Arctic region and commit to give form to how the interdependence of nature and culture has shaped life practices of the Sámi community. Her work combines duodji traditions as somatic and familial vocabularies, and opens intergenerational dialogues around knowledge of the handmade as a feminist articulation.

Gry Fors Spein has been interested in duodji since she was 15 years old and have a master degree in duodji. Her desire to safeguard duodji traditions from Loppa municipality has resulted in a book project; the revitalization of the local gákti and production of place specific accessories. In 2004 she completed a major in duodji and in 2017 she completed a MA in curation. She has worked as an art conservator, teacher, and entrepreneur. Today she works as a freelance curator, duojár and mediator of duodji.

Elisabeth Stubberud works as Associate Professor at the Centre for Gender Research at NTNU. Her Kven and Sámi roots and heart lie in Bissojohka/Pyssyjoki/Børselv. Elisabeth has been involved in queer Sámi organizing since 2017 and she has been the leader of Garmeres. She is interested in how various identities, social categories and discrimination grounds intersect, as well as the preconditions for community and belonging.

Samuel Valkeapää works as Assistant Professor and Prorector at the Sámi University of Applied Sciences on Norwegian side Sápmi. The position concerns Sámi duodji and design, hard materials. Interests include precious metal work, hard materials, digital tools and learning environments, as well as a safe work environment. His roots locate to the borders between Finland, Sweden and Norway and research focuses on Sámi creativity in past and present landscapes.

Tuula Sharma Vassvik is a Sámi writer, researcher, artist and sound artist. Tuula is deeply engaged with Indigenous, oppressed, and colonized people's resistance to colonialism, racism, capitalism, patriarchy, and heteronor-

mativity. Son is concerned with the battles in Sápmi fought with forces that come from cultural practices and connection to the earth, each other, and parents. Tuula currently works as an advisor for the Sámi museasearvi (Sámi museum association) and is the producer and presenter of the podcast *Vuostildanfearánat—Sámi stories of resistance* which centers on women, non-binary, and femme Sámi activists.

Erika de Vivo is Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions fellow at UiT: The Arctic University of Norway. Erika holds a PhD in cultural Anthropology from the University of Turin, Italy, and her research centers on Sámi studies, linguistic landscape studies, and history of anthropology. Her main research interests include Sámi cultural heritage, art and political activism in Sápmi, and the study of historical relations between Sápmi and Italy. Since 2018, Erika has carried out extensive fieldwork in Troms-Finnmark County on the Norwegian side of Sápmi, with special focus on the Márku-Sami festival Márkomeannu.

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Sámi allaskuvla

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