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- Images

for the thesis titled:

51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W
60°11'07.6"N 24°56'12.3"E

by Cáit Ní Dhuinnín

I recommend reading this pdf in two page view as it was intended to be printed as two A5 booklets, one with the text and one with the images. It was not possible to print it due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Master of Fine Arts, Time and Space Study Area
Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki

Submission Date: 01.04.2020

Thesis Abstract

51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W
60°11'07.6"N 24°56'12.3"E

Cáit Ní Dhuinnín

Master of Fine Arts, Time and Space Study Area
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Supervisor: Saara Hannula

Examiners: Essi Kausalainen and Jaana Kokko

The written component of my thesis is a record of the artistic research that I carried out during my MFA, between January 2018 and April 2020. It includes reflections upon the developments that occurred in my practice during this time, as well as a discussion about the influences and ideas relating to those developments.

In the text I discuss two of my works. First is the exhibition ° which was a duo show with Minna Mietttilä in Tasku Galleria, Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki, 26.10-02.11.2018. In this show I exhibited an untitled work. This consisted of a durational drawing performance with a sauna stone and a participatory vocal element. This work is not included in my thesis plan but was an important part of my process, therefore it is discussed in the written component. After that I write about 51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W the participatory installation that I showed as part of Kuvan Kevät - MFA Degree Show of the Academy of Fine Arts, Exhibition Laboratory, Helsinki, 4.5-2.6.2019. The following materials were used in the installation: stone, gravel, sand, clay, bones, eggshells, cotton fabric, plastic bags, wires, speakers, paint, wood, nails, paper, carpet. The

material common to both these works and the thing that connects them is stone.

In the written component I explain the significance of stone in my practice and the various ways I approached it during my master's studies. I map my journey from working with stone on a personal level, to forming and sharing two participatory works. I expand on the process of collaborating with materials as well as the challenges of making place based work when I was no longer in that place. Included in the discussion are my thoughts and questions about the agency of materials, the importance of body-based experiences and the role of sound in my work. I refer to various artists, performers, writers and composers in my writing such as art critic and activist Lucy Lippard and artist Sari Palosaari. These references were invaluable to my research.

The text is divided into nine sections. For the most part it proceeds chronologically and is written reflectively. There are some segments which are written differently: a poem, an account, a journal entry, some questions, descriptions, sounds and positions. Those segments are written in italics. Writing the thesis gave me the opportunity to reflect on my process and to distill some of the information and experiences that I encountered along the way.

51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W
60°11'07.6"N 24°56'12.3"E

Cáit Ní Dhuinnín

Thesis Project

Master of Fine Arts, Time and Space Study Area

Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki

Submission Date: 01.04.2020

In this thesis I will discuss $51^{\circ}48'12'' N - 10^{\circ}18'23'' W$, the mixed material, participatory installation that I showed as part of Kuvan Kevät 2019, Exhibition Laboratory, Merimiehenkatu 36 C, 00150, Helsinki, 4.5-2.6.2019.

I will also discuss the exhibition °, this was a duo show with Minna Mietttilä in Tasku Galleria, Kuvataideakatemia, Elimäenkatu 24, Helsinki, 26.10-02.11.2018. In this show I exhibited an untitled work which consisted of a durational drawing performance with a sauna stone and a participatory vocal work. This work is not included in my thesis plan but was an important part of my process, therefore it is discussed in the written component.

Supervisor: Saara Hannula

Examiners: Essi Kausalainen and Jaana Kokko

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The title of this thesis contains the geographical coordinates of two places which have been central to my thesis work. Longitude and latitude coordinates are used to mark these locations. They are read as degrees, minutes and seconds. These particular places don't have exact names, therefore the coordinates are important if you want to travel there. Here are the coordinates written in an alternative form which can be copied into google maps and used to navigate digitally:

51.803333, -10.306389

60.185436, 24.936757

For the installation *51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W*, I created a soundscape, together with sound design student Oula Rytönen. To listen to a version of this soundscape while reading this thesis please use the following link: <https://soundcloud.com/c-it-816015793/touching-stone-to-bones> or scan the QR code below.



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i. introduction

This thesis is a record of my journey, from the beginning of my master's studies in January 2018, until the time I finished writing in March 2020. I have had many companions on this journey, the most significant being the material stone. In this thesis I discuss the role of this material in my work. I map my route from working with stone on a personal level to forming and sharing two participatory works.

There were other companions along the way who I am deeply grateful for. My supervisor, Saara Hannula who's support and gentle guidance was felt every step of the way and much appreciated. I worked with sound design student Oula Rytönen to create the soundscape for *51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W*. Oula had an open and curious approach and helped me through unfamiliar territory. And the various artists, performers, composers and writers who I refer to in my writing. These references were invaluable to my research.

The text is divided into nine sections. For the most part it proceeds chronologically and is written reflectively. There are some segments which are written differently: a poem, an account, a journal entry, some questions, descriptions, sounds and positions. Those segments are written in italics. Writing this thesis gave me the opportunity to reflect on my process and to distill some of the information and experiences that I encountered along the way.

ii. negotiations with matter

*If I hold you long enough to my ear will you sing for me,
speak to me, sound for me?*

*Take hold of stone, bone, grit and sand, a different hold for
each,
between fingers and thumb, a micro-process of erosion.
I rub, compress, reduce.*

No piece of sand will stay the same, no.

*Touch bone to stone,
crunch sand and clay,
pushing, the force of palm to palm,
displaced fragments of greater forms become such trivial
dusts, traces of.*

*The larger masses, the smaller particles, interconnected.
The dust, inhale it, out comes the blackened mucous,
you were with me, grey clay, red sand, chalky white,
you lodged in my nostrils, you filled my ears, my coated
throat.*

iii. sauna stone

“the most basic and most mythic of materials”

Lucy Lippard 1983, 15

Stone, has been central to my artistic process for the past two years. In January 2018 I found a sauna stone in a rubbish container behind Mäkelänrinne swimming hall in Helsinki. The one I found is a ceramic sauna stone. Ceramic sauna stones are manufactured from ceramic pulp that is formed into a shape and heated to temperatures over 1300 degrees Celsius.¹ This particular sauna stone is tetrahedron shaped and fits comfortably in my hand. It is dotted with triangular, indented marks, measuring 0.5cm in length and weighs 0.505kg. The sauna stone enchanted me from the moment I found it.

The process that followed the finding of the sauna stone was one bound by no particular intention. As my practice encompasses different ways of creating this felt like a suitable approach. Having said that, I had an ongoing interest in developing body-based practices as well as incorporating ritual into my work. None the less maintaining a state of not-knowing was important to me, to have no particular outcomes in mind, no fixed idea of where the process would take me. I was following the sauna stone.

1. According to the website of a prominent ceramic stone manufacturer, Kerkes, <http://www.kerkes.fi/ohjeet> 15.01.2020

To pay attention to the sauna stone and to receive it on a number of levels was central. By receiving it I mean visually, tactually, energetically, imaginatively and intellectually. I wanted to establish a collaboration with the stone. To do so I needed to hold space for the process. This included a concentrated period of time devoted to being with the sauna stone in the studio, writing, meditating and moving together. This was followed by a longer period of time, spanning eleven months in which the collaboration evolved.

A significant part of the process involved asking the sauna stone questions and creating a text based on those questions and the thoughts around them. The physical presence of the sauna stone was also very important to the process. I carried it with me, more or less all the time, for a couple of months. It became a companion, a talisman and a touchstone.

I use the term collaboration as a way of implying that the sauna stone has its own agency. The American political theorist and philosopher of Jane Bennett writes, in the context of new materialism, about the vitality of matter explaining it as “the capacity of things, edibles, commodities, storms, metals – not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi-agents or forces with trajectories, propensities or tendencies of their own” (Bennett 2010, viii). This was how I perceived the sauna stone, as something with its own trajectory and propensity.

In a similar way to Bennett, I believe that if things are perceived as having some sort of agency or trajectory of their own it will alter how we value them and how we treat them. With this mindset, in the example Bennett gives, instead of perceiving rubbish as rubbish one would perceive it as lively material which is potentially dangerous. This would then affect the course of action taken when dealing with “rubbish” and its potential (ibid). I approached the stone, with the idea that the potential of what was discarded went beyond the value which was prescribed to it. This wasn't a conscious approach but one which was evoked in me by the stone.

My interpretation of Bennett's theory of agency is not that the agency of stone is a separate force or spirit residing in the stone, as in an animistic tradition, but rather the agency of the material of stone itself, which is in a constant state of change. This interpretation is influenced by the the British anthropologist Tim Ingold. In his article “Materials against Materiality” (2007) Ingold focuses on the properties of materials as opposed to the materiality of objects. Objects are fixed and “finished” things. Materials are in a constant state of change.

When I read Ingold's description of humans swimming “in an ocean of materials” (Ingold 2007, 7) and his reference to the constant state of flux between things forming and transforming, my understanding of the stone changed. The material connection between my body and stone became more tangible. I also became very conscious of the material relationships between things. Stone became an index of materials. Ingold also acknowledges the wisdom of those who work with raw

materials: the stonemasons, potters, tanners and so forth, and the importance of the knowledge that can be gleaned from working physically with different materials. Knowledge that he believes is often overlooked in favour of a more theoretical approach.

On the other hand, contrary to what I have stated previously, the separation of stone and an animating spirit is not always very clear, as described by American writer, art critic, activist and curator Lucy Lippard. When talking about ancient stone idols she states, “the stone was both spirit and spirit’s dwelling place” (Lippard 1983,18). This causes me to question the notion of agency which I have already defined. My opinion on this remains inconclusive.

Two artists who have been influential to my practice and who’s works foreground the agency of the materials they use are Kristina Sedlerova-Villanen and Sari Palosaari. I visited Sedlerova-Villanen’s work *don’t look back* 2018, on Eira Beach in Helsinki, September 2018. For this work the artist left two natural salt monoliths on the beach. These strange mineral forms had an uncanny physical presence. They related in scale to a human body and were somewhat impenetrable yet approachable. I felt like there was a companionable aura about them and they seemed to invite touch. Over time the monoliths dissolved into the sea, a process impossible to witness during one visit alone. Sedlerova-Villanen who also works with language as a source, was referring to two people who looked into the past and as a result turned into salt, a story similar to that which is told in myths and the Bible.

Sari Palosaari also works with the temporality of stone and with the interactions of different forces and processes. The exhibition *Time is out of joint 2018*, contained moments which harnessed the unseen processes of a soundless cracking agent that is used to split rocks in urban areas. In her installation Palosaari positioned boulders in different situations in the gallery. In one section of the exhibition there were two boulders. One was cracked in half, sitting on a blue two-seater bench, similar to benches found in waiting rooms. The other was intact, sitting on the floor. When I visited the exhibition it was palpable that there was a silent process happening. It was happening within and between the stones. It felt like I was witnessing something mysterious, from the outside. The cracking agent, which is an expandable mortar that the artist had put inside the boulders was, at different times, expanding to the extent that the stones broke open. The moment of cracking open was difficult to predict as the agent reacted differently with different types of stone. Things were happening in their own time. The artist created the situation and then allowed the materials to take the lead.

An important part of my process with the sauna stone, which I briefly mentioned earlier in this section, was the practice of collaboration. Collaboration is as a process of communication. Communication can take place in many ways, across all the senses. To communicate with the stone required different modes of transmitting and receiving information and various ways of interpreting it. I imagined reading its surface as if it was an expression. I discovered how it could move by rolling it on the floor, placing it on my body and throwing it in the air.

Performance makers Karen Christopher and Sophie Grodin write about their collaborative practice in the article “On creating a climate of attention: the composition of our work” (2016) saying, “the interaction between us creates a climate which will influence the work and its aesthetic” (Christopher and Grodin 2016, 5). Similarly, the interaction between the sauna stone and me created a climate, it was not a climate of my making but was a shared making with the stone. An important part of this shared making was noticing and reflecting upon the gestures which developed during the process of collaboration, an example of this being the notes I took after drawing practices with the stone (Appendix 1 and 2).

The thinking of British ecologist and philosopher Timothy Morton has been associated with the practice of Christopher and Grodin and I can also see how it applies to my own work. Morton uses the term “ecological thought” which is a way of thinking that looks for connections and interdependencies in the relationships between things (Morton 2010, 7). I was looking for connections between the human and the mineral while I was working with the stone. I recognised that part of my enquiry with the stone was to explore approaches to meaning-making. For centuries cultures have prescribed meaning to stones. I wondered if I was doing the same thing.

17 days of taking everything as a sign 07.03.2018, was a durational exhibition and solo performance by Helsinki based choreographer Emmi Venna. It occupied a liminal place, blurring the lines between art and life. Venna created the site-specific work for the exhibition *s/pace* which took place in Exhibition

Laboratory between February and March 2018. The performance included dancing, writing, resting, music and creating intimate, one-to-one situations with the audience (*Emmi Venna* 22 March 2020). When I visited the exhibition, in the middle of my process with the sauna stone, I recognised some connections between Venna's approach to meaning-making and my own. The non-hierarchical, non-discriminatory way of relating to meaningfulness, chance or "signs" which I experienced in Venna's work was bolstering to my own process.

The way *17 days of taking everything as a sign* held the audience felt supportive, warm and generous. I was also drawn to the temporality of Venna's performance. It felt unhurried. Time seemed to slow down in the space, or at least it did the day I was there. I got the impression that the artist was a conjuror of time. Time could speed up or slow down depending on the energy in the space. It felt close to the temporal and energetic experience of collaborating with the sauna stone.

iv. °

After eleven months with the sauna stone an opportunity arose to share the process in an exhibition in Tasku Gallery, Academy of Fine Arts, in November 2018.² ° was a duo show with artist Minna Miettälä.

For this exhibition we, the stone and I, made a durational drawing over the course of a week. The gallery floor was entirely covered in paper and the drawing gesture repeatedly encircled the stone, leaving a spiralling trace on the paper. We also developed the text which we had written during our earlier conversations together (Appendix 3) and I devised a score (Appendix 4) for visitors/participants to engage with.

I would identify the tone of the score as something similar to Japanese artist Yoko Ono's works found in the publication *Grapefruit* (Ono 1964). These works or "event scores" by Ono exist instead of a physical work of art and contain instructions that the reader may or may not wish to follow. I was also inspired by the way Australian artist Saskia Doherty uses voice in her works. I see parallels between our practices and I admire her poetic approach to material, stories, time and voice. (*Saskia Doherty* 24 March 2020)

Along with the printed text and score there was a microphone left outside the gallery entrance. When someone spoke into the microphone their amplified voice was directed into the

2. 26.10-02.11.2018, Tasku Galleria, Kuvataideakatemia, Elimäenkatu 24, 00510Helsinki.

gallery space via two speakers. Visitors to the exhibition were welcome to enter the gallery space while the drawing was happening. They were also welcome to participate by reciting the text and/or referring to the score. I performed the text at the opening of the exhibition and so did one visitor. The gallery space became a container for the temporal and energetic layers which infused the interaction between hands, stone, pencil, person, space and voice. The process being described in the text was overlaying the process of drawing as it was occurring. I viewed the participation of the audience as an extension of the collaborative energy that infused the work.

Minna Miettälä's work consisted of a delicate structure created from two slender columns which were composed of multiple, interconnected, hand-turned wooden legs. Wooden dowels, placed horizontally, joined the two columns which stood around one metre apart. The structure reached up to the ceiling in a precarious and animated manner. The cylindrical shapes of the two columns as well as the impression of movement that was evoked by their leaning position brought another energetic locus to the exhibition space. The sculpture was standing slightly off centre in the exhibition space, on top of the drawing paper.

What I enjoyed and appreciated about the presence of Miettälä's work was that it was also in the spirit of embracing and allowing for the agency of material. It summoned an air of the uncanny. I feel it is important to mention Miettälä's work as I felt there was a porous quality between our works and a poetic joining of circular motions in thoughts and actions. I also think

it demonstrated ecological thinking in how the works interconnected and related to each other.

v. the necessary delusion of the stone being my friend

The performance has to happen on the floor, grounded, low, succumbing to gravity, my body, the body of the stone. There is no doubt that collaboration can be challenging. My will overwhelms and the flow breaks. I am outside it now. Then I breathe. I go back in. The pencil erodes, the stone erodes, some barrier around me erodes. I surrender to the process. The circles we draw overlap, layer, spread out, create thicknesses, thinnesses. At certain moments it feels like there is no beginning and no end, can we just keep drawing forever and ever? We are suspended, outside of the dominant dualistic culture and the struggle with control and meaninglessness that has been with me recently. Then we rest.

vi. between

“Stones, like us, stand at the intersection of countless lines, crossing one another and receding to infinity, at the centre of a field of forces too unpredictable to be measured; and we awkwardly call the result chance, hazard or fate”

Marguerite Yourcenar 1970, xix

One could say that the sauna stone was not a “real” stone. However, in the contemporary Mexican-American philosopher Manuel de Landa’s analysis of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze’s (1925-1995) theory of new materialism, an alternative perspective is suggested. He proposes that something, for example a mountain, is a mountain because it has been created by particular processes (*Manuel de Landa. Deleuze and The New Materialism. 2009. 1/11 8:27- 9:14 and 2/11 0-0:25 05.01.2010*). In this example, de Landa clarifies the defunct role of essences, if I replace the mountain with the stone, it means that it is not defined as a stone because of some essential reason but because it underwent similar processes to how other stones are made.

The processes which create stone combine heat and pressure, it takes millions of years for them to occur “naturally”. The processes which create sauna stones also include heat and pressure, however it does not take millions of years for these processes to occur. The idea of the sauna stone being “unnatural” depends on how one perceives humans and our creations. The sauna stone was holding space for me to slip between materialist notions, a phenomenological approach and

something else. Something unknown, unnecessary to know.

To elaborate on the necessity for not knowing I refer to the book *On not knowing, how artists think*, edited by Elizabeth Fisher and Rebecca Fortnum (2013). This book is a collection of essays and explores many facets of the need for not knowing. In the essay, “Wonder, beginning again and letting be”, Professor of Philosophy Rachel Jones writes from a feminist perspective, based on her extensive research into the work of philosopher Luce Irigaray, about the violence of knowing or presuming to know. She explains that if we are determined to reduce the unfamiliar to the familiar, or the unknown to the known, then we are denying the existence of the other. Negating differences.

What I took from this essay as the most important message is that it is possible to resist this tendency. By paying attention to differences without needing to absorb them, a person can stay open to the unknowable and ungraspable aspects of themselves and others. (Jones 2013, 18) While it may seem a bit unnecessary to approach the sauna stone with this in mind, I don't see the need to restrain this way of thinking, but instead I propose taking every opportunity to practice it.

vii. journal

When I consider stone, what do I think of now? Squashed things, different densities, bones, minerals. The ingredients of these stones. What is the concentration of minerals and how do they relate to me? What is my role in this interaction? I am curious, I look, I see, I translate perhaps. I keep these stones company, like a vigil to their existence. I sit with them. Can I create a vessel in which these two sites converge? The vertical and the round. (own journal, 2018)

viii. 51°48'12" N- 10°18'23" W

How to share an experience, an encounter, an inquiry? How to share a place/places?

How to create place-based work when you are no longer in that place/those places?

How to know stone? What do I remember now, from afar?

Where in my body do I remember it?

51°48'12" N- 10°18'23" W was an installation which I showed in Exhibition Laboratory as part of Kuvan Kevät 2019.³ Kuvan Kevät is the Masters in Fine Art exhibition of the Academy of Fine Arts Helsinki. It takes place annually in the spring. The questions written on the previous page are questions which were present in my mind, before, during and after the installation was made. I see them as questions that were partially answered by the experience of creating *51°48'12" N- 10°18'23" W* but I believe they will continue to occupy my practice for some time.

The work, including objects, materials, sounds and instructions was installed in a space I altered to encompass it more fittingly. As the installation involved the participation of the viewer, it was my wish that there would be some privacy to engage with the work, to feel more comfortable and protected. For that reason I designed two fabric panel walls which delineated and sheltered the site of the installation. The walls were made from lengths of wood and fabric. The wood was painted white and formed into frames across which I stretched white cotton. The fabric allowed light to travel into the space. Visitors were able to move through the installation to access the rest of the exhibition.

There were three positions/actions suggested for the viewer. Each one took place with a material or materials. In the lying down position, the body of the participant became a layer on top of cotton, on top of sand, on top of gravel. In the standing position the body of the participant had to balance upon

3. Kuvan Kevät 2019, 4.5-2.6.2019, Exhibition Laboratory, Merimiehenkatu 36 C, 00150, Helsinki

a stone, which wobbled. The interaction with clay involved a more elaborate sequence of actions. First bending down to pick up a handful of clay, then squeezing the clay while being in any chosen posture, and finally, bending down, reaching up or leaning over to deposit the clay on the floor, windowsill, stone or some area in the space. The participant reproduced geological processes, compressing and heating the material. Change occurred over time.

On entering the installation there was a large window on the left divided into three sections. The top middle section was left open on calm days. On windy days it was closed so as not to disturb the work of the neighbouring artists. With the window open the outside sounds of building excavations mingled with the sounds in the installation, situating it more firmly in the surrounding environment. The space was lit by the natural light coming through the window.

In the corner across from the entrance, near to the window there were initially ten plastic bags filled with locally sourced clay.⁴ Nine of them were stacked upon each other and one bag was left open, positioned slightly separately from the others. The supply of clay was gradually depleted as handfuls were taken and moulded by visitors to the exhibition. There was an instruction accompanying this action as well as the other two actions/positions in the installation (Appendix 5). It was important that the clay came from a local area, that the work would be connected materially to Helsinki and the geological

4. The clay was sourced from Kultelan Tiiliputki, Somero.

region surrounding it, this being the Svecofennian province of the Fennoscandian Shield.

The exit from the installation was positioned diagonally across from the entrance. A grey stone of irregular shape was placed on the floor, almost on the axis between the entrance and exit, but closer to the exit and the wall opposite the window. There was an off-white A4 page with the instructions (*ibid*) written on it stuck to that wall. The stone measured 12 inches on two sides and 8 inches and 9 inches on the others and its height was 8 inches at its higher side and 6 inches at its lower.

In the corner to the right of the entrance was a bed, approximately 170cm in length and 60cm in width, composed of two layers. The bottom layer was made of dusty granite gravel, pink and grey in colour. The top layer was a thin mattress made from hand-dyed cotton, pale beige in colour and filled with sand.

There were four speakers in the space, one to the left just as one entered, another in the opposite corner, above the bags of clay. A third speaker was placed in the corner nearest the exit, and a fourth was placed in the remaining corner. It was unique in its position because it was outside the fabric wall and therefore not visible to the person who was inside the installation. All speakers were facing into the space. The position of the speakers and the design of the sound corresponded spatially and materially with the multiple focal points of the installation.

The following materials were used in the installation: stone, gravel, sand, clay, bones, eggshells, cotton fabric, plastic bags, wires, speakers, paint, wood, nails, paper, carpet. When possible, materials were found, borrowed, re-used, re-cycled. When this was not an option, they were purchased with gratitude for the human and non-human entities who made it possible to do so.

viii. (a) place

Kerry

51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W

In Cill Rialaig, Co. Kerry, on the west coast of Ireland there is a hilltop with four stones standing upon it. I was in the area for the season and visited the hilltop on numerous occasions during my time there. I had heard about the stones previously, but had deliberately not researched their history or any meaning associated with them as I wanted to experience them in, as much as possible, an unbiased way. I didn't want them to be loaded with history but wanted to see what I might gather from them by experiencing them in that moment, to share stone time, to be in their presence. At the back of my mind was an interest in the role of ritual in times of crisis, in resistance and in ways of knowing stone on multiple levels.

On one occasion I tried to become like stone. I tried to stand still on the hillside for an hour. I didn't quite succeed. I stood for half an hour, my body initially rigid and upright. The grassy ground below me uneven from the hooves of cattle, the day slightly wet. I felt the wind on my face, cool and moist on one side from the ocean far below me, warm and dry on the other.

I stood still while thinking about the hard parts of my body, feeling limbs that wanted to move, joints that wanted to twist or turn, heavy in my hips and my bones. My knees bent a

little, my spine twisted to one side to allow for the incline of the ground. I had to remain human: I couldn't occupy the space of stone but I could stand alongside it. I liked it there. Another day called for a different action. My desire to share the experience of stone fuelling me I began to wrap myself around the stone, trying to be close to the stone, to feel the material. I ended up clinging to the surface, my straining fingertips hooked over the top, elbows and knees pressing painfully onto the unyielding surface, feet a fraction off the ground. It hurt. But the hard, mineral parts of me had met the hard mineral parts of the stone.

*The stone of my bones. Minerals, minerals, minerals.
Calcium, iron, potassium, beta-carotene, magnesium, phosphorus, silicon,
sodium, sulphur.
Mineral bodies.*

Helsinki

60°11'07.3"N - 24°56'11.9"E

Under the railway bridge, perching. They are many; smooth rounded forms, too many to count, at least not today when it is so cold. The embankment is steep, it can be slippery to climb.

Depending on the time of day, the time of year, the sunlight reaches in to warm them, but up at the top, under the thick concrete layers and dense iron rails there is a chill. It touches the bones.

*Liquid drips and stiffens, repeatedly, and time escapes, I see a worm immortalised. It will worm no more. Is this how the universe was formed and how it will end?
A steady drip, drip, drip.⁵*

5. Text proposed for Kuvan Kevät catalogue (edited), January 2019

The work which was shown at Kuvan Kevät was informed by a process of visiting two places and an engagement with a material they have in common, stone. One is a place in Ireland, 51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W, which is also the title of the installation. I visited there during the summer of 2018. The other is in Finland, 60°11'07.3"N - 24°56'11.9"E, which I first visited in February of the same year and revisited more often that autumn. I could use the word site to describe these places but there is an allusion to extractivism in the term which doesn't sit well with me, I refer to this again later in this section. I will however use the term now to explain the relationship between the places, the material and the work.

While tracing the history of site-specificity, Korean curator and art history educator, Miwon Kwon states, that the topics which an artist has an ongoing engagement with are in fact a site in which or from which they are working (Kwon 2004 28-29). I would identify my previous research with stone as a site to which this installation responded. It was the material of stone itself, alongside ideas about stone that also became a site. Therefore, the installation is both site-responsive (Kwon 2004 1): the material and ideas of stone, and place-responsive: the location of the stones I visited.

In the late sixties American artist Robert Smithson developed works which he referred to as sites and non-sites. I see similarities between his approach and mine. Smithson wanted to share a site as art, to bring the site into the gallery, and he wanted to do so in a way that was immediate and bodily, as opposed to representational or pictorial. For these works Smith-

son brought piles of dirt or rocks into the gallery and showed them in tandem with a map of the area from which they came. (Lippard 1983, 30)

My approach, differing from Smithson's, was a distillation and translation of my physical and emotional experiences in two places, with stone as the locus. However, similarly to Smithson I thought it was importance to include a direct reference to place in the installation. Smithson displayed a map on the wall whereas I titled the work using the geographic coordinates of the place in Kerry. I chose not to include the coordinates of the place in Helsinki in the title since the exhibition was taking place in Helsinki with materials from the local area.

In *The Lure of the Local, Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*, Lucy Lippard writes; "Even if one's history there is short, a place can still be felt as an extension of the body, especially the walking body." (Lippard 1997, 34) When visiting these two places, I was often on foot, I arrived slowly. In my experience, the roles described by Lippard also occurred in reverse. My body felt to be an extension of the place. The place moved me but I was not at the centre of the experience; I was involved in a being-with practice. The places did inform a response in me and I focused on and remembered these responses, mainly in my body.

Dance artist and educator Andrea Olsen concisely states: "The body is the medium through which we experience ourselves and the environment. The ways we gather and interpret sensory information affect both how we monitor our internal workings

and how we construct our views of the world” (Olsen 2002, xxi). Yes, as Olsen says our bodies are always gathering information, it is an unconscious process. In the *Somanauts – workshop for experiential anatomy*⁶ dramaturg and writer Elina Minn guided the visitors through a gentle awakening or reminder of anatomical awareness. The “*Undoing Practice*” encouraged the visitor to focus on the experience of their body (Minn 28 April 2019). Elina, in a calm and clear voice, read aloud an instructional text, similar to a body scan⁷. The unconscious act became conscious. With this came an opportunity for an evaluation of how the body/mind/soul felt in relation to the outer world. In $51^{\circ}48'12'' N - 10^{\circ}18'23'' W$ I wanted to foreground the experiences of the visitors’ bodies to the gallery; that they would experience the material qualities of stone and its different physical states (sand, gravel, clay) through an invitation to touch and to listen.

I see the installation in the gallery as the third place in this process. The different actions which happened there were distilled from the kinetic encounters in the two other places and coupled with the site of stone. It is a third place because it is not a representation of the other places but has its own conditions, yet it would not exist without the other places nor without the site of stone. It is for this reason that I think of place-based

6. *The Somanauts-workshop for experiential anatomy* took place in Kiasma’s Studio K space amidst Alma Heikkilä’s paintings. The workshops occurred on different days between the 31.03 - 16.06.2019.

7. A body scan is a practice that involves paying attention to different parts of the body and the sensations which are felt in each part. It is usually carried out while lying down.

work, in this instance, as a collaboration with place, because the places co-created the installation.

The installation tells something about the other places. American philosopher David Abrams writes: “The singular magic of a place is evident from what happens there, from what befalls oneself or others when in its vicinity. To tell of such events is implicitly to tell of the particular power of that site, and indeed to participate in its expressive potency” (Abrams 1996, 182). *51°48’12” N - 10°18’23” W* was an indirect, distilled telling about place. Curated by my own leanings and interests it shares, I hope, an aspect of the places from which it came.

Composer and musician Jonathan Kawchuk speaks about sound coming from a space or place: “All recorded sound exists in a space of some kind”. (Kawchuk 2019) This awareness influences where he decides to make music. When discussing his latest album which was recorded near the Rocky Mountains, Alberta, Canada he refers to the distancing that can occur when looking at a place or at nature and making work about it, as opposed to making work in the place itself. In his view, making work about the place is a very human-centred approach.

I see a parallel between Kawchuk’s position and an orientation towards our world that David Abrams refers to in his research into the literature of the Lakota people and the Omaha people of North America: “Words do not speak about the world; rather they speak to the world” (Abrams 1996, 71). Here Abrams references an Omaha poem in which a rock is being spoken to with great respect and reverence. For me the word site speaks

about the world not to our world. This relates to my reluctance to use the word site which I alluded to earlier in this section.

viii. (b) sound

crisp crisp crisp

crisp crisp crisp crisp crisp

crrisssp

crunch crunch crunch

trickle trickle trickle trickle

trickle trickle trickle

trickle trickle

rumble rumble rummmble rumble

crisp crisp crisp crisp

hissssssssssssssss

CRACK

The soundscape for the installation was derived from recordings taken from a previous work of mine, *Sounding the Stones*, which was exhibited in the group show *Hidden Materialities* in Exhibition Laboratory, March 2019. A continuous layering upon the “site” of stone was occurring in my practice. Studio recordings from different materials were also included: stones of various sizes, animal bones, egg shells, clay, gravel, sand, water.

The sound design was a collaboration with sound design student Oula Rytönen. We paid attention to small or usually unheard sounds. My actions caused reactions in the material. Mushing gravel into clay, sprinkling sand into water, rocking a stone back and forth. Oula designed the sound to create an undulating loop. The sounds emitting from each speaker were considered in relation to the area of the installation they were in as well as the overall presence the sound. Particular attention was given to how they related to the material, atmosphere and position proposed for each location in the installation. The sound enveloped the space, the people and things in it, as well as contributing intimate aural details. It was a way of engaging another sense and to open up the imagination. There was a sense of repetition between what was visually present in the space, what was being touched and what was being repeated in the soundscape. So, it was another telling about material.

Artist Jana Winderen’s practice is embedded in a consideration of our environment and a concern for how we are treating our planet. Her approach to sound and listening strongly influenced how I approached the sounding of materials for

the Kuvan Kevät installation. *Spring Bloom in the Marginal Ice Zone* (Winderen 2018) is a work which opened up a mode of questioning and wondering that guided my practice.

The marginal ice zone is the border between the open sea and the sea ice. It is a very fragile ecological area. Winderen recorded this border zone in the Barents Sea, giving voice to the creatures living there, creatures that may not usually be heard by the human ear. (*Jana Winderen* 24.03.2020) Winderen's work inspired me to wonder: What other sounds do we not hear as humans? What might the sound of stone be? How do we respectfully encounter and interpret the sounds which would not, without technological help, be audible to the human ear? These questions were present to me while creating the soundscape with Oula.

The practices of American composer and musician Pauline Oliveros were also very present to me when I was developing the sound component of *51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W*. Oliveros (1932-2016) developed and advocated a deep listening practice during her lifetime. An important part of her practice were sonic meditations (Oliveros 1974) which Oliveros first began as a personal response to her inner turmoil in the face of political despair: "The Vietnam War protests and atrocities were at their height. A student at U.C.S.D. sat in the plaza, poured kerosene on himself and burned himself to death . . . I felt the temper of the times. I felt the tremendous fear." (O'Brien 2016)

After this experience Oliveros withdrew from performing and public life for some time. During this time, she created and listened to sounds which she found soothing to this state of turmoil and despair. She would later propose that the sonic meditations which arose from this period helped expand consciousness as well as having, “humanitarian purposes; specifically healing” as a goal in her practice (ibid).

In my experience Oliveros’ meditations provide refuge and remedy during times of personal, political and ecological turmoil as well as the expansion of consciousness which she proposed. I intended that $51^{\circ}48'12'' N - 10^{\circ}18'23'' W$ could also provide refuge to the visitor and an invitation to rest. The sound component of the installation reiterated a meditative aspect in the work.

viii. (c) positions

positions (shared)

standing

lying down

*bending - taking a piece of clay - squeezing the clay -
moving/not moving in the space*

*standing; barefoot, weight can be distributed evenly between
the two feet, depending on the supporting surface, depend-
ing on the feet - there is a possibility of finding balance.*

*lying down; a position to rest in perhaps - the back of
the body touches the ground; the front of the body faces
upwards.*

*bending; to get the clay - taking a piece of clay; to squeeze
the clay - squeezing the clay; the hand moves repeatedly,
moulding the clay with its touch, the hand dries, the clay
dries - moving/not moving in the space; passing the time it
takes to squeeze the clay*

*positions (not shared)
on elbows and knees
perching*

on elbows and knees; the joints of the limbs hold the torso, head and neck suspended - weight bears down on elbows and kneecaps, they are the only points of contact with the ground, over time there is pain in this position - imagine an insect on its back, first it lies still, it is vulnerable then it wriggles and squirms - legs seek purchase to rock the body and push, push, push upright - it needs to right itself to continue living - on elbows and knees the pain is the trap - to leave the position, collapse is necessary so that the weight will not bear down on one side only, this would be agony - slide or collapse onto the belly, leave the pose.

perching; different from squatting but similar, a bird usually perches but here it is a human position - in this instance the pose originates on the sloping embankment, where the body is situated higher up than the street below - it might be a position of watchful rest, or hiding in plain sight, a way to look at the dirt, plants or small animals around - it is an in-between position where things might be picked up from the ground and looked at more closely.

We have structure. Andrea Olsen refers to the physical body as a structure. This includes our “bones, muscles and other tissues which comprise our bodies” (Olsen 1991, 9). Our bodies exist inside larger structures both tangible and intangible. These include societal structures, physical structures and mental structures, amongst others. The work is also a structure; an installation and its various components, which, in this case, lives inside yet another structure; the gallery. The gallery serves as a place in which to pay attention. Helen Mirra says about this: “The exhibition space is a useful temporary fiction of autonomy for artworks, for another kind of attending to” (Mirra 2015).

While developing this work it was important for me to consider the structure of the human body in relation to the structure of stone, thus the references to minerals and the consideration of tactility, hardnesses, softnesses etc. It was also important for me to find a way to relate to the structure of the gallery or exhibition space, to figure out my position in relation to it.

Andrea Fraser wrote about Fred Sandback's work saying: “It makes a place for me inside the institution that the work is inside” (Fraser 2006). I like to think that $51^{\circ}48'12'' N - 10^{\circ}18'23'' W$ became a place inside the gallery which remained responsive to the physical structures of the space and considerate of the other works around it. At the same time, it gently but directly addressed the visitor and explicitly provided a place for the body to occupy.

Ernesto Neto's installations provide alternative ways of being within the gallery. His practice brings other senses, besides the visual, into focus. Neto also bring the participants in his works into relation with each other. These are qualities which I also identify in my own work. Neto's exhibition of 2001, *Only the amoebas are happy*, at the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York, foregrounded the experience of the body, beyond the visual faculties. The installation consisted of a web-like, maze construction it created a path for the visitor from the gallery entrance. This pathway lead to the threshold of a room. The room had soft walls, ceiling and floor and there were drooping globulous forms hanging from the ceiling. It was lit with an incandescent blue light. The work embedded itself in the architecture of the gallery, thus leaving the viewer with no choice but to participate in the work once they entered the room or else remain outside of the work.

I see a similarity to the way I installed $51^{\circ}48'12'' N - 10^{\circ}18'23'' W$ though my approach was less directive. The position of the installation within the architecture of the gallery meant that the viewer had to pass through the installation to reach the rest of the exhibition. Also, similarly to Neto's installation, the participant became part of the work once they chose to engage with it. In $51^{\circ}48'12'' N - 10^{\circ}18'23'' W$ there was space allowed for the participant to engage with the material, through touch and listening, but also room to engage with the other participants in the installation. Clay could be squeezed together, the person lying down became part of the installation, they could be observed. The person standing on the stone became a statue perhaps. The context of the gallery could very easily transform

the stone into a pedestal, the body on the bed into a performance. There was a tension between the desired experience I wished to create for the visitor and the reality of the context of the work. There was a limit to the level of intimacy that was possible in a space that also functioned as a thoroughfare to the rest of the exhibition.

The idea of posture which Olsen proposes is “the way we live in our structure – the energy and attitudes which moment by moment shape our bodies” (Olsen 1991, 9). In the installation I proposed three positions/actions that the viewer could partake in. With these I was proposing an energy or attitude that was attuned to the material in the space, orientated towards stone and stone time. The energy which infused the positions was one of quiet resistance, rest and the act of paying attention.

In 1973 Gene Sharp published “198 Methods of Nonviolent Action” (Sharp 1973). In the category of physical intervention “stand-in” is listed, so is “sit-in”. “Lie-in” isn’t listed, but it is something to consider in relation to the installation. In the sphere of activism, a sit-in or a stand-in is a way of showing support or solidarity with something and a way of going against something else meaning an effective means of protest.

During the process of being with the stones both in Kerry and in Helsinki I wondered what I could learn from those stones. I noticed how I felt in my body when I was in contact with the stones. I also got the feeling, as I stood alongside them, that we were standing for something and also resisting other things. To stand in solidarity with stone. To support inaction. To connect

with geological time. To stop. To pay attention. To think about history. To think about future. To feel solidity. To stand upon stone. To stand-up on stone. To feel weight shifting. To be in uncertainty with stone.⁸

8. A personal list created in a similar way to Richard Serra's, List of Verbs 1967/1968, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/152793>, last visited 12.01.2020

(ix) sediment

Sedimentation occurs over time, when things have been given a chance to settle. The process of making my thesis work and before that of working with the sauna stone is an experience that is still settling for me.

At the start of section vii. of this thesis I wrote the many questions that I had at the beginning of and during this process. I don't have answers to these questions, though I have addressed them in different ways in my writing and in my art-making. I think there are multiple ways that they can be reinterpreted and revisited and I'm sure I will do that again and again. Still there are things that remain with me from this time, fragments of sediment composed of different materials.

There were many practices which I found enriching. The good feeling of working with others, human and non-human, directly or indirectly, remains with me. Inviting participation, conversation and communication gave energy to the process. It also felt good to take time to retreat and reflect. To practice unlearning, to let go of the need to know and define. To find balance.

The sediment of this process also includes a bag of dried clay pieces. Each one bears the imprint of somebody's hand. The clay pieces were created by visitors to the installation $51^{\circ}48'12''$ N - $10^{\circ}18'23''$ W. They carry the trace of an interaction between a human hand and a muddy material and represent the duration of an experience. I also have a large drawing. The one I created with the stone as part of the exhibition^o. Spiralling lines

traverse the paper, flowing and settling in different densities. I invited Minna Miettälä to contribute to the drawing when we exhibited together. Her marks are also on that paper. And I have a recording of sand, trickling onto a hydrophone, immersed in a basin of water, as well as the memory of listening, together with Oula Rytönen, to tiny sounds of stone particles.

Eventually sediment becomes rock. This process takes thousands of years. It cannot be hurried. I think it is hard for a human to fully grasp the magnitude of these processes but an understanding can be reached for. I consider my visits to stone sites, whether monumental or commonplace, as a way of touching on stone time. I also consider the process of drawing, in which the erosion of the graphite and clay core of the pencil occurs, as a way of connecting the everyday, small-scale thing, the pencil, with a broader geological time-frame. The squeezing of a fistful of clay for the un-pre-defined amount of time it takes for it to dry and crack, connects to stone time. The suspension of human time by listening to a loop of abstract sounds over and over again, connects to stone time. In those moments I hoped to offer a portal to a different rhythm, to share the temporality of stone with others.

This thesis could be considered as part of the sediment remaining from these processes, or it could be viewed as a form of compression, another geological process essential to the formation of rock. However I prefer to consider this thesis as an excavation of the layers that comprise my practice and my artistic research. It is a way of sifting through sediment that might never become stone.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.

Notes from the process of ° (i)

Sometime between October _ and November 5th 2018

Concentration

Expanded attention

Direction

Energy directed down or sideways

(horizontally or vertically)

Pressure, pressure, pressure

The grip on the pencil, the eyes closed

Weight dispersal

Documentation of a process/a collaboration/a working relationship

Traces

marks, the position of the body over the stone, with the stone

The development of the drawing is more interesting I think

Listening, feeling

3b/4b/hb

Where does the stone want to move?

What is its rotation?

How to begin/how to end?

What is the relationship of time to this piece?

Begin when it's empty, end when it's full, when is it full?

Follow the marks like they were arrows.

Appendix 2.

Notes from the process of ° (ii)

Sometime between October _ and November 5th 2018.

Eclipse

Eclipse

Density

Beauty

Compression

Pressure

Pushing down

Graphite

Pencil

erodes, erodes, erodes

Repeated actions bring frustration, how does a deepening of the experience occur, through collaboration? Through contextualisation perhaps?

Embodied movement, how does that occur?

Meditation, duration, compression, object, stone.

How to convey the sadness?

The excavation of grief?

A cyclic instead of a linear world view.

spiralling, swirling dervish

Kundalini

What effect does spiralling have on the body, mind, earth systems?

Rotating spine following the movement through the torso and spine

Appendix 3.

Stone Script, 2018

You being so perfect, so perfect despite the cracks and the scuffs and the marks and the seams and the wear and the tear of being. You seem so content, so complete. Such a nice shape, the way the edges round in, the way you're not sitting flush with the table but rising up out of it.

Do you connect softly with your surroundings? Is that why you seem to belong?

Why do you have those marks on you?

You were heated and splashed. Did you settle and shift when the heat started to increase? Were you up against others? Did you make a crack noise when the water touched your hot surface? Maybe you were on the top, or were you on the bottom? Did the ceramic of you ping?

Sitting on the table, the light changes your surface. The traces of the charcoal are still to be seen. The shadow underneath you a rich blue.....violet really. Three exposed facades and rounded ridges in between. You are impenetrable now. So self-contained, self-assured but content, quietly content, with a soft singing. Simple maybe, like a child's simple rhymes or nonsensical, humming and muttering, yes humming, a low hum, because you're not just one. Is it because of the marks on you that they seem to

represent many? Each dent a receptacle for some part of your consciousness ? And what about time? Are you being subjected to a different timescale, are you being used? You have no navel but many dents, deliberately made.

Designed, made, manufactured, moulded, are you worthy? Are you the real deal? Not really, no. But you are made up of various different materials that come from this natural world. You are human-made. But humans are part of nature which means that you are part of nature. If you were an animal you would be a hybrid, manipulated breed. And if you escaped into the wild you would breed with the wild animals and create a new type of breed. How would that work? How would people react and respond? Would you be a pest, a threat, a fear? By human cultivation you were made but when you become a menace that is forgotten and ignored. You are an aggressor then, or could you be a salvation?

You emit a humming vibration.....a pulsing sound, like the sound of bees in the the summer, coming and going, buzzing surrounds you. The particles of you move like this, in a whirling whirr. Vibrating, the inside of you is active. Is your time-scale speeding up? You were in the studio, by yourself, humming, radiating warmth. You have your own life, your own presence, your own energy. You rest on stomach and head and hand and hip. The hip bone is hard, you cannot balance together, you roll off.

Appendix 4.

Things to consider when reading the text:

pace

volume

reading in a perpetual canon

the effects of gravity on voice

reading aloud

whispering

the mic

tone

the space

reading with others

reading to another

the effects of words on a body

reading to somebody across the room

walking

layers

reading while watching the drawing

reading to the drawing

reading to the world

sitting down

texture

Appendix 5.

take a handful of clay
squeeze it until it begins to dry
leave it in the space

ota kourallinen savea
purista savea kunnes se kuivaa
jätä se tilaan

stand barefoot upon the stone

astu paljain jaloin kivelle

take off your shoes
lie down

ota kengät pois
mene makuulle

51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W
60°11'07.6"N 24°56'12.3"E

IMAGES



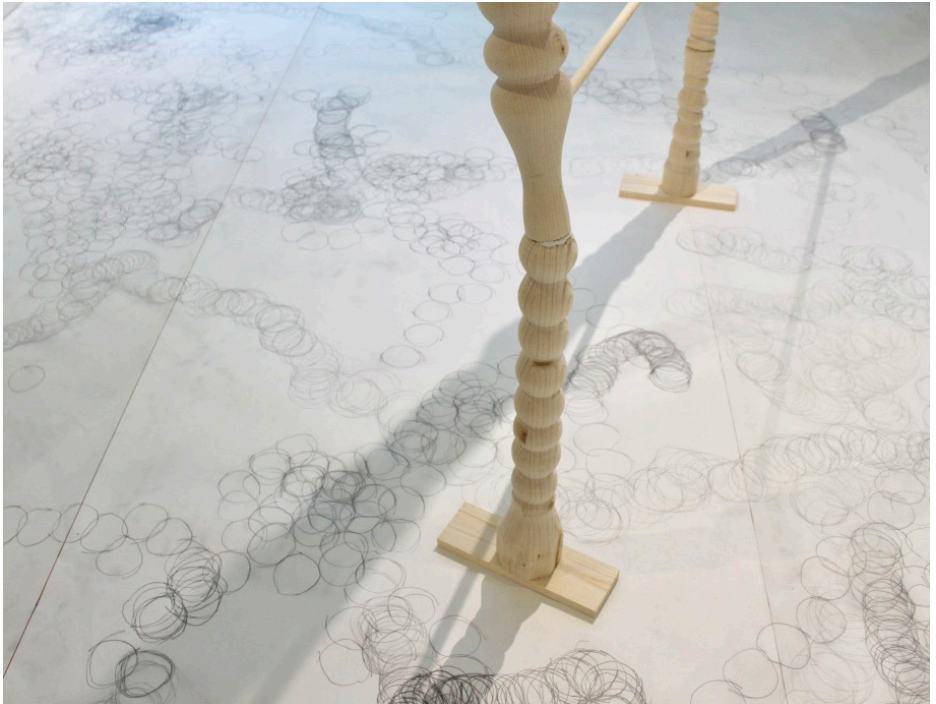
Sauna stone, Helsinki, 2018. Photo: Cáit Ní Dhuinnín



°, duo show with Minna Miettälä, exhibition view, Tasku Gallery,
Kuvataideakatemia, Elimäenkatu 24, Helsinki.
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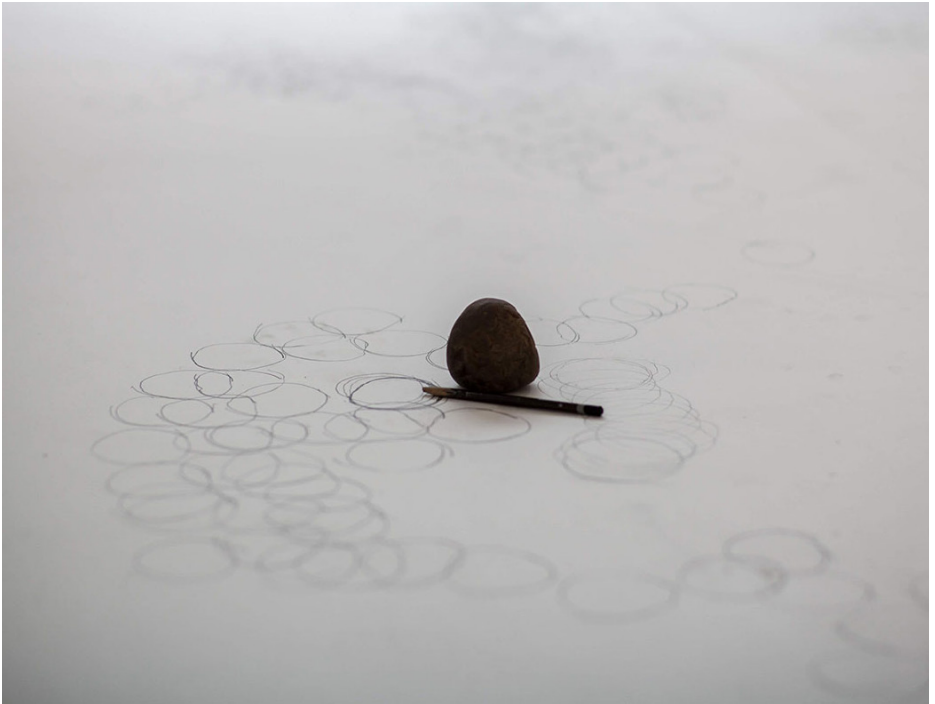
°, drawing performance, opening event 26.10.2018, Tasku Gallery, Kuvataideakatemia, Elimäenkatu 24, Helsinki. Photo: Sam Conlon



Detail of Minna Miettillä's work with the drawing, °, Tasku Gallery, Kuvataideakademia, Elimäenkatu 24, Helsinki. Photo: Minna Miettillä



A participant reading the text at the opening event of °, 26.10.2018, Tasku Gallery, Kuvataideakatemia, Elimäenkatu 24, Helsinki. Photo: Sam Conlon



Detail of the stone and a pencil with the drawing, °, Tasku Gallery, Kuvataideakatemia, Elimäenkatu 24, Helsinki. Photo: Sam Conlon



Reading the text at the opening event of °, 26.10.2018, Tasku Gallery, Kuvataideakatemia, Elimäenkatu 24, Helsinki.
Photo: Sam Conlon



Installation view, *51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W*, Kuvan Kevät 2019, Exhibition Laboratory, Merimiehenkatu 36 C, 00150, Helsinki, 4.5-2.6.2019.

Photo: Cáit Ní Dhuinnín



Installation view, $51^{\circ}48'12'' N - 10^{\circ}18'23'' W$, Kuvan Kevät 2019, Exhibition Laboratory, Merimiehenkatu 36 C, 00150, Helsinki, 4.5-2.6.2019.

Photo: Cáit Ní Dhuinnín



Installation view with participant and viewer, $51^{\circ}48'12'' N - 10^{\circ}18'23'' W$, Kuvan Kevät 2019, Exhibition Laboratory, Merimiehenkatu 36 C, 00150, Helsinki, 4.5-2.6.2019. Photo: Cáit Ní Dhuinnín



Installation detail, $51^{\circ}48'12'' N - 10^{\circ}18'23'' W$, Kuvan Kevät 2019, Exhibition Laboratory, Merimiehenkatu 36 C, 00150, Helsinki, 4.5-2.6.2019.

Photo: Cáit Ní Dhuinnín



Installation view, $51^{\circ}48'12'' N - 10^{\circ}18'23'' W$, Kuvan Kevät 2019, Exhibition Laboratory, Merimiehenkatu 36 C, 00150, Helsinki, 4.5-2.6.2019.

Photo: Cáit Ní Dhuinnín



Installation detail with participant, *51°48'12" N - 10°18'23" W*, Kuvan Kevät 2019, Exhibition Laboratory, Merimiehenkatu 36 C, 00150, Helsinki, 4.5-2.6.2019. Photo: Cáit Ní Dhuinnín



Detail of installation, $51^{\circ}48'12''$ N - $10^{\circ}18'23''$ W, Kuvan Kevät 2019, Exhibition Laboratory, Merimiehenkatu 36 C, 00150, Helsinki, 4.5-2.6.2019.

Photo: Cáit Ní Dhuinnín



Installation detail with participant, $51^{\circ}48'12'' N - 10^{\circ}18'23'' W$, Kuvan Kevät 2019, Exhibition Laboratory, Merimiehenkatu 36 C, 00150, Helsinki, 4.5-2.6.2019. Photo: Cáit Ní Dhuinnín

