

Viliina Silvonen and Emmi Kuittinen

***Collaboration Between an Artist and a Researcher  
in the Field of Laments in Finland***

**Abstract**

*The authors – folklorist Viliina Silvonen, PhD and professional folk musician Emmi Kuittinen, M.Mus – have been collaborating in the field of laments in contemporary Finland. Artist-researcher collaborations form new perspectives and ideas and create multivocal knowledge by joining varying interests and differing ways of knowing, thinking, and communicating of partners whose approaches reflect different ideologies. In this chapter, we reflect on difficulties and advantages encountered during the collaboration and analyse the voices that have emerged. The chapter is structured around autobiographical writings that form dialogical narration and comprise the basis of the analysis.*

Participatory methods and collaboration between different fields have been a trend in research for a couple decades. A basic method in ethnomusicology is collaboration between a musician and a researcher, which focuses on the practicalities of doing and learning from and with the musician to produce new knowledge (see, e.g., Rice 1995; Baily 2001). In our case, the approach is a bit different. In this collaboration between a folklore scholar and a professional folk music artist, we have searched for ways to join our knowledge and ways of knowing to learn something new about laments as a form of performing arts in contemporary Finland. Furthermore, we have examined the possibilities of including the artist's views and ways of knowing in scholarly articles and communicating the multivocality present in the collaboration.

Participatory research appeared in the field of sociocultural disciplines in the 1990s, resulting from the crisis of representation that emerged in anthropology and other cultural research in the 1980s (see, e.g., Denzin 1997). The forms and practices used in this field are varied. The aim of the trend has been to involve non-academic participants in all phases of the study. The shared domain of these methods is the attempt to deconstruct the hierarchy and power relationship between the subject and the object of the study and to find new, possibly multivocal methods of knowledge production. These approaches are informed by

social epistemology and feminist philosophy (see, e.g., Lather and Smithies 1997; Lassiter 2005; Wylie 2015; Pink 2015; Koskinen 2018). Often this kind of research is aimed at increasing the democracy of knowledge production and the direct social impact of research with problem-solving interests (e.g. citizen science, co-research). However, participatory collaboration does not always aim at these; it can also be based on collaboration between highly educated experts with different ways of knowing, like a professional artist and a researcher (Koskinen 2018:96-100) – as seen in our case. Indeed, as stated by Pushor, while the practices of collaboration can vary considerably, "common goals and mutuality are integral to collaborative research – a sense that each partner has much to learn from the other and that the results of the research will be richer through collaboration than any one partner could achieve without the other" (Pushor 2008: 91-92).

The authors, a researcher and an artist, have collaborated for several years on a project called "Kyynelkanavat – Laments in contemporary Finland" (2021-2024) that studies what kind of practices lamenting are in contemporary Finland and what kind of meanings are given to lamenting. We are one of three artist-researcher working pairs as part of the project setup.<sup>1</sup> In this collaboration, the artist is not positioned plainly as a research subject or as a partner in collaborative ethnography, even though in some parts the study focuses on her as a lamenter artist; she instead works as an artist making art. Neither is the researcher learning to practise lamenting or producing knowledge in a practice-based way in our case study; she instead does ethnography, analyses lamenting and the discussions around contemporary lament practices and brings broader sociocultural and theoretical contexts into the work of the working pair. Our collaboration includes sharing and combining the work, interests, and knowledge of two specialists from different fields with differing ways of producing knowledge and interests of knowledge. We form a unit of an artist and a researcher, and in that way the collaboration can be considered artistic research.

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<sup>1</sup> All the pairs have different foci. Ethnomusicologist Elina Hytönen-Ng and lamenter/folk singer Emilia Kallonen focus on the bodily experience of lamenting, learning processes, and lamenting circle activity. Folklorist and Orthodox theologian Riikka Patrikainen and lamenter/musician Liisa Matveinen study contemporary lamenting from the point of the lamenter's worldview and the parallel between folk tradition and religious tradition. For more about the project, see, e.g., Kyynelkanavat, n.d.; UEF Connect, Laments in contemporary Finland, n.d. Silvonen and Kuittinen (2022; 2023); Hytönen-Ng and Kallonen (2023).

Collaboration between an artist and a researcher creates multivocal knowledge and new modes of communicating research because it joins varying interests and differing ways of knowing and communicating, and these form new perspectives and ideas that reflect differing ideologies of knowledge. This kind of joint knowledge production is fruitful and inspiring, but not always easy. In this chapter we focus on unpacking the challenges and processes of an artist-researcher collaboration and present the dialogical co-authoring method we have used in our analyses about the laments in contemporary Finland (Silvonen and Kuittinen 2022; 2023).

New knowledge is formed in reflexive processes in our collaboration (see also Morgan and Castle 2023:6). We have included some of our reflexive processes in the chapter as a dialogical co-authoring, and through that we analyse the processes and the challenges of joint knowledge production. The chosen style of presenting the collaboration in dialogical form makes our own voices clearly present and reveals perspectives and interpretations that are not uniform. We use multivocal co-authoring to emphasise the varying perspectives we have, even though this breaks the narrative coherence, as the voices of the artist and the researcher are different. In the text, we both write with our own voice in the first-person singular, then in a joint shared voice, and finally in the more general academic voice that belongs to a researcher but is not subjectively positioned like the first-person singular text. The first-person singular writings are put in italics and marked with the author's name in the front.

In our work, the concept of multivocality opens the diversity of the field and the many varying positions where we act as a researcher, an artist, and a working pair in relation to each other, as well as with the research field and the field of folk music and laments in Finland. Bakhtinian (e.g. Bakhtin 1984[1963]) concepts of voice and multivocality (or polyphony) are discussed and interpreted variously in research (on readings of Bakhtin, see, e.g., Meizel 2020:12). Here a voice is used in the sense of sociocultural agency and perspective: "Voices are less or more stabilized 'material embodiments of social ideology and experience' (Feld et al. 2004:332), whose defining feature is that they change as they enter into dialogue with others" (Lindfors 2019:74 citing Feld et al. 2004; see also Wortham 2001:38-40). Multivocality is the polyphonic, dialogic approach that forms in the collaboration between us as a pair and with the entire project group of six people, and in interaction with the discussions in academia around the fields of folk music and laments.

We first introduce the field where we are operating – namely, lamenting in contemporary Finland – and our relation to that. Second, we outline the processes of our collaboration, presenting the applied methods on a concrete level, and third, we continue with the challenges and advantages of the collaboration. Fourth, we discuss the multivocality that has formed in the collaboration.

### **Researcher and artist in a field of laments in contemporary Finland**

As a phenomenon, lamenting – ritual wailing – is somewhat global, but the specific practices and meanings vary culturally and over different periods of time. In Finnic areas, laments are historically known among Karelian, Ižorian, Ingrian, Votic, Vepsian, and Seto people. There is no clear historical evidence of lamenting among Finns and in Finnish language. Traditional laments are ritual oral poetry that express personal and collective sorrow and grief, performed usually by elderly women during rites of passage. In areas of the Finnic tradition, lamenters have also used laments outside of ritual contexts to express personal grief. According to traditional mythic beliefs, lamenting is a language that is heard and understood in the otherworld, and laments are addressed to the otherworld and otherworldly denizens. The traditional ritual practices were fading in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century due to modernisation and other changes in the sociocultural and political atmosphere. At the same time, laments were brought into new contexts, such as staged performances on song festivals and other festive events, and they received new forms and meanings. The background of the lament practices known in contemporary Finland is especially connected to Karelian vernacular ritual traditions.<sup>2</sup> Karelia is a transnational region located in Eastern Finland and the neighbouring Russian areas. Karelian is a very close linguistic relative of Finnish, being autochthonous in Finland and Russia. Furthermore, while Karelian and Eastern Finnish cultures are close, there are clear differences due to historical and

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<sup>2</sup> For more about traditional Karelian laments and neo-lamenting in Finland, see, e.g., Honko (1974); Tenhunen (2006); Wilce (2011; 2017); Stepanova (2015); Silvonen and Stepanova (2020); Silvonen and Kuittinen (2023).

cultural contexts: Karelian culture developed in the Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical sphere and Finnish culture in the Catholic and Lutheran ones.<sup>3</sup>

Since the 1990s, lamenting has been brought into new contexts with varying practices, representations, and interpretations, from performing arts to new spirituality, so-called healing laments, and wellness activities. Furthermore, there are also traditional, mainly commemorative uses of laments, found mostly in private among Karelians in Finland. All the publicly known contemporary practices are learned from archival audio material and research, or through courses. The non-traditional laments are sometimes termed "neolaments". These neolament practices by Finns or Finnish-Karelians take place mostly in Finnish, and the meanings differ from traditional lamenting. The first ones to bring lamenting into new Finnish contexts were Karelians, and several people in the contemporary lament field still have a personal connection to Karelianness. There is no united lament tradition community in Finland, and between the different approaches and practices in the field of laments there are some contradictions.<sup>4</sup>

***Emmi Kuittinen:** I am a folk singer and musician who specialises in the traditional Karelian and Ingrian singing styles, and especially laments. I have graduated from the Sibelius Academy (SibA) as a Master of Music and I also have a Music Educator degree.<sup>5</sup> This education emphasised the skills of a musician and pedagogy. It gave me a strong knowledge of traditional singing in Finland and surrounding areas but also the identity of an artist who creates her own music. I have not been educated to write academic texts and therefore my voice in this article is different from Viliina's. I started to lament during my master's studies in autumn 2011 by learning Ingrian and Karelian laments from archive recordings. Because of the improvisational nature of the tradition, I soon felt that I should be able to make my own laments as well. I have read a lot of research on laments, because my aim is to understand the tradition and have the skill to lament. In Finnish folk music research, laments have been considered a genre of folk music*

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<sup>3</sup> About the Karelian culture in Finland and the cultural appropriation, see, e.g., Tarkka, Stepanova, and Haapoja-Mäkelä (2018); Stepanova (2020); see also Silvonen and Kallio (2023).

<sup>4</sup> About the diverse contemporary lament field and the discussions in relation to Karelianness, see Silvonen and Kallio (2023).

<sup>5</sup> For more about SibA folk music education, see Hill (2009). On Kuittinen's lamenting, see Silvonen and Kuittinen (2022; 2023).

and this has also affected my studies at the SibA and, further, my music. In addition to traditional-like laments, I have composed songs and other music inspired by laments. In that way my point of view regarding laments is very musical and I especially value the aesthetics of laments. However, I understand that lamenting is not traditionally considered singing – it is simply lamenting. I identify myself as an artist and musician, and I do not do artistic research by myself.<sup>6</sup> My background is Finnish-Karelian, which is a bit different from the Karelian culture that has the lament tradition. I have done cooperation with Karelians but I mostly lament in my mother tongue of Finnish.

**Viliina Silvonen:** *I am an ethnomusicologically oriented folklorist specialising in Karelian lament tradition and the diverse field of laments in contemporary Finland. The education I received focuses on theoretical aspects and does not include any practical music-making or applications. In general, I am interested in how traditions live, change, and gain meanings in changing sociocultural contexts, how they are made meaningful, what kinds of discussions there are around them, and in what frames they are interpreted. Thus, in addition to our joint interests considering the contemporary field of laments, I am interested in, for example, the ongoing, partially conflicted discussions around varying lament practices in Finland (see Silvonen and Kallio 2023). I have roots in Karelian-speaking Orthodox Karelian culture, but I have always lived within Finnish culture. I have never lamented myself, as it has not felt right to me to do so, and I have not had a proper reason. This reflects my personal understanding and conceptions about lamenting; however, I do not judge others' decisions and ways of lamenting.*

The main aim of our artist-researcher collaboration is to better understand the phenomena of lamenting in contemporary Finland, its connections to traditional lamenting, and the meanings of lamenting in contemporary contexts as performing arts. We have known each other since before the Kyynelkanavat project, having followed each other's work and occasionally discussing laments too, but our more systematic collaboration began in 2021.

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<sup>6</sup> The Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research (n.d.) defines artistic research as "practice-based, practice-led research in the arts" (see also OECD 2015:46-48).

## Processes of Collaboration

The basis for our research is Kuittinen's work as a lamenter-artist. Our collaboration methods mainly include ethnographic interviews and informal discussions, both together and with the whole project group. The interviews with Kuittinen are led by the researcher, but the topics are decided on together, and the nature of the interviews is conversational. Silvonen, the researcher, has also observed Kuittinen's lament performances at various events. We have also applied autobiographical reflexive writing on certain topics to deepen the discussions. With these methods, we were able to reach the embodied knowledge of the artist, including ideas and practices that she had not recognised or reflected upon earlier.

We decided to co-author articles (Silvonen and Kuittinen 2022; 2023). The idea of writing together arose rather early in the project when Kuittinen said that besides artistic work she would like to participate in the processes of writing research. Neither of us had earlier experience or models for collaboration between an artist and a scholar. We chose to use autobiographical writing, as it is familiar and natural for the artist, who did not have experience in academic writing and its norms. In the analysis, the lamenter's autobiographical texts are presented as such, to make the voice and thoughts of the lamenter-musician heard directly, not interpreted and conveyed by a researcher. In addition to the artist's texts, the researcher similarly writes autobiographical reflexive texts from her point of view. This kind of narration breaks customary academic tradition but brings the tacit knowledge of the artist into the dialogue.

This co-authoring method is informed by collaborative autoethnography (Chang, Hernandez, and Ngunjiri 2013). As a method, collaborative autoethnography "preserves the unique strengths of self-reflexivity associated with autobiography, cultural interpretation associated with ethnography, and multi-subjectivity associated with collaboration" (Chang, Hernandez, and Ngunjiri 2013:17). Even though neither of us engage in actual autoethnography – the analysis of one's "own life stories as situated in sociocultural contexts in order to gain an understanding of society through the unique lens of self" (Chang, Hernandez, and Ngunjiri 2012:18) – the work of our artist-researcher unit approaches autoethnographic analysis, and thus it can be understood as an application of collaborative autoethnography.

Our process of writing is interactive, starting with discussions about the topic and perspectives based on our earlier interviews together. Silvonen, the

researcher, made some guiding questions for the autobiographical writing to begin with. The interaction continued during the writing process through commenting and asking more questions, especially by the researcher. This helped Kuittinen, the lamenter-artist, to deepen her thinking and the self-reflexivity of her writing and Silvonen to understand the way the artist sees and understands the topics. In the articles, the autobiographical texts are set in dialogue with analytical text that discusses the subjective thoughts and experiences in light of the theoretical framework and research history – depending on the topic. This kind of ethnographic approach widens the individual, subjective perspective and locates interpretations in a broader sociocultural context. In general, this kind of joint knowledge production opens perspectives and brings the situational and individual variation of the interpretations and meanings into the framework of the research. It enriches the final result, compared to traditional researcher-led ethnography. Even though in our co-authoring processes the researcher has a dominant position – in the sense that she is familiar with academic conventions and practices – also present are the ideals of collaborative research involving deconstruction of the hierarchies between researchers and other participants (see, e.g., Pushor 2008).

### Differing Interests and Ways of Knowing

*Emmi Kuittinen: I consider a lot the aesthetic values of the laments. For me, the old Karelian and Ingrian lamenters in the archive recordings are the masters from whom I am learning. I learned my first lament by imitating a recording. I have made some notes for myself to help the learning, but no deep analysis. Once I have learned by heart the melody and especially the rhythm of the text and the text itself, I have felt that I understand the lament on a new level. I sometimes feel that I understand the Karelian lyrics inside me but if I have to translate them for somebody else, I do not have words. I think I have copied many things from the archive recordings into my own laments – for example, the movements of the melody, the accents and rhythms of the text, and the features of the sorrow – just because they feel like a lament to me. When I write my own laments, I have to test the text vocally to know if it feels suitable to lament. Sometimes certain words might look good on paper but feel wrong in the mouth. When I perform a lament, I might not feel sad at that moment but hearing my own lament voice and trying*

*to remember how lamenting, crying, and sadness feel in my body helps me to reach the feeling. The old lamenters described the feeling of sadness as "apeus", or moodiness, which I think is an excellent expression. This "apeus" makes the lamenting feel very natural and it also helps with improvisation of the lyrics.*

*Collaboration with a researcher is a great opportunity to work on a topic that is important for both of us but from other reasons and perspectives. The archive recordings have been an important basis for Viliina's work, too. It has been very useful for me to work with Viliina, who understands traditional lamenting, because I can ask many things from her and also learn things from her analysis. Many things I have just felt have gotten an explanation from Viliina. This has led me to trust my intuition and to see that things can be understood with different senses and not only with the brain.*

*Even though I feel there has been a respect for different ways of knowing in our collaboration, there have still been some misunderstandings. For me, many of our discussions are very personal. Talking and analysing my art feels like talking about my personality and how good I am. I think Viliina is better at taking the role of an outsider, and she has knowledge of some theoretical discussions that I do not have. She might talk on a very abstract level while I talk about my own feelings. She has also asked me questions that I could not answer – either because I have never thought of that aspect or because I simply do not know. That has made me wonder if it is possible that I start to analyse myself too much when I think about the questions. If I analyse just myself, I feel the focus of my art is on the wrong place. Despite this, I feel our discussions and Viliina's analysis are beneficial: I have understood to question so-called self-evident facts – on both personal and general levels. I should not assume that other people automatically know my perspective.*

*Furthermore, though I have always taken seriously the ethical aspects – like am I allowed to lament, and how and where – I feel that our collaboration has given me better tools to work ethically. For example, I have learned the importance of telling one's position. I have felt stressed about writing my experiences as a lamenter, as I have done in our previous articles. Am I taking space from other lamenters? Am I trying to make my subjective experiences a common truth? At the same time, I have felt it fair that an artist can speak up for herself and is not only analysed by external people.*

*Viliina Silvonen: I do research and my aim is to increase the knowledge about laments as a cultural phenomenon and a tradition. I seek to understand the varying perspectives and the broader societal and cultural context of lamenting and the discussions that have evolved during the decades of applying and employing laments in changing contexts and discourses. Even though my perspective is rather theoretical, and research usually concentrates on textual and verbal levels, bodily and sensory methods are also familiar to me from my earlier analyses of lament emotions (e.g. Silvonen 2020).*

*For me as a scholar, collaboration with an artist is in a way deeper and differently active, being more long-term ethnography than just interviews and observation, but also much more than ethnography. In particular, the writing processes in the co-authored articles have led me closer in a sense to the artist's way of seeing and thinking about laments and lamenting. It has also revealed to me the level of abstraction of her approach, better than discussions alone. The autobiographical and freely written narrations about themes we decided on together beforehand have introduced topics that would not otherwise have emerged, and they have raised new questions. I think the possibility to comment on and ask for further reflection with additional questions, again and again, has been important in this collaboration.*

*One of the issues I have felt to be most challenging in the collaboration is our different use of language and the differing levels of discussion. As a researcher, I usually observe and scan the sociocultural level of phenomena and use more academic language, including theoretical concepts that are basic words for me. Emmi as an artist often works on a more personal level in her approaches and discussion, and the language she uses is more descriptive, based on common sense, and everyday language – even though she is a rather analytical person in her work. In the ongoing processes, when the thoughts are raw and the ideas are only on the tip of the tongue, at times it has been hard to find shared language in the sense that we are really talking about the same thing and at the same level of abstraction.*

*On a personal level, this collaboration has deepened my understanding of the contemporary field of laments, various interpretations, and contradictions in the field. I have been aware of the diversity of the field, but this deeper collaboration with an "insider" – as well as interviews with other lamenters and observations in general – has made the image of the field clearer and revealed some disparities that I would not otherwise have been able to track. It has been valuable to reflect*

*on the field together with an artist, sometimes also challenging her approaches to get closer to her understanding and the ideas of laments, as well as to learn more about the bodily processes and perspective. This has increased my understanding and challenged some of my presumptions, too. For example, an understanding of what the assumed, self-evident common facts in the field are – which are not shared opinions, however – has evoked new ways of seeing and studying contemporary laments and surrounding discussions.*

As shown in the texts above, a thing that is clear to us but not always clearly present and expressed in our collaboration is that our fundamental interests of knowledge are different. On the level of the subject matter – that is, laments – we have common interests and have decided on the topic and perspectives of the study together. However, as an artist Kuittinen focuses on the aesthetics and concrete personal and embodied level of lamenting, while Silvonen as a researcher engages in discussion on an analytical, sociocultural level.

The differing standpoints reflect our educational backgrounds and the ideologies behind them. Silvonen's perspective is shaped by the academic discussions that emphasise the rationality and reason that arise from the Enlightenment. Within these discourses, language is regarded as the proper way of communicating, thinking, and producing knowledge. The reliable knowledge about the world requires distancing oneself from subjective experiences and interpretations, entailing decontextualisation of observations or sensory experiences. These kinds of ideals of knowledge production are based on Western white societies (e.g. Bauman and Briggs 2003). Textuality has been and remains dominant in academic knowledge production. Even though in recent decades bodily aspects and the crisis of representation have challenged these ideals and opened academic discourses to also valorise other ways of knowing (e.g. Pink 2015), the ideals of the Enlightenment and Western knowledge are still strong. Kuittinen's ways of knowing, understanding, and communicating lean on the ideals of so-called *contemporary folk music* (*nykykansanmusiikki*),<sup>7</sup> which cherishes embodied knowledge, creative processes, and artistry, but at the same

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<sup>7</sup> Contemporary folk music (*nykykansanmusiikki*) can be defined as a professional, conservatory-based, Westernised and artified form of traditional or folk music, and it has been formed especially in the curriculum of SibA Folk Music Department (Hill 2009:210).

time the tradition is valued as a base of one's own creative work and improvisation. In Finland, the SibA Folk Music Department's ideas have been and are very influential in relation to the understanding of folk music, especially on a professional level. The ideology behind the SibA Folk Music Department embraces "Western art music values of virtuosity, individualism, innovation, and the notion of progress" (Hill 2009:216) as well as the transnational, multicultural, and global nature of folk music. Furthermore, oral transmission and especially aural memory are seen as essential for artistic creativity. (Hill 2009:208-225.)

The differing ways of knowing and interests do not mean that we do not value each other's work and interests, but the premises are different – and that affects our ways of approaching and seeing things. The differences can validate and improve one's trust regarding their own way of knowing and doing, as Kuittinen describes above. The varying ways of knowing and differing background ideologies increase the perspectives in the collaboration and make it more multivocal, and they have diversified the reflexivity of our work. (See also Morgan and Castle 2023:6.) Besides these benefits, the differing interests, ways of knowing, and background ideologies can create challenges.

Challenges can develop when the interests and the premises of an artist and a researcher are not aligned. This has led to difficulties in communication between us. On a surface level, the discussion may be shared but the levels of abstraction differ: for example, Silvonen discussing on the social level of phenomena and Kuittinen on a personal level, possibly even involving a single case. In such cases, mutual understanding may remain inaccessible. The different conceptions and levels of abstraction are linked to the differing ways of knowing and interests: the artist's intuitive or embodied, personal knowledge, and the scholar's theoretical, analytical perspective. In the collaboration, we have learned to recognise these problems and the shared ground formed in the discussions and processes of collaboration and writing that are interactive, correspondingly commenting and asking for clarifications, rephrasing, and conversing. In the outcome – namely, a research article – the discussion is adequately shared, even though the styles differ, which makes the narrative line slightly loose. Concurrently, these detours in the communication have revealed new themes and perspectives in our collaboration. Facing these challenges and discussing some uneasy topics have been somewhat easy for us because we already knew each other, and we were aware of our respective premises and positions in the field, as well as our ethical reflections, before the collaboration. We had built mutual trust even before the project began.

## Collaborative Multivocality

**Emmi Kuittinen:** *I bring the voice of a musician into the collaboration with Viliina. The voice is very practical. I have experienced how lamenting feels. I can tell what kind of issues I have been considering when making laments. The basis of my lament art and laments is in the Karelian and Ingrian lament traditions. However, I consider myself as a musician who creates her own music and, therefore, I have made my own interpretations as well. I hope in my artist's voice the respect towards the tradition can be heard.*

*Folk music is very marginal in Finland and almost every time I perform there is somebody in the audience who has never heard contemporary folk music before. For me, it feels important that my music has roots and I also like the ideology "everyone is allowed to play" that I feel we have in the field of folk music. Therefore, it feels important to have the voice of a folk musician. Even though I am not a well-known artist, I feel my voice is heard in public: I have had the opportunity to record and publish my laments with record labels and I even was nominated to the Finnish Music Awards Emma Gaala in the category of folk and world music with my recording "Itken ja laulan" (I cry and I sing). I have been present in the media and given interviews. I would like to be considered only as a musician, but because of the imbalance of the sexes in the field of music, I think I also represent a female musician's voice.*

*When I give lament courses, I feel a big responsibility to convey knowledge of the Karelian and Ingrian lament cultures and a respectful attitude towards the tradition. Also, the respect inside the studying group is important. The voice of a teacher has power that should not be used in the wrong way. At concerts and in releases like albums I try to give the best information that is possible in that particular situation, but the courses are the best places for sharing the information and also having conversations about ethical questions.*

*Since the beginning of starting to work with laments, I have felt the diversity of the contemporary field of laments in Finland, but this collaboration and discussions with Viliina have helped me to understand and analyse my position in it. My perspective differs from many others in the field, and I have understood that as a lamenter-artist I am rather analytical and reflective in relation to the tradition and questions of its new uses.*

*Viliina Silvonen: In our collaboration with Emmi and the entire project group, I represent folklore studies and bear the burden of research history that is tangled with national romantic ideology, exoticism, and the Finnicisation of Karelians.<sup>8</sup> This background enables critical approaches to earlier studies, interpretations, and claims, and creates a self-critical, analytical voice of a Finnish folklorist. It also helps understanding about some of the ongoing conflicted discussions in the field of laments in Finland (see Silvonen and Kallio 2023) as well as the desire of being recognised as an authentic, genuine lamenter, which seems to be an important issue in the contemporary field in Finland (see also Wilce 2009:45-47, 210).*

*I also have my personal voice, even though as a researcher it is not that clearly present. Especially in this collaboration and the project, my personal voice focuses rather strongly on the relations between Finnish and Karelian culture, and it comes from my family background. It has been part of my perspective much longer, at least since I first spoke with my grandmother over ten years ago about her experiences in post-war Finland as an ethnic Karelian. All this has made the research and some of the ongoing discussions around laments more personal for me, which has brought new layers to the analysis, too. Furthermore, my personal voice reflects my earlier academic interests: the emotions and affectivity of traditional Karelian laments and laments as a practice that is understood as something else than music, that is, as a culturally coded way of communicating with the otherworld and ancestors.*

*This collaboration and the discussion around laments in contemporary Finland have made me observe the varying voices and the combination of voices that I have and I represent in differing situations. When discussing with Emmi, the folklore scholar and the personal voice are present, and they intertwine. In public and in research, the personal voice recedes more to the back, and the context influences how academic or popular the voice is. Furthermore, as there are six of us in the entire project group, I have noticed that I also have a rather general voice of a project representative researcher when I speak on behalf of the entire group at public events, like open lectures. This voice does not feel exactly like my own, because it also needs to represent other researchers and artists whose interpretations differ from mine.*

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<sup>8</sup> Earlier ethnic Karelians were seen as Finns and the Karelian language as a dialect of Finnish. For more, see, e.g., Tarkka, Stepanova, and Haapoja-Mäkelä (2018); Stepanova (2020).

The changing nature of voices when "they enter into dialogue with others" (Lindfors 2019:74), is present in our collaboration. Moreover, this collaboration has not only changed but it has also created new voices. The autobiographical texts above show the various voices we represent, the multivocality that is present in our discussions, and that the voices or combinations of voices are situational and context-dependent. As already discussed in the earlier chapter about the differing interests and ways of knowing, the changes of our voices and the collaborative multivocality are based especially on these differences, the ideologies behind our ways of working and knowing, and the interaction of these. As shown in earlier studies (Wylie 2015; Koskinen 2018), a useful critique or comment that increases multivocality can also come from outside academia. This has been the case for us, too. Besides being merely between us two, new voices are formed in encounters with the entire project group, as well as with other people interested in laments who have attended the non-academic events that the project has organised, and as a result of some discussions around laments in Finland in recent years.<sup>9</sup> The collaboration and these outside voices have made clearer the positions and roles we have in the field of laments as a researcher and as an artist and a teacher. These various encounters have made us reflect on what kinds of voices we represent and use with new perspectives and how these voices vary situationally.

Although we aim for equity between us in the research processes, there are power structures in the collaboration when we work in the field of research, since the researcher is a native to academic discourse (Ahmed 2000:50). The researcher is responsible for the methodological frame, the introductory part, the actual analyses, and the conclusions – the parts that frame the entire study and how it will be understood – because she is familiar with the academic requirements. In other words, her voice is more exposed in the collaboration outputs; however, all the choices and decisions are discussed together, and the processes are revealed in a transparent way. In our collaboration of two experts from different fields working together but also in their own fields, this is adequate, and the point of co-authoring is based on the goal to have the artist's voice clearly present as such in the research outputs. One way to increase the balance between the artist and researcher is to find non-written modes of communicating the results of the

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<sup>9</sup> About the discussions, see Silvonon and Kallio (2023).

collaboration. For example, the most balanced research output of our collaborations is an academic audio paper (2023), where the form allows the lamenter-artist to use her artistic, folk musician's voice. In the analysis, Kuittinen's embodied, intuitive knowledge and Silvonen's literary- and analysis-based knowledge are side by side, forming something new.

We have also had similar experiences of balanced collaboration from a joint conference presentation where Kuittinen has lamented. We have also tried presenting our work as a demonstration that embodies our ways of working and producing the knowledge in a dialogue. In the demo, we first gave some background information, then Kuittinen lamented and Silvonen made some analytical comments, and those were then discussed together. The combination of an open lecture and a concert has also been a good way of communicating our results and work, even though that form is not as dialogical.

In the non-written forms of communicating the research based on art and research, textual and bodily knowledge blend and the line between them can disappear. In a way the processes of our collaboration – conversations and discussions between us and finding the words to describe the bodily knowledge and counterparts in the theoretical one – are more clearly present in these forms. These processes and the bridge joining the bodily and textual have widened our understanding and, in that way, also created a new voice and knowledge. The collaboration deconstructs the dichotomy of text and body, as the textual becomes part of the bodily knowledge while the bodily fuses with the textual knowledge.

Through the dialogical narration that includes the autobiographical, reflective sections, we have also tried to bring the multivocality and the differing ways of knowing and producing knowledge in the written form papers. The chosen form of presenting the collaboration makes our own voices clearly present and allows perspectives and interpretations that are not uniform.

## **Conclusions**

For us, the artist-researcher collaboration has been a great opportunity to learn new ways of approaching laments and to more generally produce knowledge. This kind of collaboration has been new for both of us, and it has required not only creativity but also an understanding of each other's perspectives. Overall, the artists' and scholars' different ways of thinking, feeling, and knowing enrich the

work and knowledge – in our case about laments and lamenting. The artist-researcher collaboration has revealed perspectives and raised questions that otherwise would not have emerged. The results are more multivocal in comparison with the traditional researcher-led studies, and these new ways of knowing and emerging perspectives complement the earlier research. This collaboration has not only created new voices but also taught us new skills that can be adopted in future projects. In this chapter, we have presented our co-authoring method, analytically reflected on the advantages and the difficulties of joint knowledge production, and explored the various voices that are present and have been formed in our collaboration.

While collaborations between artists and researchers are not a new phenomenon, the methods and practices are varied. In our case, co-authoring and autobiographical writing as part of it have been the most fruitful way to produce knowledge together. For us, the co-authoring has not been exactly writing together but in turns and in interactions that created dialogical narration. The initial idea has been to make the artist's voice, perspectives, and experiences present as such in the research articles, not referred to and interpreted by the researcher. The basis of the dialogical narration and the analyses have been the autobiographical texts by the artist and the researcher. Alongside discussions and observations of lament performances, the writing has been a fruitful mode to produce the new knowledge because it lets us more closely approach the thinking and the different analytical, reflexive processes of the artist and the researcher. Even though this writing practice breaks the flow of the narration, since the authoring styles of the artist and the researcher differ, the outcome presents the differing perspectives that are present in the collaboration and create multivocality.

For us, the precondition of successful collaboration has been shared values and attitudes towards the lament tradition, as well as mutual trust. We had both worked with laments already for a long time before this collaboration in the *Kyynelkanavat* project, and we knew the basics of each other's work beforehand: respect for the lament tradition and ethical responsibility are core fundamentals for both of us. Although we are not like-minded about everything, the collaboration would have been impossible without these shared basic values. Yet, it has not always been easy to join the interests and the ways of thinking and knowing of a researcher and an artist.

These differing frames of working, as well as the differing use of language and levels of abstraction, have led to misunderstandings at times. Concurrently, these

have raised new perspectives that otherwise might not have appeared in the collaboration. We approach laments and lamenting from different perspectives: the artist's perspective is very practical, and she has considered a lot of the questions about how to perform laments, to bring them on stage and still be respectful towards the traditional ritual practices; the researcher's approach is more theoretical, and her aim is to understand the whole phenomenon of laments and the tradition in relation to changing sociocultural contexts. Kuittinen's aspect is very practical, and her interests relate to artistic work. She has read research about laments to understand the lament tradition better, to work responsibly and to create something new as an artist. Silvonen studies laments, the cultural phenomena, and the surrounding discourses to create new knowledge about the lament tradition. For Kuittinen, and for her work as an artist, it is often enough to know things intuitively, but Silvonen needs to base her opinions and interpretations on research and argue them in a detailed manner.

In this chapter, we have approached the collaboration between an artist and a researcher – and their differing perspectives – through the concept of multivocality. The multivocality that forms in this collaboration consists of the voices of a researcher and an artist. Our differing ways of knowing, being, and communicating, as well as our differing personal backgrounds, experiences, and interests, bring a multi-perspective point of view to the work. In this artist-researcher collaboration, the textual and bodily traditions stand side by side and at times fuse. Even though our collaboration and this case study represent only one part of the contemporary lament field, the voices that are present in the collaboration are more diverse than our individual voices. The entire project group of six persons with different backgrounds, the entire field of laments in contemporary Finland and its varying approaches and interpretations, and other outside discussions have increased the perspectives. For this kind of collaboration, which focuses on work between an artist and a researcher – both specialists in their respective fields – the interaction with others has been a valuable resource. In general, this process and the co-authoring method has enabled the different voices to be present in academic discussions and research articles. We hope that our case example inspires and supports other artist-research collaborations in ethnomusicology, and more generally the wider field of cultural studies.

*Viliina Silvonen: When working on this chapter, Emmi posed a question: Do we actually create one new voice as a working pair? I would say it is not one new*

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*voice but several new voices, ways of participating, formulating, and communicating the thoughts and ideas. As I see it, our collaboration has changed – or more precisely added perspectives to – my thoughts about laments and lamenting, and I assume the same is true also for Emmi.*

***Emmi Kuittinen:*** *From my perspective, the collaboration has increased self-reflexivity and self-understanding of my work as a lamenter-artist. When I wrote my experiences, Viliina put them into a larger frame and I have better understood myself, the lament tradition, and laments today. I also think that we have managed to let art and research live side by side.*

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