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Reindeer in the Ice Bar



We worked in Lainio Snow Village from 29th of November to 3th of December 2005. We were asked to do environmental art works inside and outside of a snow hotel. We made those works mainly out of snow. Snow as a material made it possible to do both sculptures and reliefs. The works tell us something about Finnish nature and wild animals and at the same time create atmosphere and coziness in the Snow Village. The conditions to our work was to make a huge reindeer relief in an ice bar. Icy snow, curved walls and the great size of the relief created a challenge to our process of work.

Basic ideas behind our work

Traditionally winter has represented something evil in the arts, even the hell itself. (Hautala-Hirvioja 2003, 12) On the other hand winter has meant also the time to spend together acting as a counterbalance to the busy summertime. For example in Japan where winter is shorter than in Finland, there has been arranged even celebrations because of winter (Lillberg 2003, 40). In Lapland snow has represented also the time of activity and not only the time of silence.

Frost and ice made it possible to move easily not only on lakes but through the marsh and also all kinds of snow activities were and are enabled because of snow (Nyman 2004, 40).

The idea of winter art is mostly based on the winter celebrations of far East. Snow and ice sculptors has namely played and still play an important role in those celebrations.

(Lillberg 2003, 40) Northern countries like Finland and Sweden has approached the subject from a little different point of view: why make only an exterior or a sculptor of a building and not the building itself (Jokela 2005)? In Lainio the building, the snow

hotel, already existed so our part was to practise the technique of snow and ice sculpting and at the same time to support the atmosphere of the hotel and it's surroundings.

The main idea in our working in the point of view of art education was to put these two goals together: playing and celebrating and on the other hand aesthetic and cultural values. We enjoyed the winter and at the same time considered the fact that we were learning new art skills and new approach to winter and supporting the culture or the business of the place.

Planning

The first thing to do, when we started the project was the planning. There were two groups working with the ice bar reliefs. Another group was working with wolf subject in the same hall. We started planning by drawing reindeers. Reindeer was a new animal for all of us, we had not seen reindeers so often in the real life. So learning the animals construction took some time. We decided to make a huge landscape on the

dome of the icebar. One group decided to work with a landscape with a few reindeers in it, and our group started planning a reindeer herd. After drawing a few sketches we decided to start working and continued the process of planning while working. It was also essential to form a miniature plasticine model of a reindeer.



Photo: Timo Jokela

Realization

We drew the shape of the reindeer herd to the snow wall before sculpting the relief, because we had to be able to take a couple of steps back and check the right proportions of the anatomy. One of the most problematic obstacles in the sculpting process was the snow wall which had almost melted once and then freezed again - the drawings that

we made in charcoal didn't get stick to the icy and lumpy walls. We used the basic tools for snow and ice sculpting. Especially chisels were ideal for removing larger pieces of hard snow and ice. For details we used smaller chisels and for finishing we used files.



Photo: Timo Jokela

When talking about reliefs it's necessary to focus on deep shadows and highlights that create the shape of the work of art.

In our case the lower lines of the reindeer were important because the source of light was based under the relief to lift it from the wall. Without dramatic contrasts between light and shadow the relief would be quite invisible.

Conclusions



Photo. Maria Huhmarniemi

Working that short period of time in the Lainio Snow Village we found out how easy-or difficult it was to reform the snow and ice. It was crucial to understand the significance of studying the models and planing what to do and how to do it before actually going to work with the snow. When making a big reliefs into the inner wall of a dome it was very useful to have sketch's made. Of course choosing the suitable tools and keeping them sharp for the modeling was also important to know.

The whole project (including the lessons - work period and this report) gave us a new perspective and a new working methods connecting to the winter and the winter art.

Understanding the winter's importance not only a source of income to the locals but also seeing how unifying element the winter is to the northern people. The work period taught us not only a individual skills but also how to operate as a team and enjoying what we were doing.

Thank you Lainio



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