

Eeva Kaisu Hiltunen
Henriikka Kolari
Suvi Laine
Anne Lehtelä
Mikko Virtanen

UKUV0103
University of Lapland
Art Education
–Art and Environmental Education Project in Kurtakko, Kolari
9/13-9/16/2005

We are observing realised project aspect of our group. On the whole there were twentysix students of us Environmental Workshop in Kurtakko. Marja Huhmarniemi and Timo Jokela, from university of Lapland, were working as instructors as the work went on. Village Kurtakko is known its duckboard path called “Telatie” (English: Roll road) which passes through a swamp from Kurtakko to Venejärvi and Teurajärvi. Considering Kurtakos agricultural history we accomplished a four-piece group of cow sculptures and sculpture of udder aside the duckboard.

Our basis was to fit sculptures into their environment on its own terms -with out breaking the spirit characteristic of the place. Means were to make our pieces of work bonded to the history of the place we were working at, also at the same time taking into consideration wishes of the villagers. Intention of the project was not only to make aesthetic objects into nature

but also be an experiential process of learning as so giving our work pedagogic value. In his article *From Environmental Art to Environmental Education* Timo Jokela emphasizes indeed pedagogic aspect in part of environmental art project by cementing: “The creative birth process of a work of art defined by a place is a good example of an activity involving experience-based learning (--) information is gained through personal experiences, and which is anchored to lasting practical knowledge through communal activity.”

In the beginning of the project we got to know something about the Kurtako and the surrounding environment, something about traditional dairy farming and old folklore. About the same subject, we got to know from writings of Samuli Paulaharju and lectures of Timo Haanpää. Planning an environmental art project without visiting the place was rather difficult. After two days planning we first time visited the place where the sculptures were about to be situated. We found out that

all our plans were too difficult to carry out in one week. The willow was a new material for all of us, so we have not realized what kind of works we were able to produce from it during our project. After all we found out that it would be the best to start project with four cows beside the duckboard path and one large udder near by the resting place of the hiking path.

Changes of ideas led to disunion of groups. Henriikka and Suvi made udder and Eeva Kaisu, Anne and Mikko made cows. We made udder and cows with members of other groups. Both construction processes were quite similar. First process was to fetch willows near to the ditch area. We used trunks of willows to the base of constructions. Thinner parts of the willow we used to braided ropes and also cover to udder and cows. At the end of first day the form took shape. The next day we finished them and then put them out to the places, where we were planned. The place of udder is near by to old summercowbarn, which was next to newer outdoor shelter.

The udder was developed from base of dome, which was held up by four heavy trunks of willow. The next process was to attach udder's teats to the base of dome, which was covered with willow braided ropes. We used sleeping bags as a mold of teats so the shape was easier to

make. Holes in the dome we patched up with single branches. The place of udder was to us also comfortable working environment. It was easy to make teats close to campfire in the outdoor shelter as we at the same time warmed up our cold toes near the fire. We had a lack of time, so we didn't do the text part. But the people of Kurtakos village will add them later to causeway. The text part includes people's old traditional calls to cows and some old spells, which can be seen in a Finnish folklore. Idea of the text part was to connect both environmental art works.



The mane frame of the cows was A-shaped supporting structure at the both ends of the cow. They were attached to each other using diagonals, horizontals and verticals. With braded ropes- such as with udder and single branches the shape and plasticity of the cows was sharpened. The cows frames were build in the parking place from where they were carried along the causeway to their final place in the historical cattle area, There were 4-6 makers for each cow. While we were building our works, many passer-byes became interested in them.

classes. In both classes the character of the place was taken into consideration but in contrary to the idea of the third class we sterted to design our work before we got acquainted with the place which is unconditional to the third class. Our works integrated to their environment and in spite of that maintained their ability to function as an independent work of art.

Through their material our works used their environment “as it`s medium” like environmental art is able to do. (Stephanie Ross, in her article “What is envinmental art?”.) This way they possessed deeper relation to their environment. We built our works to enduse through winter to next summers culture event but as Stephanie Ross continues in her article: all environmental art works “are (not) intended to endure in one place” for years. We are not necessarily able to see how our works endure the cold winter of Lapland, change of seasons and weather conditions. The whole making process took about ten hours.

Picture 1: The making process of a teat. (Notice the sleeping bag) 9/15/2005

Picture 2: Basic construction of the cow. 9/15/2005



In his article “*From environmental art to environmental education*” Timo Jokela refers Robert Irwing’s classification of environmental art that separates environmental art into three classes: dominate a place, be characteristic and be defined by a placed. We found features describing our work from the two later

Picture 3&4: Here are results of the project: one of the cow and the udder.
9/16/2005

References: *Mantere, Meri-Helga: Image of the Earth. Writings on art-based environmental education. Helsinki: University of Art and Design. (1995); Jokela, Timo: article From environmental art to environmental education.*

Ross, Stephanie: What is environmental art.

Picture 1. taken by Suvi Laine and pictures 2-4. taken by Anne Lehtelä.

