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The Frozen (Jäässä) Project

Winter Art Education Project's Pilot



1. The Under Water World.
Photo: Virpi Valkonen

WHAT

In the late winter of 2003, the Winter Art Education Project carried out a pilot project, in which the goal was to build a winter work of art in, cooperation with several schools. The Lapland Regional Environment Centre, a partner in the project, organised the main events for the National Water Day in Rovaniemi, along with The Finland's Environmental

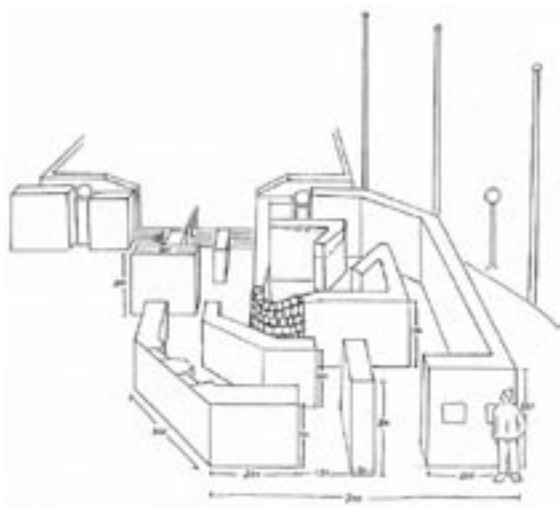
Administration and the University Of Lapland's Arctic Centre. It was decided that the pilot project be carried out in the Arktikum yard as part of the International Water Day exhibit.

WHO

The Lapland Regional Environment Centre supplied and delivered the ice that was needed for the Frozen Project. In addition, the Environmental Centre was responsible for publicising the event. Art Education students Mirva Aalto, Vesa Alanen, Mari Matinniemi, Virpi Valkonen, Marjut Honkala and Nina Ala-Fossi from the University of Lapland, formed the work group, and planned and carried out the Frozen Project under the leadership of Timo Jokela, Susanna Vuorjoki and Maria Huhmarniemi. They designed and sketched out plans for the entire work, prepared inspirational materials and along with the teachers, led the participating pupil groups.

The Rovaniemi Art School, the Rantavitikka and Ounasrinne Comprehensive Schools, and the Lyseonpuisto Upper Secondary School, participated in the Frozen Project. Students from the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland also took part,

through the Winter Art Education Project's snow and ice workshop, and teachers took part through the continuing education courses.



2. The plan for the snow structure.

Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi

WHERE

The Arktikum is located near the centre of Rovaniemi by the Ounasjoki River. The provincial museum of Lapland and the University of Lapland's Arctic Centre are located there. The scientific exhibits focus on the arctic areas. An exhibit on glaciers and their research was shown during the Frozen Project. The Frozen Project was carried out in the circular inner yard of the Arktikum, where tens and hundreds of tourists and school groups saw the project daily.

GOALS



3. Working in classroom.

Photo: Mirva Aalto

The goal of the Frozen Project was to test and model a cooperative school project in which different schools, different aged pupils and other participants would take part. When considering snow and ice sculpting, the challenge was to develop techniques and tools that would be suitable for the children. In addition, the goal was to construct a winter artwork for the International Water Day event, held at the Arktikum. The subject of the work had to

be associated with water, snow or ice. The idea in forming the work was to adapt the type of bond between architecture and art used in the Snow Show, so that the winter artwork would form a snow and ice space. Another central theme was the documentation of the Frozen Project, and of snow and ice sculpting techniques for the Winter Art Education Project's production of teaching materials and publications.

During the same time as the Frozen Project, the Snow Show's pilot work named Oblong Voidspace, designed by Steven Holl and Jene Highstein, was on show in Rovaniemi. One of the project's goals was to support the reception of this work by having the students participate in the Frozen Project.

METHODS AND WORK

The methods used in the Frozen Project included building with snow, by packing snow into forms and sculpting from snow and ice. The students planned their works by sketching ideas and building small-scale models.



4. Building the snow walls.

Photo: Mari Matinniemi

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Frozen Project was started with a meeting for the art teachers from the Rantavitikka Comprehensive School, Lyseonpuisto Upper Secondary School, Rovaniemi Art School, Ounasrinne Comprehensive School and students from the Art Education Programme. The meeting was used to plan the content of the work based on the theme of water, snow and ice, which concluded with the decision to build an underwater world with all its plants, fish and small creatures. The cooperation between the schools was

organised in a way that the art education students would coordinate the project. They planned the shape of the snow construction, which was to be a labyrinth, as well as the schedule and some material for inspiration. Each of the students was also responsible for one school and participated in the leading of the student groups.

The pupil groups prepared for the Frozen Project by sketching ideas, making small scale models and by practising snow and ice sculpting at their own schools.



5. Sculpting

Photo: Mari Matinniemi

In the Arktikum yard, the activities were divided into two weeks. An ice sculpting workshop was held the first weekend, in which the participants were mostly students from different programs within the Faculty of Art and Design.

The art education students also participated in the workshop, and for many of them the workshop was their first experience of ice sculpting. Risto Immonen and Maria Huhmarniemi led the workshop. The theme for the ice sculptures was snowflakes. The ice sculptures were placed near the entrance of the Arktikum. Due to the warm March sun and the heat reflecting surfaces of the large windows, some of the sculptures already melted considerably during the sculpting process.

During the week, the ice workshop continued and the snow constructions were built. Most of the snow construction was completed in a day. The Snow Brick Company, snow workshop students and art education students participated. The building of the labyrinth in one day was a lot of work. On the other hand, packing the snow into the large moulds was considered easy. Later, the decision was made to build snow moulds for Winter Art Education project, so that hired builders and moulds would no longer be needed.

The pupils from the Ounasrinne Comprehensive School packed the snow into small (1m x 1m x 0.6m) moulds, which were a suitable size for the sculptures. The Rovaniemi Art School pupils carved snow reliefs into the labyrinth on the next weekend during their pupil-parent day. The pupils' parents were invited to take part in helping with the work. The students from the Lyseonpuisto Upper Secondary School worked in small groups to make ice sculptures for the inside of the labyrinth. The grade eight pupils from Rantavitikka Comprehensive School worked in pairs to sculpt ice reliefs. They were placed into the labyrinth wall as ice windows. The Ounasrinne Comprehensive School pupils worked in groups to make snow sculptures. Some teachers also created works of their own from snow and ice.



6. Teachers are working.

Photo: Timo Jokela

The weather was warm during the entire

duration of the project. The night before the International Water Day, a project team gathered to finish up the yard area and to touch up the melted sculptures. However, the next morning, March 21, 2003, Water Day, the work was complete.



7. A lot of audience in Water Day.

Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi

During the themed day, the Arktikum offered a “Vesi – lumi – jää – tulevaisuus” (Water – snow – ice – future) seminar, exhibits relating to the subject and ice sculpting exhibits, where the public were offered the opportunity to try out sculpting for themselves. In addition to the seminar participants and other visitors, one school class came to the ice sculpting exhibit just so they could try out ice sculpting. Also, the Arktikum Arctic Centre had an exhibit on glacier research, and right in the entrance they had a descriptive poster display covering the different areas of the Frozen Project. The theme day was considered a success.

During the evening of the Water Day, the project's participants were invited to the Frozen event, where they were served hot drinks and a slide show covering the different stages of the project was displayed on the snow wall. The goal was to give the participants an understanding of the whole process, and of the entire work. The event was successful with a warm atmosphere.

A few days later, the Underwater World had melted so much that parts of it were taken away, and after a week the whole work had to be removed as the spring weather pushed winter aside.

RESULTS AND EFFECTS



8. A detail in snow wall.
Photo: Mari Matinniemi

The Underwater World, as a work, was a success. The labyrinth was an interesting space and its snow walls offered a place for the pupils to sculpt.



9. Highschool students are ice sculpting.
Photo: Timo Jokela

During evaluation, it came to light that even more pupils could have participated in the project. About one hundred children and young people took part in carrying out the project. One of the most successful parts of the Underwater World was its snow walls, which brought together the ice

and snow reliefs, made by the pupils. The ice sculptures made by the upper secondary students were also a success, and during evaluation it was mentioned that ice was a suitable sculpting material for pupils.



10. Ice reliafes are made in pairs.

Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi

The results of the evaluation were concrete and practical, and were of much importance for planning of the 2003 – 2004 winter projects. During evaluation it was stated that March is too late a time for a winter art project, that pupils would have to learn to dress more appropriately for outside working conditions and that it is expensive to rent the moulds used in snow construction. There also proved to be a lack of teaching materials and tools. Art education student, Marjut Honkala did her Master's Thesis on the Frozen project and its evaluation.

The results of the content evaluation of the

Frozen Project were motivational for future activities. The project strengthened the pupils' functional relationship with winter, and supported local culture as well as positive local identity. Winter, snow and ice are known characteristics of a northern environment and becoming familiar with them is important in the development of the identity of the youth. In the evaluation of the project, the criticism mainly focused on the loose connection between the Snow Show and the reception of the *Oblong Voidspace* work.



11. Details from ice.

Photo: Mirva Aalto

SUCSESSES AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

- + The result of the cooperation between the schools was an impressive winter artwork with splendid details. The work provided positive publicity for art education, and the possibilities for collaborative activities.
- + In the Underwater World, a connection was created between art and architecture. Moving about in the labyrinth was an interesting spatial experience.
- + The documentation of the project was successful. A lot of high quality photos and video material were accumulated during the sunny days. Also, feedback was collected from several pupil groups.
- + The Frozen Project gave practical experience, which was used as a base for planning suitable snow tools for the students and planning for the 2003 – 2004 winter art projects.
- The Arktikum yard was a poor location for the winter artwork due to the warm March weather. Building walls and its large windows reflect the sunrays into the yard. Those who work in the building could probably have been able to predict the consequences, if this

issue had been discussed with them before the project began.

- The packing of the snow into the moulds for the labyrinth was felt to be very hard work for a small group of students. In collaborative school project, at least the older pupils and upper secondary school students could participate in building the snow constructions. Also the pupils' parents could participate.
- The rental of the moulds for the snow construction cost a lot of money. If winter art projects are carried out frequently then it would be smart to construct a few different sized moulds for that purpose.
- The project was carried out with a very fast pace and the exchange of information internally was not always fast enough. It would be good to agree on certain procedures regarding publicity, already during the beginning stages of the project.
- The connection between the Frozen Project and the Snow Show remained loose. The two works could have bridged together in the minds of the pupils if they had been located closer together.

Translated by Aurora Nieminen