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The Our Snow (Lumemme)

Tales of winter

WHAT

Our Snow was a community art and art education project carried out by the winter art education project. It involved the realization, of a winter artwork in Rovaniemi in Konttinen Park, with several schools and colleges.



1. Winter Art as a place to play.

Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi

WHO



2. High school students sculpting.

Photo: Akseli Elomaa

The Winter Art Project's staff Maria Huhmarniemi and Jutta Pasma coordinated the project. The project's visiting teachers, Heikki Länkinen and Mirva Aalto participated in the project as organizers and contact persons. Art education students Sakari Sillanpää and Riitta Moilanen, from the University of Lapland, completed project study-credits as part of the project, and Akseli Elomaa carried out teaching practice as a part of his studies. Additional participants included Sari Jääskeläinen, in her practical training from Turku Polytechnic, and artist Risto Immonen, a visiting teacher of the ice-sculpting workshop.

Groups participating in Our Snow included Lapland's College of Physical Education, Ounasrinne Comprehensive School, Rantavitikka Comprehensive School, Ounaskoski Comprehensive School,

Lyseonpuisto Upper Secondary School and Tapio Home. The *Our Snow* work was a snowflake shaped snow construction, on which the participating pupils and students created reliefs and ice sculptures.

WHERE

Our Snow was carried out in Konttinen Park in February 2004. Konttinen Park is situated close to the town centre on the bank of River Kemijoki. In the winter there is an skating rink and slides in the park, so children and families gather for outdoor activities. Rovaniemi's biggest hotels are nearby to Konttinen Park, and tourists and local people are walking and jogging the paths bordering the park equally.



3. The snowflake form of the work.

Photo: Heikki Länkinen



4. Details telling some stories.

Photo: Heikki Länkinen

GOALS

The goals of the *Our Snow* were to create winter art with local groups and to stimulate thoughts and discussion, about what winter means to northern-Finnish culture. A further aim of the project was to bring the participants closer to winter art through their own experiences, and thereby to improve their ability to decode the Snow Show as an art event. The Snow Show art event was carried out at the same time on the opposite side of River Kemijoki.



4. Wild Deer and a Hunter

Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi

5. Tribute to Johan Turi

Photo: Maria Huhmarniemi

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

One starting point for the Our Snow was that it would be a spacious snow-structure. Other starting points were that reliefs would be sculpted onto the snow-structures, which would include illustrated stories, poems, texts, proverbs and events relating to winter, snow and ice. The idea was, that the reliefs, protrusions or carvings, would form a story-filled "book", which could be read at close proximity at several heights.

The pupils were introduced into planning the work with examples of reliefs, which have had a significant role in the architecture. Their own reliefs were outlined as drawings, and from these were made scale models. While designing, pupils paid attention to where the reliefs would be placed on the snow-structure.

Kaija Hatakka's 6th grade class from Ounasrinne Comprehensive School took part in carrying out the work, by creating animal themed reliefs onto the points of the snowflake. The pictures depicted animals hibernating, moving through snow and other story subjects. The pupils of Ounasrinne Comprehensive School also wrote their own stories.

Kristiina Ylinärä-Tikkala's grade nine art class from Rantavitikka Comprehensive School, made snow reliefs expressing beliefs related to the stars, motifs from shaman drums and stories from Finnish folklore. Liisa Halonen-Laiti's 7th grade art class, from Ounaskoski Secondary School, created reliefs on the inside walls of the snowflake.

Three groups from Rovaniemi Art School participated. The group guided by Tuula Vanhatapio carved snow reliefs onto the outside walls of the snowflake, and designed the illumination of the work. The

group run by Niina Ala-Fossi carved ice reliefs as windows. Annika Suutari's group made reliefs for the doorways.

Students of Lyseopuisto Upper Secondary School's winter art course created snow structures and carved three of the snowflakes' outside walls. Students from Lapland's College of Physical Education made snow structures and the Our Snow work's title sign. The winter art workshop, in which art students of the University of Lapland participated, created snow structures and ice sculptures onto the points of the snowflake. The ice sculpture workshop made sculptures next to the Our Snow piece.

The Our Snow project included also collaboration with the Tapio Home, an activity centre for senior citizens, which has an average age of 82 years. The winter art project brought them closer to winter art and encouraged them to share their winter memories. Pictures of snow sculptures, snowy landscapes, and paintings of winter scenes were used to inspire their own visual work. In addition to painting sessions, the Tapio Home group visited the *Our Snow* sculpture where some of them were able to try snow and ice sculpting themselves. Later on they constructed some small snow sculptures on the Tapio Home grounds as well.



6. Snow architecture

Photo: Annika Suutari

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

For the planning of the Our Snow project we made use of experiences gathered from the previous year's pilot project, along with feedback from participants. Maria Huhmarniemi made a plan for the snow structure. Heikki Länkinen, Mirva Aalto and Sakari Sillanpää searched for background information on the winter theme for reliefs. The timetable was planned in cooperation with the schools. Also construction licence was requested from Rovaniemi authorities to realize the work.

The Our Snow art piece was constructed in three weeks. During the first week the large snow structures were made by compressing snow into moulds. Parts of the snow structure were ordered ready-made as cones and blocks. During the second and third weeks the snow and ice reliefs were sculptured. During the third week, the ice sculpting workshop made ice sculptures next to the Our Snow work.

Groups worked in Konttinen Park from early morning until evening, and the practical arrangements worked well. In the park there was an electric socket, from which power for electric saws, drills and a coffee maker, and in the evening for halogen lamps used to illuminate the work was taken. The project was allowed to use a hut next to the construction site, where tools were stored. Fires were lit in braziers to create an atmosphere and for warming hands.



7. Winter Event

Photo: Noel Bridgeman

A good crowd gathered for the opening ceremonies of the Our Snow. Hot juice was served, which was enjoyed while warming by a fire. The snowflake was illuminated with warm hues on the inside and cold from the outside.



8. Winter Event

Photo: Ville Kostamoinen

RESULTS AND EFFECTS

Resulting the project, a six-pointed snowflake-shaped snow construction was built in Konttinen Park. On the external walls of the snowflake, reliefs were illustrated with snowmen, a snow queen and a bear rolling a snowball. The centre of the snowflake was made of pillars, which displayed illustrated stories about making of snow angels, tobogganing and ice fishing.

The experience of being inside the snowflake was fascinating. The space had a soft sound environment and smelled of

snow. Lights and shadows were clearly outlined on the white surfaces, changing the space's character as day passed. The artwork was illuminated for a week in the evenings.

Around two hundred people took part in making the Our Snow work. Most of the students taking part in the snow and ice workshops were exchange students, for whom it was a unique experience. They got a taste of working with local children and youth.



Illumination in Our Snow work.

Photo: Noel Brideman

SUCSESSES AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

- + The Our Snow project realised a successful winter art collection in Konttinen Park.
- + Participants gained a personal experience of making winter art, which probably affected them how to decode the Snow Show art even.

- + Plenty of people gathered for the warm-spirited opening event: the opening ceremonies acted as meeting place for participants and it increased interaction between various groups.
- The Our Snow project had many participants. Some of them only took part in planning and reflection without further commitment.
- Due to the subject focusing on winter stories and experiences of snow and ice, it was sometimes approached impersonally. It remained unclear whether the work aroused genuine discussion about winter culture and our relationship with winter.
- The relationship to the Snow Show art event could have been closer and more interactive. For example, the Snow Show art event's voluntary workers could also have been invited to join in with the opening, which would have allowed them to also experience some local winter art.
- At the opening ceremonies, there could have been more of a program, and areas of responsibility for the planning of the program should have been shared out. The Our Snow piece would have served as a wonderful location for students' presentations and performances.

Translated by Maxim Narbrough.