ABOUT THE PROJECT

In the Barents region, arts and culture play a remarkably significant role in local development. While the region faces many challenges, it also offers many possibilities. The location is peripheral, the circumstances are harsh, and it is far from Central Europe and the capital regions. On the other hand, from an international point of view, the Barents region is an interesting and even exotic area. Mobility, building partnerships and strengthening human networks are indispensable for actors in the creative field in the Barents region. The limited art markets in Finland and Norway means artists are under pressure to expand their networks into international venues. The artist residencies promote artists’ international mobility, bring different points of view to art and help develop international relations. International residencies provide the artists with opportunities to present their art, create international networks, reach new audiences, and familiarize oneself with the art scene of a foreign country.

The projects’ managers in Kven Connection were Art Promotion Centre Finland, The Regional Office of Lapland (Taike), Varanger museum dep. Vadsø museum – Ruija kvenmuseum and Vadsø Arts Association. Taike is an expert agency under the Ministry of Education and Culture. It continues the activities of the Arts Council of Finland, founded in 1968. The Centre’s task is to promote the arts on both a national and international level, as well as to promote different aspects of culture. Varanger museum consists of three departments, located along the Varanger Fjord, in Vadsø, Vardø and Kirkenes. Vadsø museum was established in 1971 (as Vadsæ museum). The museum in Vadsø is also responsible for the documentation and presentation of the history and culture of the Kven people. Vadsø Arts Association was founded in 1966. Its mission is to present professional contemporary art in Vadsø. Vadsø Arts Association fosters and collaborates on various art projects in the region and the trans-national north.

The other important partners in the cooperation were LETKE – Performing Art Centre in Lapland, The County of Finnmark, The Regional Museum of Lapland – ARKTIKUM in Rovaniemi and Kainun institutti – the Kven Institute in Børselv. ARKTIKUM, which is a museum and science centre right on the Arctic Circle, cooperated with the initiators when partners and participations visited in Rovaniemi in September 2016. ARKTIKUM is showing the exhibition in Rovaniemi in April 2018.
During this project, we wanted to find new ways to discuss Kven traditions in a contemporary context; whilst at the same time our goal was to promote inter-cultural dialogue. Our aim was also to inspire Kven artists to create and promote the building and safeguarding of identity among the Kvens and Norwegian Finns. Kvens/Norwegian Finns are a Finnish ethnic minority in Norway who descend from Finnish ancestors migrating to Northern Norway from Finland, Russia, and the northern parts of Sweden, mainly in the 18th and 19th centuries. In public life, the Kvens are considered an antiquated people whose culture is on the verge of dying out. In reality, the Kvens, like any other ethnic group in Barents area, are modern people who live in present-day society. However, many people of Kven ancestry, especially young people, know little about their cultural heritage, which is one of the consequences of the long and effective assimilation politics that lasted nearly 100 years, from the 1860s to the 1960s. Thus, the main aim of the project was to stimulate interest in Kven tradition and culture through engagement with innovative contemporary arts.

The Finnmark Fylkeskommune/County of Finnmark offered accommodation in the Vadso residency. Vadso Arts Association and Varanger museum offered production support and/or presentation facilities. Residency artists could work with local professionals and tradition bearers from a range of disciplines and sectors and/or working within a broad or defined context on the Kven culture theme. The artists researched the theme within the context of contemporary arts. The artists in residency were also asked to leave some kind of mark on the Vadso region in the form of an installation, exhibition or a workshop, which was agreed upon and designed together with project initiatives.

In the years 2016-18, Kven Connection explored the theme of Kven culture, which the partners found interesting and inspiring. It is important to offer new possibilities to artists, curators and arts managers to inspire new impulses and opportunities. Kven Connection has been a great opportunity for professionalization for artists, which provided opportunities for creative investment, development of ideas and connections. Participating was also important for the artists’ own professional development in general. Kven Connection added cultural development for the artist, community and other collaborators. The experience of being in residence has also built capacity for cultural awareness and competence, for organizational development, personal development and managerial skills. It has promoted interest in the Kven culture, artists’ working possibilities, conditions and mobility between Finnish Lapland and Northern Norway.

Kven Connection launched the call for artists in December 2015. The curator Anastasia Patsey (Museum of nonconformist art, St Petersburg Art Residency) and the reference Board consisting of Inger Birkelund (Ihanal), Riina Kaisa Laitila (RDM-Porsanger Museum), Tomi Aho, (Taike) and Henrik Sondal/Toril Østby Haaland (North Norwegian Art Center) selected five Finnish and five Norwegian artists from different fields of arts to participate in the project. The Artists were invited to spend a month at Vadso Artists Residency between November 2016 and August 2017. In April 2018 it was presented in ARKTIKUM in Rovaniemi, Finland. It was important the project was shown in the two collaborative and connected countries Norway and Finland.

We would like to thank the reference group, partners, the County of Finnmark and the Norwegian Art Council. Without their support, Kven Connection would have been impossible. We would also like to thank the artists from Finland and Norway who participated in the project and the art curator Anastasia Patsey. You made this exhibition possible!

March 2018
Malla Alatalo, Kaisa Maliniemi and Monica Milch Gebhardt
GOOD PEOPLE!

It is an honour and a privilege to be allowed to open this exhibition, both because the exhibition is a significant event, and because it touches upon several sides of my own identity, ethnically as well as professionally.

It feels appropriate the exhibition is opened in Vadsø, which from the olden days has been called the ‘Kven’s capital in Norway. And given that the opening is taking place in the old building of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), it feels as if the squaring of a kind of historical circle is taking place: for, as it is well-known, Vadsø was chosen as NRK’s first district office, opened on May 17th – the national day – in 1934, with speeches and festivities underlining the office’s historical and national role in “the exposed border areas” of the north, with a population of considerable ethnic and linguistic diversion. Both the prime minister and the president of the parliament sent their salutations northwards, live on the ether. At last the country was united, as the prime minister said in his speech, where he drew a direct line from Harald Hårfagre (Norway’s first king) to Vadsø on May 17th 1934. Vadsø was chosen because of several reasons, such as the city being the centre of the county’s administration, which was important to cover in broadcasts and newspapers. But a major argument was related to the national security policies. Vadsø was favourably located for planned radio broadcasts from Northern Finland, and importantly, the place was centrally placed for the vigilance of the Kvens as an imagined, potential national threat. And it was precisely as a tool to admit the Kvens and the Sami into the nation, through the ‘Norwegianisation’-policy, that Vadsø’s radio station received its particular justification, as “an excellent means to promote Norwegian language and culture in this region,” as expressed in a report on the national challenges in Finnmark. In this way, NRK Finnmark was conceived as part of the mobilisation against an assumed “Finnish threat,” and the NRK building was thus a weighty national symbol in the efforts to admit Finnmark fully into the nation. And it is no small historical irony that the opening of the Kven Connection exhibition takes place precisely here – not to mention the fact that the house has been taken over by Vadsø museum – Ruija kvenmuseum.

Now, to the exhibition itself, where I begin with the name, Kven Connection, which has a deep historical resonance, given that connections are a main dimension of Kven culture, history and life world. As a border minority the Kvens have never been isolated. The minority has always been in close connection with neighbouring peoples, as well as having strong kinships across ethnic divisions. Yes, it was the Kvens’ fate, in many ways, to be a border-transgressing people, while they shared the fate of many other European border minorities in that their loyalty was constantly questioned – was it to their new homeland or to the place of origin, also known as the “kin state”? For a long time, national borders, established by treaties, were absent from the Northern hemisphere, and so it was when the Kvens began to settle in Northern Norway; and thus there were no national political obstacles to considerable transactions between inland and coast. Nor when the national borders were established was transgression hindered, because the borders were perceived as porous, due to an extensive migration practice from time immemorial. Thus, the Kvens have always received and given impulses and knowledge, almost like Odin’s ravens, Hugin and Munin.

I don’t want to attempt a specific interpretation of Kven Connection, and will leave this to everyone who visits the exhibition and to professional art critics and connoisseurs. We’ve already received a sample of interpretations and elaborations at the seminar and the panel talk we’ve witnessed here today, prior to the opening. After all we haven’t had the chance to familiarise ourselves with the exhibition before now, at the opening, and it takes some time for impressions to sink in and thoughts to be set in motion.

What I will do instead is share with you some reflections on the exhibition in the wider context of relevant art dissemination.

First of all, Kven Connection can be placed in the tradition of aboriginal and minority art, which is viewed, by some, as a distinct category or direction. Thus, it could be
placed with Sami artists such as Jon Savio, Iver Joks, Britta Marakatt-Labba, Lars Pirak, Synnøve Persen and Nils Aslak Valkeäpää. Several of these have pieces in their oeuvre that by some has been designated as “action art”, stimulated by dramatic contemporary events, as for instance the conflict surrounding the development of the Alta-Kautokeino river. A well-known example is Marakatt-Labbas 27 meter long frieze, entitled “Kråkorna” (The Crows), about the Alta-Kautokeino issue and the famous police action in Stilla.

Secondly, Kven Connection can also be placed in a particular Kven art- and art dissemination tradition. The tradition has roots in for instance the ethnographer Samuli Paulaharju, active in the interwar years (his artistic contribution being his photos and drawings) and the photographer and self-declared Kven Käre Kivijärvi from Hammerfest and several expressions from his now famous series of photographs. Likewise, lines can be drawn to the photographer, artist and writer Matti Sanio and his many travels in Northern Norway, especially in Varanger. He was from Helsingfors, but based in Oikarinen, near to Rovaniemi for many years. One of his best-known contributions is the book “Missä Golf-virta jääty (1973), Where the Golf Stream freezes”; abundantly illustrated with, among other things, photos from Kven communities. Sanio collaborated with the county conservator in Finnmark to create an extensive touring exhibition on the Kvens with the photos of Sanio and Paulaharju, which gave the exhibition an in-depth historical comparative perspective. Elsa Montell Sanio, married to Matti Sanio and settled in Oikarinen, was a well-recognized weaver of tapestries. She made a series of pieces relevant to the Kven culture, although the motifs were mainly inspired by nature. It is part of the history in the couple’s many years of travel and activity in Northern Norway, their base in Vadsø was always at the Tuomainen farm – as long as their close friends Ida and Alf Tuomainen resided at the farm. Finally, Kven Connection can also be seen in connection with our contemporary photo art on Kvens, and I’m thinking in particular of Sonja Siltala, head of photography at Finnmark County Library, and her bilingual book “Tunturin ja meren kansa/Fjellets og havets folk (2007) – The People of the Mountain and the Sea”. Here she documents most Kven communities in Northern Troms and Finnmark. Sonja is also a contributor to the exhibition we are in the process of opening.

Without delving deeper into the Kven Connection – as mentioned, I leave that to others and not least to the public – I would like to try to reflect on expressions and techniques in a wider context.

As already shown by the presentation image on the program for today’s event, which is also reproduced in the exhibition, at least parts of the exhibition, give associations to an art form that has been known as “cultural appropriation”. An artistic practice that utilizes already existing material installed in distinct contexts, as in this picture of figures in a landscape. (In recent times “cultural appropriation” has become known particularly through finance minister Siv Jensens Indian appropriation in connection with a carnival get-together!)

When looking for kinship or possible inspirations for this installation at Kven Connection, my contextual association is the profoundly suggestive installation “Hiljainenkansa”/ “The Silent People”, located on a field next to a busy road in Suomussalmi, in the landscape of Kainu in Finland, created and maintained by the dancer and artist Reijo Kela. This Kainulaiset land, one of the Kvens’ sister and brother peoples, a landscape that has contributed massively to Kven settlements in Northern Norway. In this field stand 1000 figures, built of straw and turf, with clothes that change according to season. The installation immediately engenders wonder, reflection and questions: What do the figures represent, maybe sorrow over the war that raged through these areas during the Winter War and the Continuation War during World War 2, over lost youth and crushed hopes? Or do the figures expose reconciliation and forgiveness? Or do the figures and the entire installation stand for a mentality characterized by silence, introversion and acceptance of fate, which might have been both harsh and mild? Inherited conceptions as such are characteristic of both Finns and Kvens, also expressed by the title of one of Arnfinn Mikkelsen’s movie about the Kvens, “The Silent People”. Another possible interpretation of this installation relates to Kven Connection and Kven organization today, that as the installation’s figures come forward into public space, the Kvens are coming forward today, they and their culture is becoming more visible. And as the installation in Suomussalmi is dynamic, by the changing of clothes and maintenance of the figures, new generations are now joining the Kven cultural struggle while the Kven culture itself is dynamic, among other things through the development of a modern Kven youth culture – it has become “cool to be a Kven.”

Now – one must be careful of asking for concrete aims in an art exhibition. The experience of art is highly individual – art may be experienced and interpreted very differently from person to person, conditioned by feelings, life worlds, faith, doubt and degrees of recognition of identity beyond concrete, material goals. In addition, it is the fate of artists to be in the pendulum between participant and spectator, between actionist and observer. But I venture the claim that the interpretations of the exhibition’s different “messages” will be fuel for stimulating increased reflection on “the Kven” and the work of concrete revitalization of Kven culture, which is being excellently carried out these days, not least by the museum we are guests at today.

Congratulations on the exhibition, which is hereby declared as opened!
The project Kven Connection is based on a number of shared residency periods undertaken by five Finnish and five Norwegian artists from different fields. Between December 2016 and August 2017 they all stayed at Vadsø Artists’ Residency for a month to explore and engage with the culture of the Kvens through the medium of art.

The curatorial concept of Kven Connection is based on the triad ‘language-borders-migration’. From these three perspectives, artists were invited to research the cultural identity of the Kven people today. Language, being one of the most discussed and relevant challenges among the Kvens, evolved as the starting point. In this project, however, the approach to the Kven language goes beyond a purely philological perspective. It is examined within a broader context as a complex tool with which one can build identity, and encompasses both verbal language as well as the language of clothes, gestures, food, music, landscape.

The second aspect of Kven Connection develops the concept of borders. Is it possible to reinvent the borders necessary in order to protect the core of the unique Kven culture? Can we create flexible and transparent borders, which are not designed to separate nor isolate, but rather to share and unite?

Finally yet importantly, Kven Connection raises the question of migration and promotes cross-border mobility as a natural human need and a necessary condition for creating sustainable communities. In the light of recent geopolitical events, the idea of multiculturalism as a pan-European concept needs to be reconsidered. This is why today it is crucial to, once again, refer to such issues as the protection of minorities, national identity and the different aspects of migration — both local and global.

Kven Connection started with a joint workshop “Root Camp” in September 2016 in Rovaniemi, Finland. Whilst preparing the final exhibition the organisers and participants gathered in Vadsø, Norway for the “Production Camp”. The artists’ notes on their residency experience and the development of the works were collected on the project blog at kvenconnection.tumblr.com
In October 2017 the premiere of the exhibition took place at the Ruija kvenmuseum (Varanger museum) in Vadsø, Norway. On that day together with the artists we created a collective performance entitled “Red Thread”. Hundreds of meters of thick red thread stretched out from several starting points in various public spaces in Vadsø up to the museum building at Grensen 1 guiding the visitors and curious passersby to the exhibition. The idea sprung spontaneously from one of the evening discussions and the action itself was in many ways improvised. Yet as the performance came to life it turned out to be a not only an introduction to the exhibition opening, but a space for discussions, exchange and informal evaluation of the project’s participants.

Kven Connection gathered art professionals with different backgrounds, visions and approaches. Each of them found their own ways to reflect on the past, present and future of the kven culture. Thanks to their contributions a variety of new perspectives on the heritage of the kvens became visible and an important discussion was fostered by means of contemporary art, a discussion that is yet to be fully developed.

Anastasia Patsey is a curator based in St. Petersburg, Russia, who works internationally. She graduated from the St. Petersburg State Stieglitz Art Academy (Department of History and Theory of Visual Arts) and holds a double M. A. degree in curatorial studies of the St. Petersburg State University and the Bard College New York. Since 2012 she has been a permanent member of the curatorial team and board member of the “Pushkinskaya-10” — the oldest non-governmental and artist-run cultural institution in Russia founded in 1989. Besides her institutional practice Anastasia Patsey works as an independent curator in Russia and abroad. In 2013 Anastasia Patsey founded the “2,04 gallery” which functions as a shared art laboratory and project incubator for emerging art professionals. She is co-founder and board member of the “Paideia School of interpretation of contemporary art”, launched in 2014. Since 2012 she has also directed the St. Petersburg International Art Residency program (SPAR). In the Fall of 2015 Anastasia Patsey was offered the directorial position at the St. Petersburg Museum of nonconformist art (MoNA) that she currently holds. She is a guest lecturer at the National Research University Higher School of Economics, the Pushkin Leningrad State University and the St. Petersburg State Polytechnic University.

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Marsil Andelov Al-Mahamid (RS/NO)

Marsil Andelov Al-Mahamid was born in Yugoslavia in 1983, to a Syrian father and Serbian mother. He has been living in Tromsø since 2009. Andelov Al-Mahamid graduated from Tromsø Academy of Contemporary Arts in 2015. Andelov Al-Mahamid also holds an M.A in business creation and entrepreneurship, and a B.A in industrial engineering and management. Andelov Al-Mahamid works primarily with embroidery, video and performance art. He has exhibited in Norway and internationally over the past few years.

Winter SS Soldiers, Traces, On the trail (2017)
Embroideries on textile

Talvi SS sotamies, Jäljet, Jäljilä (2017)
Koristetneulonta tekstiilissä
“The anti-Nazi Partisan movement and their operations between 1940-1945 in Northern Norway are not well known. Their main task was to spy on Nazis and to collect information from local people. Many of the Partisans came from Northern Norway and many of them were kvens like Jørgund Mikkalsen from Kramvik near Kiberg. She and her brothers had a kven grandmother. Local people played an important role in providing the Partisans with news and information about Nazi development in eastern Finnmark. Norwegian Partisans were often discriminated against after the war because of their connection to the Soviet Union and Communism, but still their efforts to liberate Norway from Nazi Germany shouldn’t be forgotten.”

“The time I spent in Vadsø during my residency was productive and inspiring. I was researching the Partisan movement in Northern Norway and creating handmade embroideries. A local historian in Hammerfest gave me some interesting information and he also helped me with finding old archives in the Museum of Reconstruction.”
Merja Briñón explores different phenomenons like perceptions of time, the relationship between the visible and invisible, liminality, and the aesthetics of silence and emptiness in her artistic work. Briñón lives and works in Ii, Finland and Madrid, Spain. At the moment, she is a doctoral student at the Faculty of Arts, at the University of Lapland. Before this, she also studied visual arts at Universidad de La Laguna, Spain and qualified as a graphic artist and illustrator at Kuopio Academy of Design. Her works have been on display in several national and international solo and group exhibitions.

Katariina Angeria is a Finnish performing artist and cultural activist, living and working in Muonio, Finland and Muodoslompolo, Sweden since 2011. She holds a Masters in critical media education and has taught and performed in various locations across the world. As a performance artist she studies improvisation, authentic movement and embodiment as a method of meeting and expressing different phenomenons, surroundings and relationships to human and non-human units and ecosystems. Her cultural art projects involve and foster relationships across international communities.

Sonja Siltala is a Finnish photographer, living in Vadsø, Norway. She holds a Master’s Degree of Arts in Photography from the University of Arts and Design in Helsinki from 1997. In her early works she photographed a series of surrealistic motifs in black and white. She documented the Kven life and landscape in North Troms and Finnmark in the published book ‘Tunturin ja meren kansa’ (2007). Her works of photography and other materials have been presented in various galleries across Finland, Norway and Berlin.
KATARIINA: “As we skied with Sonja on the fells of Golnes and icy snow was hitting our faces diagonally and at times we could not see much, we identified the conditions kvens might have had when they arrived to Ruja, North of Norway. They might have seen elves and sprites too, stony figures waving in the storm and showing them directions…”

SONJA: “Using traditional dresses gave me a certain power, a way of connecting with the women of the past. We were roaming the coasts of Varanger and the streets of the villages like Skallebøl, Vestre Jakobselv, Golnes, and Vardø, to name a few. The photographs were born fast. We all had our own places and voices in forming these works…”

“Our project investigated the connections between roots, identity, immigration and womanhood. The Finnish national dresses symbolize the search for identity and represent the personal origins of the artists as well as some of the origins of the Kvens. Both North Savo, Middle Finland and Tornio River Valley were regions of Kven emigration in the 1800s. By using the national dresses we found a connection to emotions that immigrants could have experienced when arriving to new places. Another important theme in the project was womanhood and the position of the women. Kven women have been important creators of new communities and supported each other in everyday challenges, when men went away fishing and sometimes never returned.”

Asle Lauvland Pettersen (b. 1978) is an Artist, Director and Theatre Scenographer from Norway. He graduated from The National Academy of Arts, Oslo, Norway and The Royal Danish Theatre Academy, Copenhagen in 2008. Pettersen’s work takes the form of installations which focus on the conceptual. He uses a combination of video fragments, objects and performances to express ideas verging on the didactic. On the surface, Pettersen’s use of technology provides a kind of innocent aesthetic experience, however as he delves deeper, further, more complicated interpretations emerge, which demand more probing reflections of the spectator.

Homes of Origin, Paths of Migration, Domicile of Legacy (2017)
Original loghouse and video

Alkupöräiset kodit, Migrasuuninpolut, Kotipaikan perintö (2017)
Alkupöräinen hirsitalo ja video

“The work consists of original remains of the Kærnæ Family House of Vestre Jakobselv. The house was the childhood home of Kjell Yngvar Kærnæ, the great grandchildren of Henrik Andersson Kärnä and Elsa Britha Nilsdatter. The Video follows Henrik’s migrational path through the landscape of Varanger via Bugøyfjord, Enari, Rovaniemi, Kemi to the Kärnä Farm in Laitasaari, Muhos, Finland. We trace Elsa Britha’s home origins from Vestre Jakobselv, where she settled down, returning back through Varangerbotn, Tanadalen, Pajala, Tornedalen to her childhood farm Kukkola of Tornio, Finland.”
Meri Nikula is a vocalist, composer and a transformational healer from Finland, who has lived and worked in several countries including Japan, Iceland, and Ghana. She graduated from the Royal Academy of Arts and Royal Conservatory of Den Haag, in the Netherlands in 2007. Meri Nikula’s work takes the form of visceral experiences. Her own voice and body are the central medium of her artistic work. The concept of ‘Vocal Mosaic’ developed by her, in which she makes collages of her voices, using various vocal techniques, is inspired by how the voice is used both across cultures and across different timeframes.

We came, we saw, we stayed (2017)
Sound installation

Tulthiin, Nähthiin, Jäthiin (2017)
Ääni-installasjuuni
“During my residency in Vadsø my goal was to start creating ‘New Kven Traditional Music’ by finding out about what kind of music has been important to the Kvens and through researching the language itself and the sounds and rhythms that would be unique to it. Kven have remained silent... to the point that their language and culture have been nearly forgotten. Should this even matter? As a question of identity, it does matter. Having roots and history you can be proud of, a sense of knowing yourself and having an identity that feels true to you, this still does matter.”

“I wanted to put a positive spin on the word Kven which represented the vitality of their culture and identity. I am a modern-day Kven in the sense that I also moved to Norway from the Torne Valley. The Kven language sounds just like home to me, very similar to the Meänkieli spoken on both Swedish and Finnish sides of the Torne Valley. I can only reach out to the inner landscape of the Kvens through my own experience of how it has felt for me moving to the North of Norway. And through my research on their past and present, specifically through the musical traces I could find and create a new work based on my own intuitive expression.”
PIRJO NYKÄNEN (FI)

A visual artist, painter and photographer, Pirjo Nykänen, lives and works in Kemi, Finland. Her creative practice is heavily influenced by seasonal changes and her work both at home and abroad has given her a sense of her own Northern identity. Nykänen often uses female props in order to investigate a woman’s experience through art, and light serves as the unifying element. Her works have been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in different countries.

The Story of Maria Liimatta (2017)

*Oil and pencil on canvas, photographic series*

Maria Liimatan tarina (2017)

*Öljyfäri ja pianiit, kankhaale, Valokuva-raito*

“Maria Liimatta (b. 1857) lived in Kemi, Finland. I found out about Maria from a book by Samuli Paalalahju (1928). Olli Jarvilehto lived in Vadsø and traveled for many years to Kemi for trading, which was very important. Maria was working in a shop. They fell in love. Maria moved together with Olli to Vadsø in Norway. They had many children. Nowadays the family’s name is Jervidalo.”
“Landscape, people, time perspective, physical experience, handmade, building, caring, family. These words describe the content that living as an artist means to me. I can imagine being able to identify with the life that immigrants experience through doing. Maria lived a hundred years ago. She created the bottom for her life. I can touch that moment of the past. I can leave my trace for this day.”

**SANNA KORTENIEMI (FI)**

Sanna Korteniemi is a Finnish sculptor with a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of the Arts Helsinki. Korteniemi’s works have been shown in numerous exhibitions both in Finland and internationally.

*Today and Tonight, Double lighting, Google drawings (2017)*

*Graphic series*

*Tääpänä ja tänä yönä, Kahenkertainen valoitus, Googlepriimustukset (2017)*

*Graafinen raito*
“Countries are different, but people are the same in many ways on both sides of the river. I know that the Torniojoki river is familiar to many Kven people too. Many Kvens are from Torne Valley area, from both sides of the river. So I feel that there are some similarities between my background and the Kven history, language and culture...”

“Is the Immigration Monument actually the Memorial of Norwegianisation? The language of power meets the language of individuals; the official narrative of reality meets the expressions of individuals. I created a series of images about these kinds of relationships in three different ways. By comparing forecast data from yr.no with the landscape that I saw from my window, I also captured the same cityscapes using Google Street View. The third approach included folding the paper for drawing in a specific way that would give it several appearances.”
Maija Liisa Björklund (b. 1987) is a Norwegian-Finnish artist from Tromsø, Northern Norway. She was educated in Tromsø Art Academy, Newcastle University and in the Iceland Academy of the Arts, and is currently living and working in Norway. Her work takes many different forms, such as installations, drawing and performative work, and has previously been exhibited in Norway, UK, Greece and Sweden. Her work often deals with interpretation, hidden or forgotten forms of knowledge, and the deciphering of signs, as in images, gesture, text and symbols.

“The new Kven Flag was decided upon in April 2017. The process of developing and choosing the flag lasted ten years. However, the mandala-like symbol that is used in the flag — a traditional sun rose — has been used for a long time in decorations and crafts, e.g. on wooden objects. The work reflects on the significance and psychological power of symbols like these in the process of forming and manifesting one’s identity and belonging.”
As a coincidence, I was in Vadsø the weekend before the residency started, participating at the annual meeting of NKF (Norwegian Kveni Association) as a representative of the Norwegian-Finnish association in Tromsø. The flag was chosen, and I soon realized this needed to be addressed in my project, even though my initial plan was focusing on the language, another important topic for the existence of the Kven culture. I’ve been closely following the Kven revitalization, and it felt like a major moment to have a flag. Finally there was a clear visual symbol to which it was possible to connect this heritage and identity.

GEORGIA MUNNIK (SA/NO)

Georgia Munnik is an Artist from South Africa with a long experience of working in Norway. She holds a Masters in Contemporary Art from the Tromsø Academy of Contemporary Art, Tromsø, Norway. She has participated in many art residences and shown her works in various galleries and across the world including Norway, Russia and the Netherlands.
“Before leaving the exhibition the visitors are kindly asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding the project by Georgia Munnik. Thank you.”
TULTHIIN, NÄHTHIIN, JÄTHIIN