Brandon Ballengée

Cecilia Jonsson

Julia Lohmann

Soichiro Mihara

Leena Saarinen

Antti Tenetz

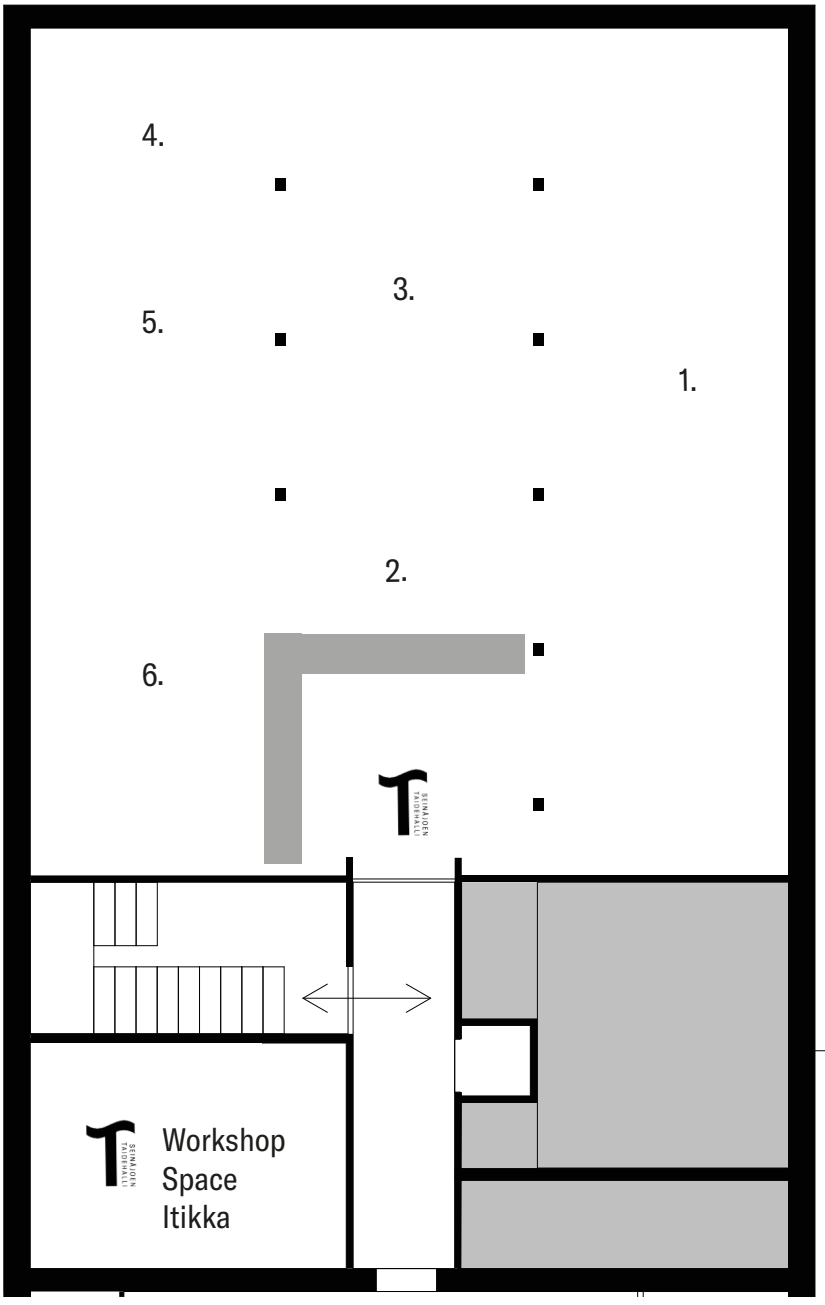
Criss-Crossing Ecologies

3.2. — 1.6.2022

KUNSTHALLE
SEINÄJOKI

Exhibition Guide

Exhibition Space HALLI



1. ANTTI TENETZ
Perihelion
2019
Installation with videos 03:30),
incubators and cyanobacteria
of the species nostoc in the left
chamber and nodularia in the
right chamber

2.BRANDON BALLENGÉE
DFNL 54 Melete, 2020
DFNL13 Aoide, 2020
DFNL 26 Thelxinoë, 2020
DFNL 57 Archē, 2020
Unique Giclée print on Hahnemühle
paper. Cleared and stained
European common frog (Rana
temporaria) collected in
Nieuwstadt. Netherlands.
From the serie: Malamp: Reliquaries
2001 - ongoing

3. JULIA LOHMANN
Hidaka Ohmu
2020
Skin-on-frame sculpture made
of Japanese Hidaka-Kombu
seaweed, rattan and plywood

Material collection of different
seaweeds and structures
on display.

4. LEENA SAARINEN
Birdsong
2019
Video 3.28 min

5. CECILIA JONSSON
Tides (Førde Fjord)
HD video 15:56 min
2021
Series Tides, 2017 – ongoing,
of rising tidal records,
pH sensitive natural
colored textile, time-lapse video.

6. SOICHIRO MIHARA
Bell
2013
Geiger-Müller tube,
various electronics, glass

#crisscrossingecologies

#kunsthalleseinajoki

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Criss-Crossing Ecologies

Text by: curator Erich Berger, Director of The Bioart Society

Matters of knowledge and the examination of the real have shifted into the focus of artistic work. We can see that the interaction of art with science and technology is becoming a prominent subject especially when it comes to questions the conventional binary of natural and artificial. The advances in the fields of life sciences, artificial intelligence and robotics start to blur this intuitive division. Within life science, biology becomes technological and the fields of artificial intelligence and robotics show capacities we originally reserved for life and humans. New technological actors continuously appear in our environment in the form of infrastructure, software, machines and re-shaped organisms.

At the same time we have to live the unintentional consequences of this continuous convergence between the evolved and the human constructed environment with the deterioration of our habitats through extraction and pollution or the climate breakdown. While we have reliable knowledge about why and how this is happening, there is a lack of impulse to act upon this slow violence. In this vacuum located between knowledge and inaction artists and other creative practitioners explore the world equipped with an interdisciplinary mindset. Here artist are not aiming to defend a postulated truth but are exploring the depth of what is real.

The exhibition Criss-Crossing Ecologies presents works of artists who observe and investigate natural phenomena and materials on the search for poetry in the factual.

They apply the languages of art, science and technology to formulate a diverse range of strategies for communicating their findings. The material starting points of the works are eclectic and are familiar to many of us. They include seaweed, bacteria, artificial intelligence, birdsong, ocean tides, amphibians and even radioactivity. Each of the works serves as a vector which can lead us further into phenomena and stories the artist wants us to contemplate, explore and experience.

Brandon Ballengée is showing us beautiful portraits of amphibians he collects during his field work; it only becomes clear after careful observation that they are mutated and carry deformations caused by the deteriorating environmental conditions in the swamps they have been found.

Cecilia Jonsson’s is observing the ocean tides with giant indication devices positioned in the intertidal zone to absorb a tidal cycle. Installed in select diverse sites and in proximity to man-made water control structures, she puts questions about sea level rise and ocean acidification forward.

In her work, **Julia Lohmann** demonstrates how to use seaweed as a design material, and invites us to re-explore sustainable materials for making, even unusual ones. According to her, the sustainable use of seaweed can help improve ocean environments damaged by human influence.

In **Soichiro Mihara's** work, a chime which indicates natural radioactive decay lets us experience the invisible nuclear processes in our environment. He transforms phenomena which are beyond human perception to help us to overcome the anxiety which the invisible might cause in us.

Leena Saarinen brings the languages of people and birds closer to each other by creating an alphabet for birdsong. She found that the whistle tones of birds look visually similar to letters or alphabets. She generates sound from bird song images and different kinds of human alphabets in the search of connections.

Antti Tenetz's work combines cyano bacteria, the organisms which produced the oxygen we are now breathing with images of life and from outer space. A machine learning algorithm turns this primordial mix into dreamlike entities and visions located in a potential deep space and future.

The exhibition Criss-Crossing Ecologies is curated by **Erich Berger, Mari Keski-Korsu** and **Anna Puhakka** in the context of the work of the Bioart Society. The exhibition was first shown in 2020 at the art centre Annantalo in Helsinki as a co-production between Bioart Society and Annantalo.

The Bioart Society

The Bioart Society is a Finland based artist association which since 2008 fosters interdisciplinary work between art and science. The Society develops, produces and arranges activities that consider art and natural sciences and usually focus on biology, ecology or biosciences. The Society runs an art space called SOLU, which serves as an artistic laboratory and a platform connecting art, science and society, in Katajanokka, Helsinki. The Society also has a residency program for artists at the Kilpisjärvi Biological Research Station of the University of Helsinki in the Subarctic Sápmi region.

Curators

Erich Berger is an artist, curator and cultural worker based in Helsinki Finland. His focus is on the intersection of art, science and technology with a critical take on how they transform society and the world at large. Throughout his practice he has explored the materiality of information, and information and technology as artistic material. Berger's current interest in issues of deep time and hybrid ecology led him to work with geological processes, radiogenic phenomena and their socio-political implications in the here and now. He moves between visual arts and science in an area which he also investigates and develops as director of the Bioart Society in Helsinki.

Mari Keski-Korsu is a post-disciplinary artist, researcher and curator who explores how ecological changes manifest in everyday life. Her current practice for several years, is focused on inter-species communication and care to possibly enable empathy towards whole ecosystems. Since 2021, she is a doctoral candidate to study towards Doctor of Arts degree in Aalto University's School of Arts, Design and Architecture. Within her research work, she is a member of interdisciplinary research group working in Abisko Scientific Research Station in sub-Arctic Sweden. For long, she has been collaborating with Bioart Society.

Anna Puhakka is a cross-disciplinary curator, artist and arts management professional from Finland. She is interested in alternate realities and the juxtapositioning of nature, ritual and technology. Puhakka has curated numerous exhibitions both nationally and internationally over the past 15 years. She specialises in curating site-specific artworks and has a firm understanding of curating exhibitions for children created by professional artists.

Artists

ANTTI TENETZ

In **Perihelion**, Antti Tenetz combines images of space, celestial bodies, technology, space science and life. Applying machine learning, it brings out dreamlike images of the worlds and beings of possible futures in space.

The Cyanobacteria, more commonly known as blue-green algae, which Tenetz selected for Perhelion, are the architects of life on Earth as we know it, because they enabled photosynthesis and produced atmospheric oxygen. Thus, maybe they could be also the architects for inhabiting space as they do in the installation.

GANs (generative adversarial network) are trained by Tenetz with images showing the bacteria, vegetation and their growth patterns as well as imagery containing asteroids, comets and humans. Perihelion is a speculative experiment about life in space. Together images and bacteria produce hybrid dreamlike entities and visions located in a potential deep space and future. They give rise to a metamorphic world and beings in which the living and the technological merge with each other.

Antti Tenetz (b.1975) is a visual artist from Finland. His works are situated at the interface between media arts, biological arts and urban art. Tenetz focuses on multi-disciplinary and multi-artistic cooperation between art and science. He often uses technologies such as drones, satellite tracking, game engines and machine learning. His works and cooperation projects have been exhibited in Finland and internationally. He has also won three national snow-sculpting competitions. Tenetz was a Regional Artist in bioart at the Art Promotion Centre Finland.

Perihelion is created in collaboration with Biofilia - Base for Biological Arts at Aalto University, Cyanobacteria research group in Department of Microbiology in the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry at Helsinki University, Biocenter in Oulu University, University of Adelaide, Waag Planet B, International Lunar Exploration Working Group and technical assistance with machine learning Hannu Töyrylä.

BRANDON BALLENGÉE

Malamp Reliquaries are created by chemically 'clearing and staining' terminally deformed frogs found in nature. This process obscures direct representation - as the artist doesn't want to exhibit large images of "monsters", which would be frightening and be exploitative to the organisms. This process is followed by high-resolution scanner photography of each specimen to create individual portraits. These portraits are printed as unique watercolor ink prints with each individual frog centered, appearing to "float" in what looks to be clouds or space. This otherworldly quality is reinforced by the titles, named after ancient characters from Greco-Roman mythology. They are scaled so that the frogs appear approximately the size of a human toddler.

They attempt to invoke empathy in the viewer, instead of detachment or fear: if they are too small they will be overlooked, but if they are too large they will become monsters. Each finished artwork is unique and never editioned to recall the individual animal and to become a reliquary to a short-lived non-human life.

Brandon Ballengée has been working on the declining and abnormal development of amphibians as a way of visualising localised environmental degradation. He has studied amphibians internationally involving collaborations with numerous other researchers and conducted public field trips with hundreds of participants.

Brandon Ballengée (b. 1974) is a visual artist, biologist and environmental educator based in Louisiana, US. Ballengée creates transdisciplinary artworks inspired from his ecological field and laboratory research. Since 1996, a central focus of investigation has been the occurrence of developmental deformities and population declines among amphibians.

Currently, he is a Postdoctoral Researcher in the Biological Sciences Department at Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), studying the impact on fishes from the 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill. Ballengée's artwork has previously been exhibited throughout the USA and internationally in more than 20 countries.

JULIA LOHMANN

Hidaka Ohmu is a dialogue with seaweed: a reflection on the material's properties, its potential to rebalance damaged ecosystems and its future role as a material for making. The sheltering sculpture is named after the Hidaka kombu it is made of, and the similarly shaped 'Ohmu' creatures from the post-apocalyptic, environmentally themed Japanese anime film 'Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind'. Kelp is an ecosystem builder that supports underwater organisms big and small, and supplies us with oxygen. Seaweed can improve ecosystems it is part of and help counter damaging human influences. It can be grown and processed sustainably, without the use of harmful chemicals, fertilisers or pesticides. It is also a superfood, has antibacterial properties, and can be used to make many different materials that have the potential to replace plastic, fabric or leather. In Hidaka Ohmu, the seaweed is used as a skin on a rattan structure. Between the rattan rods, single pieces of seaweed are affixed. The drying seaweed shrinks into concave shapes and thereby forms, tightens and stabilises the entire skin on frame structure.

German-born designer and researcher **Julia Lohmann** (b. 1977) investigates and critiques the ethical and material value systems underpinning our relationship with flora and fauna. She is currently Professor of Contemporary Design at Aalto University, Finland. Julia studied at the Royal College of Art, where she has also taught and completed an AHRC-funded collaborative PhD scholarship between the RCA and the Victoria & Albert Museum. As designer in residence at the V&A in 2013, she founded the Department of Seaweed, a transdisciplinary group of artists, designers, scientists and sea-lovers, to collectively develop seaweed as a sustainable material for making. Julia Lohmann's work is part of major public and private collections worldwide and has received awards, bursaries and support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the British Council, Jerwood Contemporary Makers, D&AD, Stanley Picker Gallery, the Arts Foundation, Welcome Trust and Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum.

CECILIA JONSSON

Tides explores tidal dynamics and the elusive concept known as the 'mean sea level.' Two key variables in determining tide height are seabed topography and coastal topography, both of which humans have changed extensively. Searching for such an unstable average surface height, has become urgently important due to global warming and rising sea levels. The tide represents, not only an environmental and scientific challenge, but also a force, which has undeniable physical and psychological influence on our culture.

Vertical structures with stretched fabric, dyed with the natural pH indicator anthocyanin, are positioned in the intertidal zone to absorb a tidal cycle. As the fabric absorbs the rising water, the chemical reactions, which create the colors, are retained in the fabric. Anthocyanin, a natural pigment, has an expansive color scale, from red (acidity) to violet (neutral) and green-yellow (strong alkaline).

Installed in select sites on coasts, salt marshes, wetlands, lakes, rivers, locations under environmental stress with their diverse local references and in proximity to human-made water control structures - Tides aims to explore the science and history of the greatest force on earth and yield new insight of our own impact on this watery planet.

Sweden-born **Cecilia Jonsson's** (b. 1980) works are devised by strategies in which materiality, site-specific navigation and objective research methods are woven together through a personal, subjective experience of contemporary alchemy. Her projects develop as investigations of physical and ideological properties of the raw materials that form the basis of human existence: from origins deep in the earth, to the extraction, transformation and global exploitation. Jonsson's artistic work has been awarded international awards and mentions such as COAL Art and Environmental Prize (nominee, 2018), Prix Ars Electronica, Hybrid Art (honorary mention, 2017), Bio Art & Design Awards (2016) and VIDA 16.0 Art & Artificial Life International Awards (2nd price, 2014). She currently lives in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

LEENA SAARINEN

In **Birdsong**, artist Leena Saarinen studies human and non-human languages. Birdsong generates sound from bird song spectrograms and different kinds of alphabets. It tries to see their connections and similarities, so that it is able to tear down structures and hierarchies in the language.

Studying the bird song spectrograms, Saarinen found that the whistle tones in the spectrograms look visually similar to letters or part of an alphabet. That is one of the links she has been trying to make in order to bring the human and non-human languages closer to each other. She studied endangered alphabets and generated sounds from them. Saarinen is interested in different kinds of translations between image to sound and sound to text, as well as what knowledge can be gained and lost in the translation process.

Leena Saarinen (b. 1988) is a visual artist based in Helsinki, Finland. Her practice is multidisciplinary and research based. She works with questions of posthumanism in the age of climate change and mass extinctions. In her work she studies culture, language and the relationship between human and non-human species. She is currently studying in the Academy of Fine Arts in University of the Arts Helsinki in the sculpture department.

SOICHIRO MIHARA

The installation, **Bell** revolves around a core element of energy that humans - in this age of increased technological progress - are unable to perceive. Every time a Geiger-Müller (GM) tube, which is part of an electronic circuit installed inside a glass dome, detects environmental radiation, it makes a glass bell in the same glass dome ring like a wind chime.

The work's bell motif was inspired by the common Japanese belief that wind chimes function as tools that can catch and remove negative energy. By their very nature, phenomena beyond human perception arouse in us feelings of anxiety, and in order to overcome that sense of fear, we have come to transform them into perceivable objects.

Aiming to make art that openly engages with the world, **Soichiro Mihara** (b.1980) creates systems that employ a wide range of materials, media, and technologies, such as acoustics, bubbles, radiation, rainbow, microbes, moss, air streams, soil and electrons in order to continually question the here and now. Since 2011, after an earthquake and tsunami struck the East coast of Japan, he has been working on 'blanks project,' which explores the boundaries of the systems that drive modern society. Since 2013, he has participated in different residency programs such as the polar region (ArsBioarctica), rain forest (Labverde) and DMZ (REAL DMZ PROJECT). Mihara's work has been awarded multiple times and he has exhibited in many international solo and group exhibitions. He currently works in Kyoto, Japan.

KUNSTHALLE SEINÄJOKI

EVENTS

seinajoentaidehalli.fi

ADMISSION FREE DAY & AFTERWORK ART
4.2., 4.3, 1.4 and 6.5.2022
First Friday of the month is always an admission free day. Exhibitions are open from 11am to 7pm. Kalevan Navetta's Afterwork Art - event at 4-6pm. kalevannavetta.fi

AARG MORNING
4.2. at 10-11am Online talk at Teams -application
The Bioart Society Director Erich Berger
11.3. at 10-11am Art University Seinäjoki Unit
1.4. at 10-11am Venla Korja, Regional Artist, Cultural well-being specialist, Art Promotion Centre Finland.

AARG Morning assembly will dig deeper into the rural phenomena in contemporary art by opening activity and cooperation models in the domain of contemporary art especially in rural areas.
The morning assembly is aimed at artists and actors in the creative domain as a platform for discussion and meetings.

AT THE ARTIST'S STUDIO - VIDEOSCREENING
4.-5.2.2022 Workshop Space Itikka
Fri at 11am - 7pm and Sat 11am -3pm.
Rea-Liina Brunou, choreographer
Pauliina Haasjoki, poet
Anne Naukkarinen, visual and performance artist
Piia Rinne, clothing and visual designer
At the Artist's Studio is a recording of a session and reading drama that has emerged from artist's visiting alongside each other's work processes.

KUNSTHALLE SEINÄJOKI

Mon–Fri at 11am–7pm
Sat at 11am–3pm

Customer service is open on opening times.

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taidehalli@seinajoki.fi
Art and Culture Centre Kalevan Navetta
Nyykoolinkatu 25, 60100 Seinäjoki

Tickets:
Adults 6 €
Students, pensioners
conscripts, unemployed 4 €

Free admission for children under 18 years.
Free admission to assistants of persons with sensory and physical disabilities during the visit.
Free admission for everyone on the first Friday of the month.

Free admission with Museum Card.

Tickets for the Kunsthalle Seinäjoki can be purchased from the Taito Shop Seinäjoki located on the first floor of the Kalevan Navetta during the opening hours.

Tickets can also be booked in advance from the online store. Kunsthalle also offers various service packages in cooperation with the restaurant Äärellä.

www.kalevannavetta.fi

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