

#4 - The Kotoisa Edition

li / KulttuuriKauppila - 1st -17th of October 2021



Slowness

At the start of this residency, we realized that we needed to approach the scope of our project in a different way. We noticed that we really weren't adjusted to the idea that this project is one thing that takes 20 years, instead treating it as a series of short and well-defined working periods with a clear start and end. During this residency we tried to get more in the mindset of the long term. To appreciate the slowness of doing a project that takes roughly 1,5 years of work, spread over 20 years in time. It is a pace we ourselves are not used to or trained for.

Appreciating the slowness of the project gave room to focus less on possible results and the feeling that we had to spend our time useful in the short term.

One of the practices we did, to move slowly, supported this slowness on a daily basis. We were outside in nature and moved so slow, that the whole world around us seemed to be faster (from the falling of the leaves, to the mosquito bite, to the movements of the insects in the moss). It was an exercise in concentrating on the very slow movements, which made room for all the things happening in that time-space.

We started the residency by setting up a framework for our daily practice. We made a schedule in which every activity had an allotted time and duration. We soon realized that this did not suit our needs. We felt like we were recreating a system that is ingrained in us through growing up and living in a neo-liberal world that is focussed on production. It might give us the feeling that we were spending our time well and that we had tasks to cross off of lists, but it felt like the wrong way to approach our project. It went against the idea of slowness. We changed to making a list of desires for the day, without a time-frame. We tried to not care if we made it to the end of the list each day, but were still proud when we did.

Discussions

We decided to once again include a daily walk in our practice. In our preliminary schedule, the walks were supposed to take exactly one hour. We might have thought of this as (the start of a score) of some kind. It was also a reference to Edition #1 during which we walked the same route every day.

It became clear during our very first walk that this agreement did not fit with our necessities for this Edition. The daily walks that were supposed to be one hour, often became (much) longer. This was in the first place because the immediate neighbourhood of our residency consisted of bungalow-like housing with asphalt roads. The trails in the woods, which we imagined when deciding to go here and which we were drawn to, were further away and took some time to reach.

The walks soon became an important time-space for discussions to take place in, in addition to the time-space at the residency. In this way, discussing became a large part of the practice of this Edition, more so than before. We felt the need to explore concepts more verbally and started writing a lexicon in which we could keep track of the words we use and what they mean at any time. We suspect that this focus on talking, words and discussions was at least partly caused by the space we worked in. With little room to move, but a big desk to sit at.

Not everything that was said was written down afterwards. Not everything that was said will be remembered. But not everything that we forgot to write down, will be lost forever. Some things will probably find their way back somehow.

Seasons

Thinking further on the idea of creating an arch spanning multiple Editions, we decided to create new words connecting sets of Editions within our project of 20 years. For now, we chose the word 'seasons'. Some characteristics of these names similar to seasons are the connection with each other, they are not separable by hard borders of ending and beginning and there is a possibility for circularity of a whole cycle. To think about seasons is more poetic than thinking about phases or periods for example.

It also gives us the opportunity to think of our work in terms of high and low seasons, depending on the amount or nature of activity that takes place.

Each Edition of Other People, common ground also has a name, just as the months in the seasons have names. A season is something that takes place outside of ourselves, it is uncontrollable.

The name of the current season of Other People, common ground (for now) is:

Rondzwemmen in de oersoep - Swimming around in the primordial soup. This name is created with the idea that other seasons will follow after this one.

Sharing

Before coming to li, our intention was to share our work with people of li in the form of a workshop.

Originally we applied for a one month residency. Because of scheduling difficulties however the residency ended up taking only a bit over two weeks. This forced us to reconsider our mode of sharing as it gave us far less time to get in contact with the community. In consultation with the residency organisers of KulttuuriKauppila we decided to host an open studio evening for people that might be interested. We wanted our moment of sharing to be something that we offer to people, not a moment to ask something from them. Through our conversations with the organisation we realized how important it is to take into

consideration what the necessities are for a place and its people, when you want to share something. To take into account language barriers, the background of the people present, the kind of place you are in and possible general shyness. During our open studio evening we sat around the big wooden desk in our living room with the candles lit. We talked about our project and about other things. We offered tea, chocolates and soup.





The Location and season

For Edition #4 we consciously decided to search for a residency that was different from the type of residencies of the previous editions. As space influences the way of working and we previously mostly met in performing arts spaces, we now were looking for a space that didn't radiate the atmosphere of performing arts as strongly.

KulttuuriKauppila Art Residency is located in an old house at the edge of the town li, in Northern Finland. It is located beside a river and the main road that connects Oulu to the North is close by and always hearable. It created a constant noise while being outside. Inside there was the ventilation system which couldn't be turned off and which made this noise present here as well.

Inside the residency one bigger space served as living and working room, from there doors connect to the kitchen, the bathroom and two sleeping rooms. It was the first residency in which our living space was also our working space. This gave a lot of importance to somehow making a conscious switch between the time during which we



used the space for work and the time we used it for leisure. It also resonated with the working-from-home that has been part of life for the last 1,5 years.

The residency took place in autumn. The grey light from outside came in through the windows, which we tried actively to change by colouring the light with the light of candles inside. The name of this Edition is also derived from this cosy feeling of the inside working and living space: Kotoisa. A Finnish word that means as much as to make it your home. Autumn is the season of slowing down, the season of dying and the season in which we turn inwards. Being in Northern Finland in autumn, these movements were reinforced daily.

Writing - A. L. Snijders

During Edition #2, we were inspired by the very short stories of A. L. Snijders. We used the structure of his stories to write our own in an exercise in both writing and translation. Sadly, sometime in between Edition #2 and Edition #4 Snijders passed away. This also meant the end for the weekly story we would receive from him through his mailing list. Something that became part of our personal practices that was now forced to stop. As a tribute to Snijders we repeated our exercise in this edition. The last story he wrote remained unfinished, but was still sent through his mailing list. To work with this last story, unfinished, in some ways felt like a homage to A. L. Snijders, as well as reflecting the theme for dying which seems so present in autumn in li.