

Imagined Site: Rural Contextual Practice

at the Kilpisjärvi Biological Research Station in cooperation with the Bioart Society Residency



SUMMER 2024 KUNO INTENSIVE COURSE

TITLE OF COURSE:

Imagined Site: Rural Contextual Practice

at the Kilpisjärvi Biological Research Station in co-operation with the Bioart Society Residency

WORKSHOP PERIOD: July 18 - July 30, 2024

PERIOD ON SITE IN KILPISJÄRVI: July 21 - July 28, 2024

ECTS: 3

LEVEL: MFA and advanced BFA

HOST INSTITUTION: Academy of Fine Arts, Uniarts, Helsinki

PROJECT PARTNERS: Vilnius Academy of the Arts, Lithuania & Konstfack University College of Arts Crafts and Design, Sweden

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

COURSE LOCATION:

Kilpisjärvi Biological Research Station

[Käsivarrentie 14622, 99490 Kilpisjärvi, Finland](#)

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

MFA and advanced BFA students at schools within the KUNO network.

In order to participate in the course students need to be enrolled at their university at the time of the course.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 24 March 2024

How to apply: please submit an [online application](#). Selection results will be announced by 28 March 2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Imagined Site is a 12-day intensive, site-responsive course that takes place at the *Kilpisjärvi Biological Research Station* (in far northern Finland) and in the participants imaginings of the site. *Imagined Site* is the third edition of the KUNO intensive course Rural Contextual Practice. This edition is produced in collaboration with the BioArt Society Residency, that has been engaging the Kilpisjärvi station since 2008 through their [Bioarctica](#) platform. The course explores issues central to making site-responsive art in rural contexts.

Imagined Site brings together students in an advanced stage of their studies from the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki, Konstfack University College of Arts Crafts and Design in Stockholm and the Vilnius Academy of Fine Arts along with select MFA students from other KUNO schools.

The course will contain presentations and introductions by research scientists, Kilpisjärvi staff and artist members of the BioArts Society, who have conducted art projects at the site. A series of collective exercises will be initiated by each of the facilitating artist teachers. In addition, there will be time for independent exploration of the site, project development, and collective meals. Students will also have an opportunity to share their past practice with the group through a series of short presentations. A temporary public project/proposal, accompanied by a work-in-progress presentation, will be done during the final days on site.

On the Rural Contextual Practice series and this year's theme Imagined Site

This transdisciplinary course explores contextually responsive art practice with a specific focus on the rural. The dominance of the urban in artistic discourses and the marginalization of the rural, as an often invisible space of industrial production or resource extraction, combine to form a strong argument for focusing our attention, within the space of art and craft education,

on developing our conceptions of the rural and rural publics and our capacity to make complex works within and about rural contexts.

Our chosen theme for this edition, *Imagined Site*, makes craft of the often maligned role of all the things we project onto a place before arriving, the things we imagine the site to be that draw us to engage with it. This speaks both to the conditions of site-responsive public art production and to the space of the 'rural' itself, which exists in many ways as a false dichotomy and a fertile imaginary.

The structure of the course involves developing three proposals for works to be realized 'in' Kilpisjärvi, one based on how we imagine the site prior to arrival, another based on how we imagine the site while there and a third as we imagine it in the aftermath of our visit.

Participants will be asked to bring consciousness to the ways they imagine Kilpisjärvi and the biological research station, by developing a proposal for a work based on their imaginings, before arriving at the site. This proposal will be held alongside the other ways of knowing the site that we will discover during our time in residence. Participants will then make a second proposal for a work that responds to the site.

The space of imagination known as 'remembering' will also be engaged, with participants asked to make a third and final proposal after leaving Kilpisjärvi, either in the process of slow travel away from the site or upon returning to their homes. We will take time to be with these three, not at all distinct, modes of being with a site, before, during and after, and their roles within our respective art practices.

The course is an opportunity for students pursuing fine and craft arts as well as media art, to meet and engage in a site-responsive exploration around these issues, through their own existing practices.

SITE NOTES

- Kilpisjärvi Biological Station is nestled on the flanks of the Saana fell and offers an exceptional setting for natural science and local culture research in Northern Finland. Year after year, researchers and students from Finland and around the world make their way to the northernmost unit of the University of Helsinki to study the fluctuation of lemming populations, the winter wildlife of the fells or the cultural history of Lappish villages.

Kilpisjärvi is located in the Käsivarsi Wilderness Area and boasts unique wildlife. It is a place where the conditions typical of the Arctic Ocean region meet a more southern and continental climate – it takes particular skill to predict weather in this area. The terrain in the Käsivarsi Wilderness Area rises high above sea level and the landscape is dominated

by high fells, including Saana (1,029 m), Termisvaara (1,024 m) and Halti (1,328 m). Kilpisjärvi is located over 400 metres above sea level and less than 50 kilometres from the Arctic Ocean. The climate is very arctic with one of the lowest mean annual temperatures on the European continent at only 2.3 °C. On average, the temperature does not rise above +10.9 °C in July.

- **IMPORTANT Seasonal Considerations:** Please be aware that the course will be held during the period when sun almost never goes down and it is going to be high season for mosquitos, so everyone will need to be prepared with clothing, mosquito nets, etc.

COURSE COMPONENTS

The activities and methods of the course include:

- developing three proposals for an on-site project, before coming to the site, on site and after leaving the site.
- presentations and introductions by biologists, Kilpisjärvi staff and members of the BioArts Society
- a series of collective exercises initiated by each of the facilitating artist teachers
- collective meals
- previous work presentations by each participant
- independent exploration of the site and time for project development
- a temporary public project accompanied by a work-in-progress presentation during the final days on site.

PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

For students from the host and partner academies, international travel and local travel to and from the site are covered through the KUNO intensive course support. Accepted students from other academies can apply for travel support from KUNO. Housing and all meals during the workshop are covered for all participants and there is no course fee. Housing will be in double and triple rooms with shared bathrooms.

APPLICATION

You are welcome to submit an [online application](#) by **24/03/2024**. Apply with a brief statement of interest, explaining why you would like to take part of the course and how it relates to your existing practice or new possible directions that you would like to explore. Include a link to an

online portfolio or website. Application deadline is 24 March 2024. Selection results will be announced by 28 March 2024.

NOTE: Please ensure you can attend **the entire course dates** before you apply. In order to maintain a strong group within this intensive study period, it is not possible to attend only part of the course, to arrive late or to depart early.

FACILITATORS

- **Daniel Peltz**

Professor of Site and Situation Specific Practice, Department of Time and Space Arts

Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki, Finland

<https://www.uniarts.fi/en/units/academy-of-fine-arts/>

- **Dr. assoc. prof. Vytautas Michelkevičius**

Head of Photography, Animation and Media Art Department and Head of Doctoral Programme in Fine Art, Vilnius Academy of Arts, Lithuania

<https://www.vda.lt/en/>

- **Sissi Westerberg**

Senior Lecturer, Smycke & Corpus: Ädellab, Department of Craft

Konstfack University College of Arts Crafts and Design, Stockholm, Sweden

<https://www.konstfack.se/en/>

The workshop is funded under the Nordplus/KUNO framework.

More information on this year's Rural Contextual Practice intensive course can be found on the [KUNO website](#).

More information on past Rural Contextual Practice intensive course can be found below.

Rejmyre, Sweden 2022:

<https://www.kunonetwork.org/ongoing-past-intensive-courses/2022/8/9/everything-you-want-was-already-here-a-kuno-intensive-course-focused-on-rural-contextual-practice>

Nida Art Colony, Lithuania 2023:

<https://www.kunonetwork.org/ongoing-past-intensive-courses/2023/9/20/making-talking-walking-not-working-and-being-shy-part-of-the-rural-contextual-practice-series>