

The background is white and filled with numerous overlapping circles in various colors: green, yellow, pink, purple, teal, and tan. The text 'Playing with Picasso' is written in a large, bold, black, rounded sans-serif font, slanted upwards from left to right. The word 'with' is smaller, in a regular weight of the same font, and positioned to the right of the main title. Below the main title, the subtitle is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font, centered.

# Playing with Picasso

*with*

Playing with Picasso  
and a Dog Who Died  
Arts Education Stories  
from the History  
of Annantalo



# **Playing with Picasso and a Dog Who Died**

## **Arts Education Stories from the History of Annantalo**

These recollections  
commemorate  
Annantalo’s 35th birthday  
on 23 January 2022.

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# Foreword

In this publication, we present roughly ten productions and projects from the history of Annantalo that have involved developing or trying something new, or are considered to have significance in terms of pedagogy and art education to this day. In these projects, art has served as a passageway through which different worlds have come together, and Annantalo has served as a coordinator, an initiator, an implementer, a developer.

There are separate publications dedicated to Annantalo's two "flagships," 5×2 art education and the Art Clinic, so these two are not included here (see page 134).

*Taidevoimaa! / Art power!*, 2007, and *Making Art Stuff. Taidekasvatusta kaikenlaisiin koteihin / Let's Be Artistic – Art Education for Every Home*, 2012, 2019, this is on the Annantalo website. Both are in Finnish but the summaries are in English.

Dedicated to children, young people and art, Annantalo Arts Centre has been operating since 1987 right at the centre of Helsinki, in an old school building completed in 1886.

Annantalo has 12 professionally equipped classrooms for different art subjects, two gallery spaces, two small so-called glass end spaces, an auditorium, a small banquet hall, café

This publication is not intended to provide historical research information, but rather to serve as a deepener of understanding, a model, a note or a source of inspiration for younger producers, art teachers, public officials or anyone interested in the subject. It also compiles ingredients and perspectives for potential future art education researchers.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our cooperation partners who graciously agreed to give interviews on projects long past.

## On the content

Annantalo's large theme and cultural exhibitions often occupied the entire building. The exhibitions were provided with multidisciplinary side programming featuring workshops, guided tours and event days to deepen the theme (Playing with Picasso, the Enchanted Forest, the Magic of Self-adornment). The themes were also expanded into art education to varying degrees. The Exhibition on Drawing and the Exhibition on Colour involved trying a new concept: in addition to a conventional exhibition, the programme featured an atelier space for independent work / a workshop installation.



In the literature and literal art trial project, literature was approached from a multidisciplinary perspective, e.g. through experiential literature-based spaces and exhibitions (the experiential Enchanted Forest space was based on Grimm’s fairytales), and as a binder between different fields of art. Reading Ambassadors carried out important work at hospitals and school homes and among immigrants.

The international Bravo! theatre festival for children and young people was born out of a societal need to renew children’s theatre and as a result of cooperation across the third sector and municipality borders. The renewal process was started with a training programme. From the very start, children’s participation has been part of the concept.

The Baby Kino concept and facility were carefully prepared to serve their valuable target demographic, children aged 0–3. As the films screened were wordless, they were also suitable for Helsinki residents who did not speak Finnish.

The Historical City Tours of 1995–2015 blazed a new trail as a production implemented across service borders. They also presented an innovative pedagogic whole in their time – the students carrying out the tours received unique “workplace learning” about acting work, while the school classes attending the tours were provided with an experiential and diverse view on the history and environment of their country and home city. The tours were produced as if for professionals; children and young people are not a reason to “lighten up” the offerings.

Over the years, the small end space on the second floor has shone a spotlight on education and the expression of artists and children alike, serving as an exhibition space, a performance space, an event space, a residence space, a utility room for teaching, a space for co-working, an installation space, an experience space...

The Magic of Self-adornment exhibition of 1996–1997 represented an art education theme work project in which the theme permeated the entire building and all fields of art. Multiculturalism and 90s modern art were strongly present (corporeality, performance...). The theme culminated in an exhibition that showcased art by contemporary artists and children equally and side by side for the first time.

Annantalo’s cultural courses brought schools and art operators in the Helsinki metropolitan area together in a completely new way. The art operators’ seasonal programmes were used to create diverse wholes involving workshops, lectures, guided tours, etc. with themes related to the life of young people. The cultural courses were pioneering in providing different learning environments and methods.

**Kikka Hahtomaa,**  
cultural producer  
**Erja Mehto,**  
head art teacher  
**Katariina Metsälampi,**  
cultural producer

**Liisa Paatsalo,**  
cultural producer  
**Leila Heimonen,**  
communications  
officer, editor  
of this publication

# Pablo & Alexander Playing with Picasso

The playful exhibition and installation took spectators on a journey to look into and understand Picasso's art and ideas "from within." Discussing the exhibition are its creator Alexander Reichstein and the Picasso working group of Annantalo: executive producer Liisa Paatsalo, exhibition planner Mauri Tahvonen and communication officer Leila Heimonen. **Text Leila Heimonen and Liisa Paatsalo**





**F**rom the door to the gallery, the spectator sees Picasso's painting 'Girl Reading' blown up to an enormous size. However, it is not a painting, but a three-dimensional installation that creates the illusion of a painting when viewed from afar. The "painting" can only be entered by stepping over the frame. Inside, there are narrow corridors, stairs and tunnels, as well as surprises alluding to Picasso's work.

### Why Picasso?

A large Picasso exhibition was brought to Helsinki in the autumn of 2009 as the exhibition was going around the world while the Picasso Museum in Paris (Musée National Picasso-Paris) was being renovated. At the same time, the leadership of the City of Helsinki's Cultural Division expressed a strong wish for Annantalo to also take part in the Picasso theme with a programme designed for children – after all, the City had made significant investments in the facilitation of the Ateneum exhibition. Annantalo had carried out several cooperative projects with visual artist Alexander Reichstein, who specialises in children's culture, so Reichstein was now consulted regarding the subject of Picasso. As it turned out, Reichstein was willing to accept the offer, as his project at Ateneum had fallen through. Thus, Annantalo became Ateneum's official art education cooperation partner in connection with the Picasso exhibition.

The name of the exhibition, *Pablo & Alexander – Leikkiä Picasson kanssa* ('Pablo & Alexander – Playing with Picasso'), was an introduction to understanding Picasso's art: Picasso examined things and played when making art, while Alexander Reichstein played

with Picasso's thoughts and the work itself encouraged children to play and examine things through play. The exhibition involved going inside modern art, at the level of information and thinking and concretely alike.

### How the painting was selected

The installation needed a painting that would be interesting to children as its starting point. Another criterion was that the image must not contain any violence or eroticism.

No suitable work could be found on the list of works to be presented in the Ateneum exhibition, but the work catalogue of the Picasso Museum featured the painting *Girl Reading* (La Liseuse, 1953). The piece is quite modernistic in its style, but the subject was readily identifiable: a female figure with some details. As such, it provided good ingredients for discussions with children. Now, 'Girl Reading' was also featured in the Ateneum exhibition, and children would already be familiar with the painting when visiting the Ateneum exhibition. Or the other way around. 'Girl Reading' is 100% a Picasso – identifiable, yet new to the audience. As far as is known, the painting had never been showcased anywhere outside the Picasso Museum in Paris.

Another prerequisite for the image – a technical one – was that it had to be horizontal in order to fit the exhibition space of Annantalo.

Hence, the piece to be selected had to feature a figure that children can identify, it had to be a "pure" Picasso, and it had to be horizontal to fit the room. The fact that 'Girl Reading' would now be brought to the public for the first time was an added bonus.

The Picasso Museum and the Picasso estate greenlit both the use of Picasso's works and their adaptation into an installation.







### What could visitors do in the installation?

The inside of the installation featured action-based and playful surprises. For example, visitors could:

- call Picasso on the phone and hear his voice
- see a documentary video of Picasso painting
- examine books
- look at a cubistically broken image of themselves in a fragmented mirror
- assemble a cubistic puzzle (three levels of difficulty for different ages)

### Of construction – from 2D to 3D; the killing of shadows and a perspective change

The parts of the work were created with many different talents in different places. The success of the project hinged on clear coordination, schedules and responsibilities.

Martin Hackenberg created a 3D model of the work and cut the modelled shapes out of plywood at the University of Art and Design Helsinki. The dimensions of the cutouts were not 1:1 with the image, as they compensated for a perspective distortion. The pieces were numbered, as the perspective change made them difficult to identify without any indicators.

The size of the installation was  $5.2 \times 3.8 \times 4.4$  m. Because of the scale, it was important that the actual construction of the work could be carried out on-site in Annantalo. Otherwise, putting this work consisting of many different parts together would have been difficult. The painting work was carried out in the classroom adjacent to the exhibition space. Professional carpenter Mihail Sherstjuk helped with the assembly, and the painting work was finalised after the work was assembled.

The final work phase – and an important one at that – was the “killing of shadows.” The idea was that when viewed from the door, the painting would look flat, but the installation was actually a three-dimensional work consisting of components of different levels. Alexander Reichstein: “I went through the entire installation. When I saw a shadow cast by a loose board, I painted that part lighter so that when viewed from afar, it would not look like a shadow and the painting would look completely two-dimensional.”

Next, the exhibition went around Russia after making a stop in Hyvinkää, Finland. It was safe and well-built, able to withstand both children’s games and the touring without a hitch. Some joints were reinforced, but essentially, it could handle four assemblies with ease. “And it could have handled even more.”

### Realised work – accessible entry “inside modern art”

When entering the exhibition space, the installation looked like a painting blown up to a gigantic size. The viewing point was marked on the floor – indeed, from that position, the work looked completely like a two-dimensional painting, but when approached, it gradually turned into 3D. Finally, visitors could slip inside the painting and it fragmented into different spaces like cubistic elements. A child who had already slipped into the image became part of it, and the “painting” became a living picture in the eyes of the viewer.

You could get inside and behind the work in a wheelchair; the “tail” of ‘Girl Reading’ had hinges that opened a wheelchair ramp.

A passageway went through the ‘Girl Reading’ installation to the light painting room of the back gallery. There were three pictures of Picasso painting with light on the wall, found in the archives of Life magazine and blown up to a colossal size. In the room, visitors could try light painting Picasso-style, but with modern equipment. Based on feedback given by visitors, light painting is also excellently suited for people such as children with autism. The space for independent light painting was created and programmed by media technology students of Aalto University School of Science and Technology, led by professor Tapio Takala.





**D**rawing into air is a form of media art that Pablo Picasso pursued in his open-minded experiments but which was not possible until the advent of modern digital technology. It resembles painting art and sculpturing but does not exactly fall into either category. A three-dimensional virtual environment makes it possible to examine works in an experiential manner from any direction. The viewer, much like the artist, can feel like they are at and inside the work of art, free to move about and seek different perspectives. Immateriality, on the other hand, eliminates the limitations of physical materials – any shape is possible, a painting hanging from the air will not fall onto the floor and the viewer will not bump into the work.

The computer installation provided visitors with an opportunity to be an experimental artist like Picasso. Wearing a pair of stereo glasses, they could step inside the painting space, choose a colour and use a light pen to create their own work that would be recorded in the air.

Tapio Takala  
professor, Computer Science, Aalto University





### Significance in house

The cooperation inside the house – design and planning, production, construction, information provision and marketing, and integrating the theme into teaching – had an effect on the atmosphere of the house and made the production feel shared in relation to the cooperation partners and the City's joint projects as well. Also, challenge always gives work more meaning. “Such is the nature of humanity” ☺

### All is well that ends well (even to a critic)

At the opening of the exhibition, art critic, journalist and columnist Otso Kantokorpi commented: “This work is even better than the original!”

I recommend this to adults as well. The playful and the serious alike.

Mauri Tahvonen

→ Otso Kantokorpi (1957–2018) was a journalist, an art critic and a columnist. Just a few months prior, he had exposed the works of a Russian early 20th century avant-garde exhibition named ‘The Circle – the Line – the Point’ at Wäinö Aaltonen Museum of Art in Turku as forgeries.



### Pablo & Alexander – Playing with Picasso

At Annantalo from 25 September to 13 December 2009

The side programme of the exhibition featured event days, lecture series for children and adults, performances and workshops, as well as drama workshops for preschool and school classes (in Finnish and Swedish). The art teachers of Annantalo also developed various educational contents related to the subject. The Picasso theme was also examined on 5x2 art courses, in leisure time art groups and on cultural courses. The exhibition and its side programming had more than 19,000 visitors.

Hyvinkää 18 Dec 2009 – 2 Mar 2010  
Moscow 11 Mar – 6 May 2010  
St. Petersburg 1 Jun – 30 Sep 2010

### In cooperation with

Ateneum  
Succession Picasso  
Musée National Picasso-Paris  
Henrik & Martin Hackenberg  
Mihail Serstjuk

The Picasso exhibition of Ateneum ran from 18 September 2009 to 28 January 2010. The Picasso exhibition of Annantalo toured Moscow and St. Petersburg in the wake of the “big” exhibition.



# Drawing and Colour Exhibitions on the basics of visual art

Text Erja Mehto



Over the years, the subjects of exhibitions produced by Annantalo have dealt with many phenomena of life and different cultures from the perspective of art education. In 2001, the Annantalo exhibition team began wondering whether visual art itself had been sidelined in the exhibition contents. We wanted exhibitions that would open the language and alphabet of images and combine information conveyed through observations with visitors' own activities in a natural way.

The exhibition spaces of Annantalo are divided into two nearly same-sized rooms. We came up with the idea of using one of the rooms as an observation space, while the other one would be dedicated to workshops. This scheme, called a *workshop exhibition*, represented the importance of visitors' own activities in the exhibition experience (illustration p. 25). The spaces are adjacent, connected by a doorway. Thus, the workshop is part of the exhibition and open whenever the observation space is. It felt both pedagogically meaningful and aesthetically inspiring to create a workshop space that would continue the theme of the exhibition in terms of content and visuals. The observation room, on the other hand, would serve as more of a conventional exhibition space that would provide information about the contents and an opportunity to encounter works of art.

Originally, the plan was to have a series of three exhibitions, each of which would showcase the basics of creating an image in its own way. The first thought that came up was the notion of a line and its significance in the creation of an image. We wanted it to have a concrete form, which gave birth to the idea of a drawing exhibition. This choice was also supported by the notion that drawing is a natural working method and form of expression shared by children and artists alike. Painting was brought up as a counterpart to drawing, and thus colour was chosen as the second exhibition theme. The third and final exhibition of the series seemed to need a three-dimensional approach, resulting in the theme of matter. For scheduling reasons, only two of these themes were ultimately implemented: drawing and colour. The subject of matter was left waiting for its turn potentially in the future.

Visual artists *Tiina Aromaa* and *Tapio Tuominen* from Annantalo's teaching staff were asked to design the Exhibition on Drawing. The Exhibition on Colour was designed by visual artists *Raija Malka* and *Veikko Björk*, both visual art teachers of Annantalo as well. Similar exhibition cooperation with in-house art teachers had already become an established practice in previous exhibitions. The experiences were positive – art teachers combine artistic and pedagogic expertise. They are also familiar with the operations and facilities of Annantalo. Both pairs were assisted by the Annantalo working group. The design process for the exhibitions took a little under a year, and the construction process was quick. The Exhibition on Colour was set up in only three days, which may be a record in Annantalo's exhibition history.



# Exhibition on drawing

The Exhibition on Drawing was opened by the City of Helsinki's Cultural Director *Yrjö Larmola* by drawing. Larmola was known to be an avid drawer, and his drawings on meeting notes were uniquely funny and clever. At the opening, Larmola drew pictures of tin soldiers while telling a story from his childhood. The audience sat on the floor, following intently as the quick drawer transferred his thoughts onto paper. The moment had the same kind of magic of drawing as beloved artist *Kylli Koski*'s real-time painting-based storytelling moments on TV in the 60s. After the drawing speech, the audience got to try drawing and various implements themselves.

At the opening, Larmola drew pictures of tin soldiers while telling a story from his childhood. The audience sat on the floor, following intently as the quick drawer transferred his thoughts onto paper.

## Diverse drawing methods

The observation room of the exhibition showed visitors how diverse a form of expression drawing is and how many purposes drawings can serve. In late summer, the exhibition work group had sent blank, white post-cards equipped with a stamp to roughly 300 visual artists. They were delivered with a request to submit a drawing for the exhibition. Some one hundred artists responded, and the greetings received from them showcased their different identifiable styles and view-points on drawing. The cards were showcased in the exhibition for visitors to see and examine.

The largest works in the room were visual artist *Hanna Westerberg*'s charcoal drawings, which she had created based directly on on-site observations in places such as a stairwell in Katajanokka, a Renaissance monastery in Italy and her own home. The floors were covered with carpets featuring comics drawn by the students of art teachers *Kati Rapia* and *Simo Koivunen*. They showed that a drawing can also be an item or a decorative element. The observation room also featured a video compilation by Academy of Fine Arts student *Cecilia Stenbom*. Her work combined video footage with animation drawn on paper sheet by sheet.

During one exhibition week, visual artist *Olavi Suomela* drew visitors posing as models on week-day mornings, allowing other visitors to see how the portraits took form.







### Living model in the workshop room

The workshop room of the exhibition was dedicated to a bunny named Pupu Violetti. This white rabbit with black ears, borrowed from a farmhouse in the Porvoo region, lived on its own nature island in the middle of the workshop room for the entire duration of the roughly month-long exhibition. The room featured drawing supplies: various papers and drawing implements, as well as small two-legged drawing tables supported against the user's lap. This sent a clear message to visitors: they could draw here. Sometimes Pupu Violetti would stay still like a statue, other times it would stretch its legs by briskly hopping around its own island. Observing a living rabbit appealed to visitors' emotions and inspired them to draw from a model. Sometimes imagination would take over,

resulting in the drawer's internal bunny visions to end up on the paper. A gallery of bunny pictures began to form on the walls of the room.

### Barefooted drawing

The second-floor glass gallery housed an installation named *Restless Feet*, created by visual art students of Specialiseringslinjen vid Gymnasiet Svenska Normallyceum and instructed by art teacher and visual artist *Marina Ciglar* from Annantalo. The space was built into a maze, the walls and floor of which were coated with white paper. In the opening performance, the audience and the students created a joint work by dipping their feet in a vat of colour solution and leaving footprints by walking on the maze floor. Some visitors also drew picture messages onto the walls.





# Exhibition on colour

The second exhibition of the series, the Exhibition on Colour, was also built in two rooms, in the first of which visitors made observations on the world of colours and the second of which was dedicated to practical working. The observation room featured colour spaces – confessionals of sorts – in which visitors could actually “go inside colours” to experience and feel their effect. With an active eye, they could see complementary colours and afterimages and take note of the relativity of colours. The room also featured a water prism that refracted light into the colours of the spectrum and a black colour circle that invited visitors to give thought to light, darkness and the essence of

colour. The black colour circle also helped visitors reset their retinas after the bombardment of colours.

In the workshop space of the exhibition, an artist’s studio, visitors could paint a colour panel with a shade they received from a large colour roulette wheel built onto the wall and mixed themselves. Over the course of the exhibition, these panels formed a 288-part colour library on the back wall of the room. The space also featured a laboratory in which visitors could mix primary colour solutions, see how colours interact by trying them on sheets of paper and examine the tools of an art painter.







## Pedagogic programme of the Exhibitions on Drawing and Colour

Both exhibitions featured guided workshop tours for daycare centres and school groups. The groups would first familiarise themselves with the subject of the exhibition in the observation room and then work in the workshop space. Three of these hour-long tours were held per day. When the exhibition was later assessed, it was concluded that one hour was not enough time for both activities. There were more things to look at and think about in the observation room than the groups had time for, and the time they had to work in the workshop room was often too short.

The tours proved so popular that almost all time slots were reserved within the first reservation day. Due to popular demand, one additional tour week was added to the Exhibition on Colour. The tour was guided by visual artists *Nea Lindgrén* and *Sándor Vály*. Both exhibitions also featured an open weekend event with workshops and exhibition tours.

### Exhibition on Drawing

11 Oct – 4 Nov 2001

### Exhibition on Colour

8 Nov – 2 Dec 2001

Total number of visitors  
5,000

### Pedagogic programme

75 workshop tours with  
1,500 visitors. Open  
workshop weekends with  
400 visitors.

Workshop room (68,5 m<sup>2</sup>)

Observation room (66,5 m<sup>2</sup>)



Illustrative image of the workshop exhibition.



# An animal as an art model

In the autumn of 2001, I was involved as the other planner in an exhibition on the theme of drawing, intended for children and young people, at the Annantalo Arts Centre in Helsinki. The exhibition also featured a workshop focusing on drawing a live model. However, this time around, the model was an animal that also lived in the exhibition space for the entire duration of the exhibition. Text Tiina Aromaa



**W**e built a piece of nature in the exhibition space: a roughly 2×3 m island formed inside a low free-form space separated from its surroundings with an acrylic glass wall. The floor of the space was covered with wood chips and hay, and a birch was erected in the middle of it. It became the bunny's dwelling. All this was surrounded by children with their laptop drawing tables and supplies. The space was used by groups of children and young people, either with a guide or on their own. Any passer-by – child or adult – could also pick supplies off a shelf and come draw. The finished works were hung on the wall for everyone to see.

On the one hand, the overall exhibition was a contemporary installation with an artificial nature structure, but on the other hand, it was a social event involving unity between the drawers. It was also a conventional model drawing situation, and everyone stepping through the door seemed to immediately know what to do.

It is commonly thought that things should be examined in their own environment. When examining nature, you go out into nature. We did the opposite. We brought nature to the exhibition, a man-made space. This caused a variety of practical problems, which in turn raised doubts about the feasibility of the project. We had to give thought to animal welfare related, moral and philosophical questions.

We also noticed that when an individual element of nature is separated



from its surroundings and assimilated to a new environment, it becomes sharper, amplified. The proportions twist and turn surprisingly. Something that is almost unnoticeable in nature can be amplified almost unbearably when brought into a room. We can manipulate it, reinforce or exclude the characteristics that we want. In other words, artificial nature is a view built based on human needs. An illusion.

We assembled our patch of nature carefully, one piece at a time. Some of our choices were dictated by the bunny and others by our own notions of nature, in which we aimed for something between reality, symbols and clichés. In a word, it had to look real.

We chose a bunny as our art model. It is one of the most common animal characters in European fairytales and stories. A plush toy with the sud-

den movements of a wild animal, the behaviour of a pet and the memories of a rabbit.

Drawing the bunny meant observing its everyday life. It also meant observing a proceeding series of events. The bunny will not stay still and cannot be caught. It cannot be captured with a pencil, either. Instead, what most often forms on the paper is a picture of that pursuit or a situation in which the child remembers the bunny, what the child thinks the bunny should be like and what the picture should look like.

The bunny aroused feelings in children. They drew it because they were enamoured with it. They also drew it in relation to an activity or something surrounding its life. The bunny eats, runs or lies in the hay. One child drew the entire Annantalo building, the place where the bunny was. Older children, young people and adults had an opposite approach. They dismissed everything else and focused on the "look" of the bunny.

There is diversity in examining a living subject and its presence. When we sense life in something, it changes our relationship with it. We are made of the same stuff. Our body recognises the similarity, participates and resonates against the other life. Interaction occurs.

Tiina Aromaa is a Helsinki-based visual artist who teaches visual arts at Annantalo. (This article was published under the title 'Life Drawing with a Beastly Twist' in the publication Lehti. Art Education Journal. It was written for the 'How Nature Speaks' seminar held by Annantalo in collaboration with art educator Riitta Heikkinen in New York in 2002).



# Literary Art and Literature as a Matter of the Heart

Text  
Liisa Paatsalo

**A**s a responsible producer in the field of literary arts, I have had the privilege of being involved in several literature-related productions as a creator, planner and implementer. The message of how important, joyous and comforting reading is has been taken forward by operators ranging from literary art teachers, Reading Ambassadors and Reading Friends and action-oriented literature exhibitions to the Annantalo Children's Book Café with its book illustrations, author guests and reading corners.

In November 2015, author *Juha Hurme* opened an exhibition named *BY – Olipa kerran kylä* ('BY – Once upon a Time there Was a Village') at Annantalo. In his opening speech, Hurme talked about the importance of reading. He listed ten theses that I believe should be nailed to the door of every children's room and classroom:

- “One.** The world is real, the globe is spinning and people take turns waking up as the planet turns its cheek towards the sun. A system of more than seven billion normal people is complex, susceptible to prejudices, misunderstandings and conflicts. Language connects people with nature, one another and people past. The future is built through language. We live in language. That is why you should read a book.
- Two.** Your native language forms the basis for learning foreign languages. A foundation. Read a Finnish-language book and you will learn all languages.
- Three.** Reading is taking trips, free entertainment. A book will give you access to images, sounds, the body, other countries, space, the past and the future. A book is an avalanche of imagination, as well as an expedition to the territory of fantasy, something that does not exist at all. Except it does.

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← A Narnia closet was built in the Children's Book Café as a passageway to Studio Anna, the space for Baby Kino.





- Four.** The world has turned into image surfaces. Pockets are filled with movie theatres. Books are needed in addition to films, TV and other two-dimensional moving images. In all of its merits and significant artistic potential, visual narration is more of a locked system. 28 scribbles is a marvel of abstraction. They can be used to depict everything there is, as well as an enormous amount of things that do not exist. The reader illustrates the narration as an active agent, a co-artist, and this is exercise for the brain. A book is a hill; climbing it will make you sweat, but it will expand your horizons.
- Five.** We only live once. That means we have a good reason to enjoy ourselves in this world, get a grip of it, act, make reality. We have to find our own path and mission. A book is a map. Reading is the most effective exercise when navigating life as civilised people.
- Six.** A good book will strike a chord with you. You will find yourself in it. The reader reads themselves in the book and learns something new. And when the “I” changes, the world changes in a more pluralistic and understandable direction.
- Seven.** Playing games and wild messaging on social media are creative reading and writing. They are only a small step away from literature. When you read a book, you improve your status in social media, becoming an unstoppable beast in the exponentially broadening field of instant messaging.
- Eight.** The internet is a drastic and significant super connection and a global information bank. Its merits are undisputable. In addition to important information, the internet contains a certain percentage of awful deceit, instigation, propaganda and nonsense. Preconceived notions and prejudices are a threat to all facets of good life. Literary education teaches critical evaluation.
- Nine.** Everyone thinks that they are normal, as stated in item one. World literature shows that people from all eras are very strange. Everyone is crazy in their own way. That makes people wonderfully similar and equal beings.
- Ten.** It took the hominids who got up on two feet a couple of million years to develop into modern humans. Modern humans toiled a hundred thousand years in order to learn to write. The art of writing was invented 5,000 years ago. Only a measly 5,000 years ago. Things began happening back then and are still happening to this day. Writing has raw, exploding book gravity and propulsion. Keep up with the times, learn to read, read a book.”

28 scribbles is a marvel of abstraction.



↑ Seela Sella, a sponsor of the Children’s Book Café, inspired young children to embark on a journey to the world of fairy-tales in 2012.

← Maikki Harjanne’s picture book character Minttu turned 30 in the autumn of 2008, and children had an opportunity to chat with the author. Harjanne is being interviewed by Annina Holmberg.





# Play and Art Go Hand in Hand

A few thoughts on bilingualism and multimedial art as a basis for working on culture pedagogy.  
Text Nina Gran

Translation from Swedish Petter Skult.

In the fairy-tale forest  
a fairy-tale spindle is spinning  
a thread as bright as the sun.  
In the fairy-tale forest  
imagine any beginning  
And it will soon be spun.

Lennart Hellsing

**T**eaching art and cultural pedagogy always begins with the child's right to experience and participate in culture. It's also important to offer every child *different* kinds of cultural experiences. One often speaks of the importance of creative learning environments that encompass other visual and social dimensions than the traditional school environments. With the help of cultural pedagogy, an experience can become truly unforgettable, and it can be transformed through individual forms of expression. Making sure every child gets a chance to experience art and formulate their own experiences and find their own ways of expression are all important goals for anyone working with cultural pedagogy.

For many children, Annantalo's bilingual exhibitions and related workshops in the beginning of the 2000s became important introductions to the fantastical and their own creativity.

## Enter into the art

The exhibition *Playing with Picasso* in 2009 let children quite literally enter into the art through a three-dimensional copy of Picasso's artwork. Once inside the world of art, a whole new dimension of fantasy and creativity opened up for the children, who through drama workshops were given the chance to become acquainted via play with Picasso's philosophy. After the children experienced the Picasso exhibition at Annantalo, it would often happen that they took their parents with them the following weekend to give them a guided tour into Picasso's mind. The parents, who might have seen the big Picasso exhibition at Ateneum, were amazed at the children's insight into Picasso's philosophy.

*The Master Painter Giotto* was introduced through an exhibition to children and youth already in 2007, letting the children get acquainted with the art, the seven deadly sins and virtues, and together reflect over both medieval and modern lifestyles and philosophies. The exhibition was directed at older children and teenagers, who appreciated the chance to grapple with a more demanding existential theme. The Giotto exhibition also attracted a record amount of adult visitors to Annantalo.

With the help of cultural pedagogy, an experience can become truly unforgettable, and it can be transformed through individual forms of expression.

## Become a part of the story

The literary arts were a common thread in the Annantalo exhibitions during the beginning of the 2000s. Already in 2006, *The Enchanted Forest* introduced both children and adults to the fairy-tale world of the Brothers Grimm, which left a taste for more. The bilingual children's literature event *The Summer Book Bag* in 2009 was quite popular, and The Children's Book Café ultimately opened its doors at Annantalo in 2011. In due time, Annantalo was also blessed with ambulatory Reading Ambassadors, in both Finnish and Swedish.

It is fantastic to taste words and play with poems, ditties and verses. Both adults and children have done so together through the ages. This playful tradition is a continuation of all the investments into spoken word and literature we have made at the Helsinki cultural centre and Annantalo during the 2010s, aiming to inspire any with an interest to dive deep into the glittering ocean of words. Literary art is an art form that has been developed in both Swedish and Finnish at Annantalo as a part of our work with the network for children's culture *Taikalamppu* (Aladdin's Lamp), which has since turned into the Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centers. We have also worked together with other organisations.

## Imagination is like breathing

Literary art is its own art form that children, youths and adults can systematically engage with from a very early age. Literary art as an artform for very young children in Swedish was first developed in Helsinki in 2008 through our first course in poetry for babies, which also gave birth to rhyming play events for very young children, a concept we named *Rhyme Jam*.

An exhibition by Sydkustens landskapsförbund, *Ordboet* (Wordhome), in 2013 gave the literary art a welcome visual dimension, which put the children's own imaginations into focus. In preparation for *Ordboet* and many other exhibitions, we and our partners organised several meetings to inspire early childhood educators and teachers and to give them an understanding of what the actual exhibition consisted of and its rich crop of pedagogical material.

The exhibitions *Saareen* (To the Island) from Oulu and *BY* by Pro Artibus had more literary inspirations and were exhibited at Annantalo in 2013 and 2015, respectively. They offered new opportunities for both groups of children and families to explore the world of children's books. For the exhibition *Saareen* we created wholly new material in Swedish to be used in audience development, as all the original material had been solely in Finnish. The visual elements merged with the excitement of the stories into one single magical whole that was appreciated by both groups of students, teachers and families, who would spend quite a lot of time with the fantastical exhibitions. Here the children could really immerse themselves in the stories in a wholly new and more concrete way.

## Empathy through shared experience

Annantalo's most successful concept in the beginning of the 2000s was to create bilingual, multimedial and dynamic ways to engage with audience development, as well as organising courses around every exhibition, regardless of who originally was behind the exhibition. The children's own experiences of the art was always the focal point, but we also spent our time and energy on the pedagogical dimension. The exhibitions also became important multimedial elements in the cultural pedagogy in the courses we developed together with the Swedish early childhood education and the City Library during the 2010s.





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## Learn by playing

Drama-based pedagogy has been an important aspect in audience development at Annantalo and for the historical city walks in cooperation with the Helsinki City Museum. Other good examples of its importance can be seen in Kallio Upper Secondary School of Performing Arts and the Association of Drama and Theatre DOT. Historical city walks were organised for several years in Helsinki, during which groups of students were given the chance to walk the city, meet people from the past and listen to their stories.

Especially memorable was the journey through two hundred years of Helsinki as the capital city which went down Unioninkatu in 2008. It started with Engels' grand empire-inspired plans for the new capital, going on to women's liberation at the University, the sound of air-raid sirens at Kaisaniemi park, Olympic euphoria at Hakaniemi market place, demonstrations for peace, and a new millennium. I will never forget the solemn expressions on the children as they carefully carried their home-made paper doves as a message of peace for the new millennium at the end of the trip through time.

Another very special walk through time was made during the Sibelius jubilee in 2015, when the children were given the opportunity to follow Sibelius through four different stages of the composer's life. Everything was pulled from real life; the actors wore authentic costumes and had time-appropriate props, and each version had their own thoughts, problems and strong feelings. All of this was possible thanks to multimedial cooperation where history meets the modern age, and drama and music meet the literary art.

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## In conclusion

It's important to start with the child's own needs and interests, and to let the child (continue to) be a free and creative participant. This requires time, imagination, diverse partners and sufficient resources. For many children, Annantalo's exhibitions and related workshops in the beginning of the 2000s became important introductions to the fantastical and their own creativity. Today, Annantalo Arts Centre continues to offer the children of Helsinki an early exposure to art in the form of workshops, exhibitions, shows or family programmes.

The fairy-tale woods, the lands of imagination or art, can all open up doors to new things for us. Portals to new realities and existences, to other people and creatures. Art and play go hand in hand with one's language and gives us new ways of looking at and exploring reality and ourselves.

In art everything is possible, and that, if anything, gives us hope for the future.

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To us it was obvious that an exhibition should be accessible for both children and adults, and that it should create a feeling of shared experience and meaning for every visitor.

# The Enchanted Forest

## Secret hatches, gingerbread and other experiential perspectives on Grimm's fairytale worlds



A conversation with set designer Kimmo Takala, the exhibition's executive producer Liisa Paatsalo and communication officer Leila Heimonen. Text Leila Heimonen and Liisa Paatsalo

All of the 201 fairytales of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's compilation *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1857) were published as a complete collection for the first time in 1999 with new Finnish

translations by *Oili Suominen* and *Raija Jänicke*. "Few classics are as broadly known when first published as Grimm's best-known fairytales." (HS, 1999)



**T**he Enchanted Forest exhibition was based on the best-known Grimm fairytales. A diverse working group of artists drew up an exhibition plan, which was used to build a fairytale world that welcomed all emotions, as well as a wide range of side programming. Visitors loved the dangers of the gloomy forest and the gardens of the King's castle: in terms of visitor numbers, the Enchanted Forest exhibition became the most popular exhibition of Annantalo – as well as its first touring exhibition.

**Kimmo** It was that ferocious heat wave summer when the forests of Karelia were burning in Russia, spreading the acrid smell of smoke everywhere for a couple of weeks. It could still be felt at the opening ceremony in August. I believe the exhibition was completed the previous night. Active construction began sometime in June, and the most intense construction phase lasted two and a half months.

#### Why Grimm?

**Kimmo** We wanted to build a fairytale-based installation that uses genuine materials and creates entire worlds. Everyone is familiar with the Grimm fairytales, the stories have been adapted countless times and many of them have become part of popular culture... They feel like a treasure trove with numerous dimensions. We started our work by reading the new translations of the some two hundred Grimm fairytales.



## The Enchanted Forest

22 August – 12 November 2006

#### The Enchanted Forest working group

Photographer Pira Cousin, visual artist Petra Giacomelli, costume designer Johanna Hänninen, textile artist Papu Pirtola, set designer Kimmo Takala and the Annantalo working group

#### Exhibition patron

Professor of child psychiatry, emerita Terttu Arajärvi

#### Side programme

Family workshops, visitor tours and lectures, teacher info events, drama workshops, the closing ceremony and workshop, the publication *Näkökulmia Grimmin satuihin* ('Perspectives on Grimm's Fairytales').

#### Tour

Nuku, Oulu – Hippalot, Hämeenlinna – Children's Cultural Centre Rulla, Tampere – Kulttuurialta (Jyväskylä City Theatre)

#### Visitors

The Annantalo exhibition and side programming: 19,900

#### In cooperation with

Arts Promotion Centre Finland's Children's Culture Division, the Finnish Cultural Foundation's Uusimaa Fund, the Ministry of Education / Taikalamppu, the Goethe Institute, Tammi Publishers. Part of the programme of the Helsinki Festival.



### What did the exhibition feature and why?

Kimmo

Well, the exhibition space of Annantalo has two sections: first, there is the corridor-like front space and then, on the left side, the more square space. In all of the best-known Grimm fairytales, the main character or characters usually end up lost or flee into the forest, and when dusk falls and the night comes, they find shelter in a cabin. With that in mind, we decided to use the front section of the exhibition space as the enchanted forest. This forest side was a space for the evening red between sunset and midnight.

Eventually, the best-known fairytales usually end happily with a wedding scene and half the kingdom and so forth, so we decided to turn the other space into a banquet room. It featured a wedding tent, the king's throne and the princess's tower. It became an entirely different, well-lit space with a different soundscape.

In all of the best-known Grimm fairytales, the main character or characters usually end up lost or flee into the forest, and when dusk falls and the night comes, they find shelter in a cabin.

Kimmo

### In the enchanted forest

For the forest, we built huge tree trunks from chicken wire, newspapers and paste. Someone doubted their durability, saying that we should have made them from glass fibre. That terrible poison! The chicken wire structures are flexible. They do not split or break if someone bumps into them. They also have the advantage that because they are hollow, we could fold the tops of the trunks to adjust their height in spaces of different heights when the exhibition began touring. The cheapest solution happened to also be the most ingenious and best.

Pira had been learning gilding, so we ended up gilding elements such as the evening sun, which was a metre and a half in diameter. The moon on the other wall, on the other hand, was coated with silver leaf.

The cabin in the forest was built from boards that we acquired by dismantling the upstairs of a leaky house on my property. In a way, the forest cabin was the witch's cabin from Hansel and Gretel, but it was also the cabin of Snow White and the seven dwarfs, as well as the former dwelling of other fairytale characters, including Cinderella. Inside the cabin, there were hints of all the characters who had taken turns living there. And there was also a gingerbread wall.

Liisa

I will always have fond memories of the gingerbread wall! I glued more gingerbread cookies onto it almost every morning because the children had eaten some.

Kimmo

Yeah, there was a small cellar hatch under the cabin floor, hiding treasures, a bird skull and all manner of things under the floor. Scary stuff and jewels... Something a little scary and exciting, yet in a safe atmosphere.

The tree trunks in the forest had peep holes into fairytale worlds built from different materials and items. One featured Hansel in a pretzel stick cage being fattened up, and Gretel, who had just come up with an escape plan. There were old Nokia rubber toys from the 1930s. Nokia used to make rubber toys of Snow White and the seven dwarfs, of which I had managed to find Snow White herself and six of the dwarfs. Only Dopey was missing, and I have been searching for him my entire life. The second peephole showed Dopey's funeral. There was Snow White, a wreath of flowers and a small casket. Characters from other fairytale worlds were attending the funeral, such as Snorkmaiden from the 1950s. I loved how the children were fine with that, but their parents tended to point out the inaccuracy! We also had Mickey Mouse there, as well as squirrels and other small animals. The third world was the kingdom of the Frog King. The fourth one featured Snow White's evil stepmother standing in front of a mirror, surrounded by her bulldogs, saying "mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all." And the fifth one was the treasure chamber under the cabin.



There were mushroom stools in the forest, which we had borrowed from Rovaniemi Theatre. Both children and adults could sit on them. The whole idea was to have story reading and storytelling places there. Other storytelling places were the cabin and, on the banquet side, the wedding tent and the throne. I believe we made around ten books from plywood for the children's parents to read from.

We also placed Pira's black-and-white photographs, printed on thin plywood, in the forest area. One photo featured white anemones, and next to the photo was Little Red Riding Hood's basket with a wine bottle in it and a cloth covering it. The cabin wall featured old fishing nets accompanied by Pira's sea-themed photos, which alluded to the fairytale The Fisherman and His Wife.





#### Kimmo

#### On the banquet side

On the banquet side, we built a tower for Sleeping Beauty and Rapunzel. As we know, Rapunzel hung her long hair out of the window so that the prince could climb it. In a way, the tower was its own closed world that could not be entered, but it had small window openings through which you could see fairytale-related hints and items. The openings featured magical items from different fairytales, such as Cinderella's gilded shoe and the princess's golden ball, a gilded key, a spinning wheel and hay...

We also used gold leaf on the throne in the banquet room. It was an oaken Jugend-style chair that we bought from Fida secondhand for six euros.

The wedding tent featured large felt works by Papu... various rose-themed rugs and quilts. The wedding tent was made from silk and dyed by hand at Annantalo. The textiles and fabrics we used were sample pieces that we bought from different interior decoration stores for next to nothing. We used them to create a royal wedding reception and ball based on the silhouette images of the English illustrator Arthur Rackham. We had jesters and little drummer boys, cook boys and, of course, the king, the queen, Cinderella and the prince. I do not really remember where I happened to find this book on Rackham. I just came across it, as you do when you work on something.



In a way, the tower was its own closed world that could not be entered, but it had small window openings through which you could see fairytale-related hints and items.



### **The first touring exhibition of Annantalo**

**Liisa**

At first, we were not planning to make this thing a touring exhibition. But when our colleagues across Finland came to see it and wanted to lease it, it ended up touring. And when you (Pira and Kimmo) went on site to build it, it had your signature in a sense, that this was the exhibition that was ordered and transferred from Helsinki. Indeed, the City of Oulu was so enthusiastic about this exhibition that they began producing touring exhibitions of their own.

**Kimmo**

The Enchanted Forest exhibition toured Hämeenlinna, Tampere and Oulu, after which it headed to the lobby of Jyväskylä City Theatre in 2007. It should have never been taken there, as it is impossible to go against the architecture of Alvar Aalto. The exhibition was not suited for those facilities, as it had to be divided into several parts. It could always be adapted to other venues, as they were former factory buildings and places of that nature. Those facilities could be used for the forest section and the banquet side, and the rooms were tall enough.

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People of different ages understand things in accordance with their own resources, adults included.

**Liisa**

### **Working up a sweat with side programming**

Just looking at the side programme for the exhibition makes me break a sweat! The café exhibitions, the lectures, the publication, the workshops and the drama workshops – and a large chunk of them in Swedish, too. And there was side programming for teachers, adults, educators, children. We had time for delving into things and expanding the theme. Nowadays, it is a lot easier to just call and order something ready-made by phone. Then you can just add things to it and grow it.

**Kimmo**

### **Happy ending**

You must never underestimate children. We did not underestimate them for a second. People of different ages understand things in accordance with their own resources, adults included. Everyone has their own views and history as far as what appeals to whom. My opinion is that exhibitions and fairytales can have conflicting elements, and even something a little scary, as it is very important for children to learn how to process their emotions. And art in all of its forms plays a key role in this.





# Reading Ambassadors

## A moment of rest in the arms of a story

Interview with Reading Ambassadors Henrika Andersson and Annina Holmberg and special planner Nina Gran. Annina and Henrika served as Annantalo's Reading Ambassadors in 2012–2016. Interview conducted by Liisa Paatsalo and Leila Heimonen.

**Henrika Andersson** is an actress and author of the popular childrens' book series about the teddy bear Nauvo-Auvo (Nagu-nalle), as well as several youth plays. Today she is working full-time as one of the two Finland-Swedish reading ambassadors (2019–2022)

**Annina Holmberg** is an author who has written plenty of books for children and young people. She has written screenplays for television series and served as an instructor in Annantalo's theatre and literary art groups, among other duties.

**Nina Gran** is a special planner in the City of Helsinki's culture promotion unit, her area of responsibility being basic arts education and Swedish-language cultural education.

**A**nnantalo focused particularly heavily on the development of literature and literary art in 2001–2016. During Helsinki's year as the World Design Capital in 2012, Annantalo opened what is believed to be Finland's first children's book café, featuring programming related to books and stories: illustration exhibitions, author and illustrator meetings, book release parties and reading sessions. The café's patron was author *Kirsi Kunnas*, while artists *Seela Sella*, *Antonia Ringbom* and *Karri Miettinen* (Paleface) served as its sponsors.

Annantalo's Reading Ambassador activities were related to the opening of the Children's Book Café. The Ambassadors were tasked with bringing the joy and comfort of stories to children and young people who were unable to attend the events of the Café due to an illness or social exclusion. In the early days, Annina and Henrika were accompanied by actors *Hannu-Pekka Björkman* and *Kristian Thulesius* as Reading Ambassadors.

The Reading Ambassadors presented books, read stories, talked about their own relationship with reading and had conversations about books and reading with children and young people. At hospitals in particular, the Ambassadors often met with individual children, while meetings with larger groups were held in places such as hospital schools, reform schools and reception centres. The activities were provided free of charge and in two languages (Finnish and Swedish).

PISA surveys were one factor behind the activities. When the Children's Book Café was opened in 2012, two PISA surveys focusing primarily on reading skills had been conducted in 2000 and 2009. The

survey results showed what authors had already observed in practice: people's reading skills were declining and polarising.

**Nina** In the grand scheme of things, literary art was developed a lot in its different forms at the time, and a lot of things happened at the same time and in parallel. Things went hand in hand, one contributing to another.

**Henrika** I think it is hard to measure or assess what had an effect on what. Someone throws a stone and then the ripples on the water spread. I personally started at Kulturrådet in Sweden as a representative of children's and young people's literature that particular year, in 2012. A great deal was happening in Sweden at the time, which could probably be seen here as well. The first PISA results in 2000 were an alarm bell that also communicated to the higher authorities that we needed to focus on children's reading skills. Apart from reading, Finnish children's PISA results were among the best, but their reading skills were in decline and the differences therein had grown. Boys in particular showed declining reading skills. And, unfortunately, the situation has only grown worse. It feels like fighting windmills. Social media, games, etc. take time away from reading, and the enormous marketing machine is spending billions to make sure that people have no time for reading...



**Annina** We both had made author visits at schools, as well as some school homes and children's homes, but back then we went as ourselves, as authors, and talked about our own work, our own books. As Reading Ambassadors, we faded ourselves out of the picture. I had no experience with going on my own to visit an ill child.

**Henrika** We both understood right from the start that the book and the story are the main character and that we are only delivering it. We both carry theatre experiences with us, and in theatre, the focus is on the very story that you start to unfold. The same applied here: the encounter was important, and the focal point of the encounter was the book, the story.

**Annina** We also noticed at the practical level how much easier it was to encounter, say, a deeply ill child with something between us and the child – namely the book and the stories. It was easy to operate through that. At the hospital, the children did have a big TV and other audiovisual equipment in their room, but they were genuinely happy when someone came in to read for them. They welcomed the book with open arms. They did not consider it old-fashioned or boring at all, but probably very calming.

**Henrika** It is indeed different when a real person reads for you and shares the story and the book and the time – in other words, really provides love and caring.

**Annina** Of course, movies get you invested in the story as well, but they provide everything on a platter. Your eyes rest when you listen, and listening leaves room for your own imagination.

**Henrika** I remember when a girl kept in isolation told me to open the window. I told her that I was not allowed to open any windows, but she was actually talking about the book. She said that the book was a window to her, through which she could fly outside for a moment.

**Annina** I always had the same feeling, that window analogy. I remember going to a special ward that you had to enter through a vestibule after putting on full protective equipment. Since the children could not go anywhere, it felt like our job was to bring the world to them. It felt really important. I met some kids a couple of times, whereby we formed a relationship in which we would both look forward to seeing each other. It was great to go see them knowing that they were hoping and waiting for my visit.

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Our job was to bring  
the world to them.

## Ricky Rapper is an effective pain reliever

“ I thought this was never going to work. This child was way too ill to be able to concentrate on listening. However, I introduced myself and the most important thing: the book. I had to raise my voice, but luckily that was par for the course for Ricky Rapper, whose story I was holding in my hand.

I began to read. A little too loudly, as the listener kept making noises as well. “Ow, ow, it hurts,” the child moaned while holding their stomach. I felt like a sadist and cursed the hospital in my mind for not providing sufficient pain relief. However, the nurse gestured that I should continue, so I tried to keep up with Ricky and the rest of the characters. I stopped taking breaks and looking at the nurse. If a professional nurse's assessment was that the child could handle a reading moment, I would provide one. That was what I had come for.

I always had a couple dozen or so books in my backpack, all of which I knew and loved. They were the easiest to read. There was no telling beforehand which book would suit whom – I had to trust my intuition. If the child was physically disabled, my first choice would not be to present the adventures of someone performing wild physical tricks. But the Moomins were always a safe bet, as were the animal trio of Ricky, Rocky and Ringo.

For some reason, I had chosen Ricky Rapper this time. Ricky is simultaneously a winner and a loser, courageous and cowardly, sweet and annoying, with enough edge to make him appeal to everybody.

I noticed that the child stopped crying here and there. I slowed down a little, lowered my voice and even began to throw myself into the story. When I reached a part where Ricky is rapping and drumming to his heart's content, I heard an unexpected noise: the patient was laughing. When the chapter ended, they wanted to hear more, and when my time was up, they demanded that I come back and read some more tomorrow. It was like their pain had melted away.

I am in no way downplaying pain: it is intolerable, whether it be psychosomatic, acute or chronic. This child had been living with pain for a long time and, understandably, hated it. Some of the child's crying was caused by sheer fatigue. A moment with Ricky Rapper gave the child an escape from their unpleasant reality, of which pain was such an essential part that they could no longer tell when they were really hurting and when they were not.

This was the nucleus of the task of a Reading Ambassador: to provide a moment of rest in the arms of a story.

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Annina Holmberg



## Can you help me?

” Over the course of the afternoon the polyclinic has emptied of clients; the only ones left in the room are the boy and me. He’s sitting in the corner of the bench, playing on his mobile phone.

I’ve over twenty books spread out in front of me, many read several times, and the teddy bear that has accompanied me lies exhausted with its legs up in the air. I pack up the books and the teddy bear into my reading ambassador suitcase, then glance at the boy, picking up my Harry Potter book in Finnish.

“Do you want me to read for you while you wait?” I ask.

He looks up from his phone, looking bored, then shrugs.

“Have you read the Potter books?”

“I don’t like books,” the boy replies.

“Ok.” I say. “But if you don’t mind, it’d really help me if I could practice reading out loud in Finnish. My Finnish is not great, and as a reading

ambassador I should practice a little,” I say, holding up the book.

The boy shrugs again, mumbles “ok,” and returns to playing on his phone.

I start to read. One page, two pages; reading in Finnish requires my full attention, and when I look up after half a chapter, I see the boy has stopped playing. I keep reading the long, often convoluted sentences. After four pages I take a break, but he nods at me to continue. I do. I read for nearly an hour, until the door to the doctor’s office opens and the doctor calls the boy’s name. He collects his stuff and gets up to go. I close the book and say to him:

“Thank you for listening.” I am about to pack the book into the suitcase, when the boy asks:

“I thought you did pretty well. What did you say the name of the book was?”

Henrika Andersson, Potter fan and currently still an active Reading Ambassador

## What was done

**Henrika** It is very important to be able to assess which story suits which occasion – we were not short on options. I have a wonderful story about a boy who was playing games on his phone at an outpatient clinic. My native language is Swedish, and I was practising Harry Potter in Finnish. I then asked the boy if he would like me to read for him. He just shrugged his shoulders. I asked him if he could do me a favour anyway, as I had to practise reading in Finnish. I asked him if I could read a little Harry Potter for him. He unenthusiastically acquiesced. I began to read, and after ten minutes, I noticed that the boy had stopped gaming. He was listening. I must have read for almost an hour. When the doctor called the boy in, he gave me a thumbs-up and asked me what the book was, saying that he might read it himself.

It was always great to have an opportunity to meet with the same group more than once. Annantalo made this possible. I got to visit a special needs school five times.

**Henrika** Our bags were so full of books that we had to carry them with our backs hunched over. And there was never a parking spot near!

**Annina** We both accumulated a selection of books that we always carried with us. We could not just walk in with a single book, as we could never know for sure what we would encounter. And we had to give the children options to choose from.

**Henrika** One time, I went to a hospital with Astrid Lingdren’s wonderful book *Osa Lotta-kin ajaa* (‘Lotta’s Bike’), as suggested by Annina. I had no idea what the child I was going to read to was ill with, and it turned out that the child had no limbs. Luckily, I was also carrying a Barbpapa book.

**Henrika** It was always great to have an opportunity to meet with the same group more than once. Annantalo made this possible. I got to visit a special needs school five times. It is important at a special needs school in particular that you visit the same group several times. The first time, we did not even talk about books. Instead, we chatted in general about what the children were interested in and what they liked, and we did not move on to a book and literature until the second or third time. At the end, all the children read several books!

## The significance of cooperation and Reading Friend training

The Reading Ambassadors also trained volunteer Reading Friends. Working as a Reading Friend meant that the volunteer would read books for child and youth patients in hospital wards. Reading Friend training was provided as a collaboration between Patient Support Point OLKA of HUS (Helsinki University Hospital), Espoon Järjestöjen Yhteisö ry EJY (Espoo Community of Associations) and Annantalo.

**Annina** The cooperation was smooth in some areas but less than ideal in others. Building a good cooperation partnership is important, and having a good partner is required in these endeavours. Take OLKA for an example, the voluntary work organisation within HUS that we began training volunteer Reading Friends with. OLKA took care of responsibility and practical training, allowing us Ambassadors to focus on the contents, which was wonderful. Suddenly, the training programme had almost 100 participants. It was absolutely incredible. We even travelled to Vaasa and Oulu to train Reading Friends. Everything looked very promising: we ran large-scale training courses and were involved in designing the Children’s Hospital. Then HUS announced that they would cease the Reading Friend activities and switch to “play friends”. This ruined the whole idea, and we replied that this new scheme was not at all what we were about.

## Experiences with refugee families

**Henrika** A lot of asylum seekers arrived in Finland in 2015. Refugee families were provided with successful workshops, consisting of a total of six two-and-a-half-hour sessions that a child and an adult attended together. The workshops were packed to the gills, with around 60 children and adults participating. One time was a complete failure – failures are important to remember, too. We wanted to provide Somali families with a series of three fairytale sessions, but we were unsuccessful because we were not familiar with the customs of the community. Today, we would perhaps be a little wiser and act on better knowledge. But it is good to acknowledge that we took some risks. Sometimes we succeeded beyond all expectations, other times our attempts were total flops.

**Annina** One failure occurred when we attempted to visit reception centres. Everything was in chaos and the asylum seekers were scared – I remember feeling so dumb and like an intruder at the time, even though our intentions were good.

## Skills in cultural pedagogy and bilingualism

**Henrika** The Reading Ambassador programme has been one of the few collaborations in which language and a story can be presented effortlessly in several languages at the same time or side by side. That is very rare, even though we are currently living in a trilingual country.

**Nina** The idea of carrying out the Reading Ambassador activities in two languages was in the plans from the start. This is an important point, as there is a severe lack of such activities, especially today. By the way, we also utilised our Reading Ambassador course experiences when organising the first Reading Friend operations.

**Leila** It also involves continuity, meaning that the Reading Ambassador work is pioneer work that is then expanded into different forms...

**Nina** We need skills in cultural pedagogy. Applicability is perhaps one of the secrets and the strengths of our success; being able to apply concepts to see what kind of things this concept can be used for and how it can be developed and by what means.

**Annina** The Reading Ambassador programme was a success not only because literary art was part of the development programme, but particularly because it was near and dear to the producer, Liisa. In other words, taking something forward requires passion from the producer and the management.

## On experiences and the potential future

**Work guidance**

**Henrika** At times, all these encounters were very heavy, especially in the cancer ward, since we are not trained therapists. I remember just shaking one time when I came home. Annina and I could talk about these things, but of course, we could not talk with anyone else due to professional secrecy.

**Liisa** Would you have liked to talk with a professional about what you had to see and experience there?

**Henrika** Now that I think about it, that would have been good. Meaning that if we were to do this again the same way, then definitely.

**Taikalamppu 2012 project supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture**  
Also supported by WSOY Literature Foundation

**Visit locations**

- Different wards of the children’s clinic
- Outpatient clinics (e.g. the Eye Clinic and Plastic Surgery Outpatient Clinic and Cleft Palate and Craniofacial Center HUSUKE)
- Hospital schools (Sophie Mannerheim School, Ulfåsa, Svenska skolan för synskadade)
- The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare
- Kalliola, Toivola and Teinilä Youth Homes
- Uudenmaankatu Reception Centre
- Presentation at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair (2015)
- Pilotproject 4xL (lust, lek, läsning, och litteratur för gymnasieelever)



### Continuity

**Henrika** The school home experience was difficult for me. After all, it is important at a school home to gain the child's trust, but that would require you to come visit again and again and again. When this was not the case, it felt a little like I was letting these young people down. We should have thought about this beforehand, but we only realised it after the fact.

And another note on how important it is for something to continue long enough: I was at an eye clinic every other week for four hours in the morning. The doctors' feedback indicated that it was very good for their work as well, as the children were a lot calmer. When you are sitting in a waiting room, you tend to just nervously wait for what is to come. It was wonderful to notice that I had both calmed down the child and helped the doctor.

### Monitoring

**Henrika** What we did carelessly and what we should have done more of was monitoring work. It should have been carried out systematically right from the start. This can easily be forgotten in pioneer projects.

## Summa summarum until the present moment

**Henrika** Enthusiasm for reading – lighting a reading spark in young people – is extremely important. Games and other activities tend to take time away from reading, which is definitely gnawing away at young people's reading skills. And if you have no reading skills, you have no enthusiasm for reading either. Even many adults never think about how reading is related to linguistic development. People's reading skills just keep declining, and polarisation can now be seen more strongly in all things than perhaps in 2012 or 2016.

I would love to say that we have a wonderful and beautiful future ahead of us, but the reality is... Anyway, we must not give up, even though things have not developed as we would have liked. In other words, we should have Reading Ambassadors everywhere and at all times!

# Bravo! for Children's Theatre



The international Bravo! performing arts festival for young audiences began in 1996 as a training project intended to raise the quality and esteem of Finnish children's theatre and culminate in a festival. The Bravo! festival has been held every other year since 2000. In addition to high-quality performances, the festival programme features director visits, international collaborative projects, seminars and training events. The concept was created by the Finnish centre for ASSITEJ, the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People. Text Katariina Metsälampi



Children's theatre in Helsinki was going through difficult times in the late 1990s, as the economic recession meant cuts in the public support for culture. Cultural and trip funds allocated to schools and daycare centres – the customers of children's theatre – were eliminated almost completely. As such, children's and young people's theatre groups such as Pieni Suomi and Vihreä Omena, who were seeking new artistic avenues, were fighting for survival in the midst of financial troubles. Puppet theatre Sampo almost lost their theatre facility. The commissioner and producer of new performances in Helsinki, Helsinki Festival for Children, shrank and eventually died. The last Helsinki Festival for Children organised by the City of Helsinki Centre for Cultural Affairs was held in the spring of 1995. Children's theatre was in dire need for positive attention and increased esteem.

### The people and their roles in 2000–2006:

#### The founders of Bravo!

Marjaana Castrén, MTh, theatre manager, ASSITEJ chair 2000

Katariina Metsälampi, M.A., cultural secretary / City of Helsinki Centre for Cultural Affairs, ASSITEJ board member

Kirsi Herala, ASSITEJ secretary, finance and marketing officer for Bravo!

#### Cooperation partners interviewed

Hannele Krohn M.A, theatre intendant / City of Espoo  
Soile Rusanen, D.A., theatre pedagogy lecturer, Theatre Academy

#### Interviews

Katriina Metsälampi and Leila Heimonen



↑ Dance Theatre Hurjaruuth's *The Princess and the Pea* was one of the Finnish productions of the 2000 Bravo! festival.

### On the Bravo! project and the need for reform

In a time of economic hardship, audiences were provided with what would be the most likely to sell tickets among parents and teachers: fairytales, educational plays about friendship and vigour.

ASSITEJ Finland and event producers were concerned about the fact that Finnish theatres tended to provide children of the 1990s with conventional performances "like back in the day." They also wanted to influence people's general attitudes. Theatre for children was often only marginal, unlike in countries such as the other Nordic countries and Russia. International festivals showcased new forms, bold subjects and multidisciplinary performances.

It was concluded that reform would start from young theatre makers and education. As such, preparations for the Bravo! project began at the Theatre Academy, the doors to which were opened thanks to the Capital of Culture project. The objective of the entire Bravo! project was to bring new trends and operators to the Finnish theatre field and create an international cooperation network.

The Bravo! festival project began in 1996 as the Foundation of the Helsinki City of Culture invited operators in the field of culture and arts to propose programme features. Katariina Metsälampi, who had led the Helsinki Festival for Children in the previous years and was also a board member of ASSITEJ Finland, began brainstorming with theatre director Marjaana Castrén and producer Kirsi Herala to create an international children's theatre development project that would culminate in a festival and

have cooperation theatres from other Capital of Culture countries. One of the programme managers of the Foundation of the Helsinki City of Culture was Jouko Astor, who was very encouraging as a former children's theatre festival manager.

Bravo! was added to the programme of Helsinki's Capital of Culture year early on. The main idea was to arouse interest in and appreciation for theatre for children and young people among young theatre operators, and to open the Helsinki metropolitan area for international children's theatre. ASSITEJ played an invaluable role as a facilitator of connections. All the foreign theatres to take part were found through local ASSITEJ centres.

Since 1997, the Foundation of the Helsinki City of Culture's support was utilised to encourage performance art students and fresh graduates to get involved in theatre for children and young people by offering interesting courses at the Theatre Academy, grants for international children's theatre festivals and work assignments at children's theatres operating in the Helsinki metropolitan area. Children's theatre reformists Ellika Lindén, Marjaana Castrén and Susanne Osten began to educate Theatre Academy students in children's theatre.

The education and performance project of Helsinki involved the following children's and young people's theatres of the time: OOP!, Teatteri Pieni Suomi, Teatteri Hevoskenkä, Nukketeatteri Vihreä Omena, Nukketeatteri Sampo and Dance Theatre Hurjaruuth, all of which recruited young theatre students for their upcoming festival performances. Pedagogy students of the Theatre Academy also prepared their own production entitled *Kani Koipeliinin kuperkeikat* ('Bunny Koipeliini's Somersaults').



## The Bravo! project – future theatre operators must be educated to understand the value and attractiveness of theatre for children and young people

### Interview with Marjaana Castrén

I was working for quite a few theatres in the 80s and 90s, and I realised that many operators were not particularly happy about “having to do something for little kids.” The background situation was such that Pieni Suomi had been born from a forced marriage between Intimiteatteri for adults and for children Penniteatteri – in other words, for financial reasons. Many an actor’s opinion was along the lines of “we’re something completely different, we’ve been making real art and now we’re supposed to get dressed in some furry costumes.” Their attitude was negative, which affected rehearsals.

We had many discussions about this at ASSITEJ and concluded that a change in attitudes would have to start from young people. Our hope was that in the future, actors’ attitude at theatres would be that creating art for children was great and something that they wanted to do.

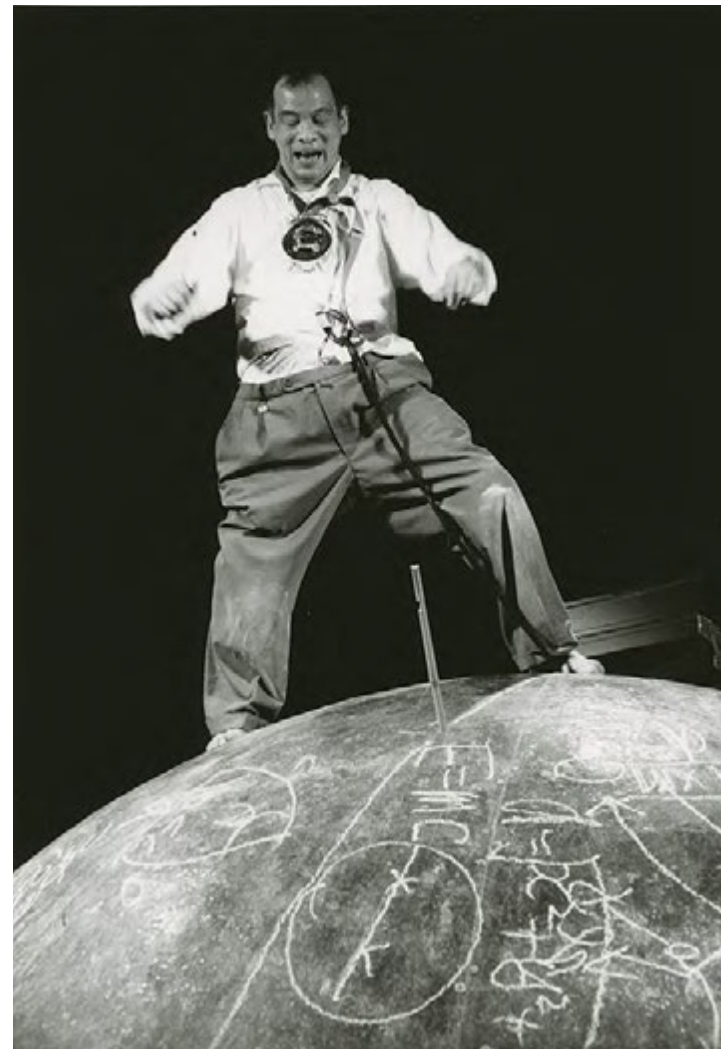
### On children’s theatre 101

In the 1990s, I was a planner at the Theatre Academy’s continuing training centre. When I told rector *Kari Rentola* and acting professor *Kari Väänänen* about the Bravo! idea, they were very enthusiastic about it, as was the head of the Foundation of the Capital of Culture Foundation, *Georg Dolivo*.

The first course in children’s theatre at the Theatre Academy started in the autumn of 1997, taught by the Swedish actress, director and reformist of Swedish children’s theatre *Ellika Lindén*. The starting point for the training was that making children’s theatre does not require any special techniques, but the performers and creators must know their specific audience and enjoy themselves with the audience. As such, the children’s theatre courses began with familiarisation with children – two or three weeks as a storyteller at a daycare centre will remind a young adult what children are like. At times, the acting students had their hands more than full with their future audience members. The end result of the course would be a performance for the children of the daycare centres involved and later for the general public.

We knew that we were creating a gem back then, but we could not foresee how far it would take us.

Marjaana Castrén



↑ Théâtre de L'E.V.N.I.:  
*Tai Yo*, Bravo! festival 2000.

On the course, *Ellika Lindén* adapted the old Native American folk tale ‘The Shadow’ into a 35-minute performance in 1998. The five students involved in the project visited daycare centres and schools in advance to “get a feel for their future audience.” The students were ill-equipped to handle the situation, so the visit was a mess. Third-year student *Panu Vauhkonen* was one of the participants, and he told me the following: “When performing for children, the keyword is calmness. You have to be fully invested at all times, but you also have to place a special emphasis on nuances. For example, when you’re acting angry, you have to carefully consider how angry you can be so as to not frighten the children too much. And if a kid gets scared and starts to cry, you have to think on your feet and come up with a way to restore the feeling of safety, or the situation will get out of hand.”

*Lindén*’s method of working yielded such good results that she instructed a total of three courses at the Theatre Academy before the first Bravo! festival. In addition to basic training, the students carried out internships at theatres such as Teatteri Pieni Suomi.

Then, the three-year education project turned into a festival in Helsinki’s Capital of Culture year, 2000. This meant that the education programme actually *led to something*. And further and further. When you think about the fact that we spent three years on groundwork and training, a huge number of the theatre people were exposed to this way of thinking. And the students received contacts, so this also had an effect on their employment further down the line.

The children’s theatre education programme currently continues at the Theatre Academy in different forms, so I am very happy about what we set into motion!”

## 2000: the first Bravo! festival

The first Bravo! festival featured acts from both Finland and abroad. All the Finnish performances were new and involved Theatre Academy students or freshly graduated professionals. Performances from other Capitals of Culture were also invited to the festival.

Each Capital of Culture country's national ASSITEJ centre or a member theatre appointed by it served as cooperation partner.

The foreign performances selected followed the Bravo! ideology: they were primarily created by young talents. The eight Finnish performances all featured young actors. During the festival, the performances toured the cultural centres of the Helsinki metropolitan area. Almost 50 Bravo! performances were held over the course of the week, and the foreign guests were given performance opportunities in other parts of Finland where possible.

Finnish students served as the foreign performances' sponsors in the final discussions, and they also opened the foreign-language performances for Finnish audiences.

The foreign groups had Finnish host theatres with whom they had professional discussions and formed friendships. Of the Capitals of Culture, Avignon, Reykjavik and Prague invited Finnish performances to their respective turfs. The most invited acts were the wordless performances *Prinsessa ja herne* ('The Princess and the Pea') by Dance Theatre Hurjaruuth and *Lumikuningatar* ('The Snow Queen') by Nukketeatteri Vihreä Omena.

The festival was also attended by a large number of international guests, who discussed the performances they saw with the groups. The international feedback panel was led by critic *Kirsikka Moring* and director *Bernt Höglund* from Sweden. The audience's opinions were also heard during the discussions. Additionally, a discussion and critique platform was opened for young viewers online – in other words, post-performance discussions with the child audience and various workshops have been part of the Bravo! festival since the very beginning.

The Bravo! project was awarded ASSITEJ International's special commendation as an Assitej World Project.

16 performances from Capitals of Culture, 47 shows, nearly 7,000 viewers

### Capitals of Culture 2000

Avignon, Bergen, Bologna, Brussels, Helsinki, Krakow, Prague, Reykjavik, Santiago de Compostela

### Cooperation partners

Foundation of the Helsinki City of Culture, the cultural centres of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, Teatteri Pieni Suomi, Teatteri Hevosenkenkä, OOP!, Nukketeatteri Vihreä Omena, Unga Teatern, Dance Theatre Hurjaruuth,

different departments of the Theatre Academy, the ASSITEJ centres of Italy, Spain, Poland, Iceland, Belgium, France, the Czech Republic and Norway, the culture divisions of Tuusula and Loimaa, ASSITEJ International

### Special features

International feedback programme for every performance and 13 international guests

→ La Baracca: *L'Elefantino*, Bravo! festival 2000.







## The significance of Helsinki's Capital of Culture year

The first Bravo! festival would not have been realised had it not been for Helsinki's year as a Capital of Culture. Elements were in place, but we received financing for the education project and were able to inspire the children's theatres of the Helsinki metropolitan area. The joint project gave all the theatres more vitality.

The Finnish ASSITEJ centre applied for a grant from the state and the Finnish Cultural Foundation for realising the Bravo! festival in 2002, and the culture divisions of the Helsinki metropolitan area committed to funding the festival if no other sources of support could be found. Due to the precarious funding situation, the 2002 festival programme featured no Finnish performances, as Finnish theatre operators only served as hosts and guides for foreign guests. Just before the festival started, it was announced that basic funding would be allocated from Helsinki's Capital of Culture year money for projects such as the Bravo! festival until 2006. The Finnish Cultural Foundation also granted a significant sum for the expenses of the 2002 festival. This sparked the decision to establish a new festival called *Hurraa!* to serve as Bravo!'s sister and support *Finnish* production. The festival has been held in alternate years with Bravo!

↖ Markeline: *Around the World in 80 Boxes*, Bravo! festival 2000.

→ Laurent Dupont: *Archipel – Saarella*. The first baby theatre performance at the 2002 Bravo! festival.

## Bravo! after Helsinki's Capital of Culture year

After Helsinki's Capital of Culture year, the festival's cooperation partners, the culture divisions of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, wanted unanimously to continue their cooperation. The international guests' performances and the new trends brought about by the education programme inspired both creators and producers. It was concluded at the planning meeting for the next Bravo! that the organisers wanted to import theatre for children and young people that could not be found in Finland from abroad. Productions that would take Finnish theatre for children and young people forward – "theatre that would not only be fun and produced in an interesting way, but also profound and in-depth." (Minutes from Bravo! meeting on 6 August 2001)

## 2002 Bravo! – audience work as part of the festival, baby theatre introduced in Finland

Six foreign performances were invited to the Bravo! festival held in March 2002. The grounds for their selection were as follows: "We will bring in wordless performances that represent different forms of narration and are intended for children. Wordless theatre overcomes language barriers and its methods are very rich. The performances selected for the festival are the groups' own productions for today's children – not a single dramatisation of a classic book is featured." (Press release 5 March 2002)

The workshops related to the performances were added to the Bravo! programme as per the producers' request. The festival already featured post-performance discussions with children in 2000. The children were told where the performers were from, what their home country was like and what it was like to perform



there and in Finland. The idea was that instead of just offering a performance, we would also provide a deeper experience with the foreign guest.

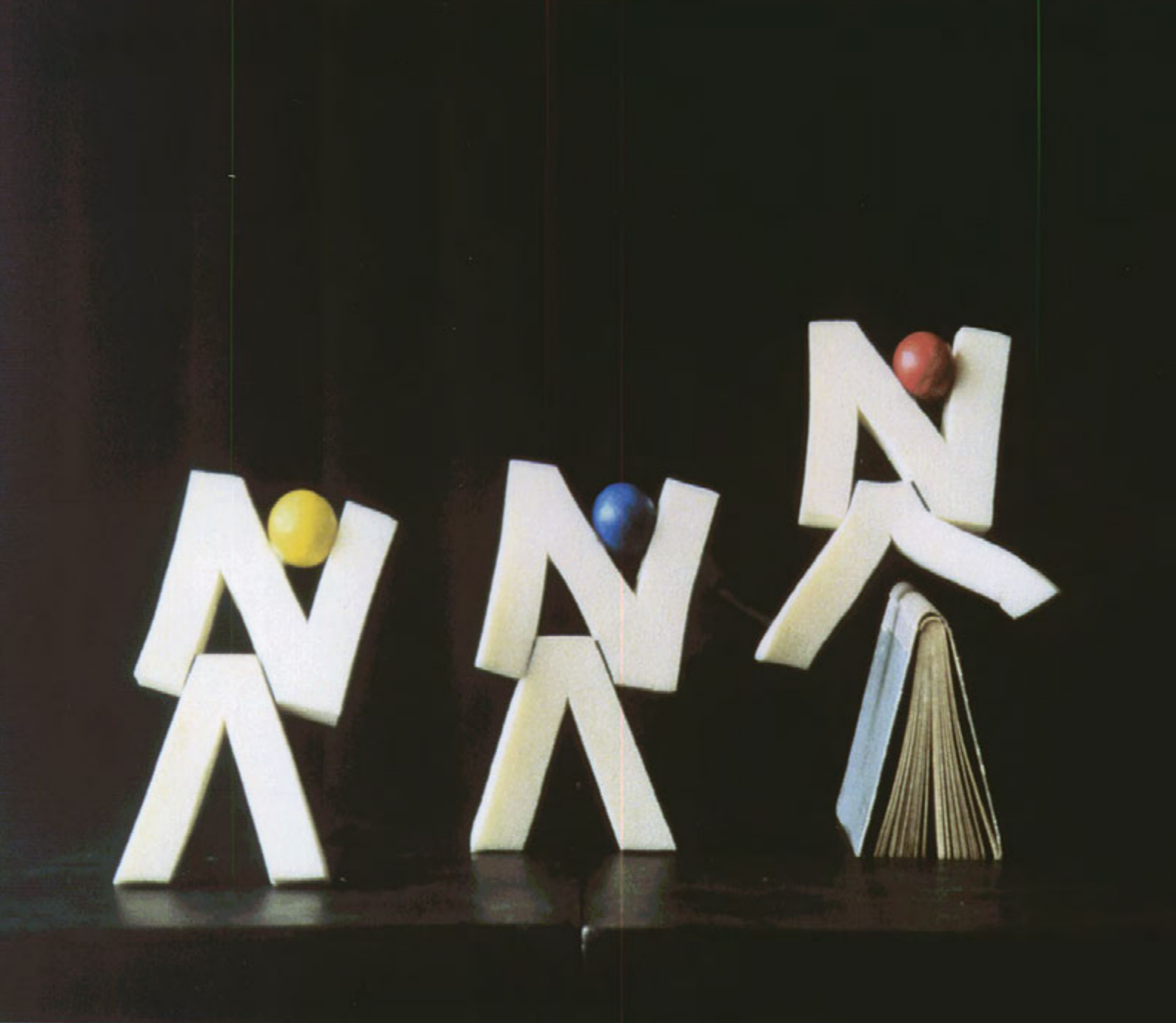
At the 2002 festival, the visiting groups held workshops for schoolchildren, theatre enthusiasts and families. Working around the themes of the performance with children was new to the international groups. For example, the Danish group Comedievognen and the Spanish group Markeline experienced this for the first time in Finland. Both theatres were inspired by the experience and began to implement audience work in their own operations.

The 2002 Bravo! festival also brought baby theatre to Finland. The audience was thoroughly impressed by the performances entitled *Saarella* ('Archipel / On an Island') and *Veden laulu* ('Song of the Water') by the French *Laurent Dupont*, who specialises in theatre for infants. Dupont also held a workshop for theatre people, as well as a lecture on theatre for babies and toddlers at the Theatre Academy.

6 performances from Denmark, France, the Czech Republic and Spain, 43 shows, around 5,300 viewers

**Special features**  
Audience work programme, workshops at schools and for families, as well as Loiste award winners

**Cooperation partners**  
ASSITEJ, the cultural centres of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, Hanaholmen, the culture division of Tuusula, Unga Teatern, HKT. SKR, Loiste event



## The 2004 Bravo! brought children's own animal stories to the stage

**A**t the 2004 Bravo! festival, we the organisers wanted to combine the best experiences from the previous festivals: 1) cooperation with other ASSITEJ centres, 2) inspiring the students of the Theatre Academy, and 3) the participation of our own audience.

In 2003, we launched our planned animal project in which children in different countries would tell animal stories through means of art. The children would produce materials that Laurent Dupont would adapt into a performance for young actors and actresses and theatre students.



← Jordi Bertrán: *Pieniä seikkailuja*, Bravo! festival 2004.

↑ Valtteri, 6.

The texts and stories serving as the basis for the piece were heard and collected at animal-themed art workshops held for children. Seven countries were involved. The festival also featured animal-themed performances from India and Nicaragua, inspired by the children.

### On four legs – the Bravo! project culminates

The idea for the animal project came about when Laurent Dupont and I were discussing the possibility of carrying out a joint project over a cup of coffee at the Gare de Lyon, Paris in the autumn of 2002. We talked about how animal symbolism intended for children consisted of plastic ducks and clumsy animals from picture books. What attracts children to animals, why do parents give children animal books, teddy bears, bunnies, tell stories and make movies in which animal characters act like people? What is the meaning of an animal to a child? We decided that we would examine young children's notions of animals and use that as the basis for preparing a performance for the Bravo! festival.

The background idea for the Bravo! project was to get young operators interested in children's theatre. The Theatre Academy played a key role in this. The Finnish portion of the animal project was carried out with Theatre Academy students and the Annantalo Arts Centre. In January 2004, six-year-old Helsinki residents drew, painted, acted, danced and told their own animal stories at workshops, monitored by actors. The children's pictures and stories were documented and used as the basis for working on a performance entitled *Koira vieköön!* ('Doggone It!') with Laurent Dupont leading the project. In addition to the students, the play featured young professional actors.



20  
02

#### Autumn in Paris.

Annantalo producer Katariina Metsälampi and director Laurent Dupont come up with an idea at the Gare de Lyon rail yard café.



20  
03

#### October–November

At the Theatre Academy: meetings and planning, director, future actors and producer

#### November 2003 – January 2004

Young children across the globe – in Lithuania, Italy, Nicaragua, Zambia – paint, dance and tell their own animal-themed stories to theatre operators.

20  
04

“I had a white dog but he died.” (Ville, 6)



Children talk about their pets: a dog, a cat, a hamster... The word ‘dog’ (*koira* in Finnish) was also featured in the name of the performance: *Koira vieköö!* Doggone it.

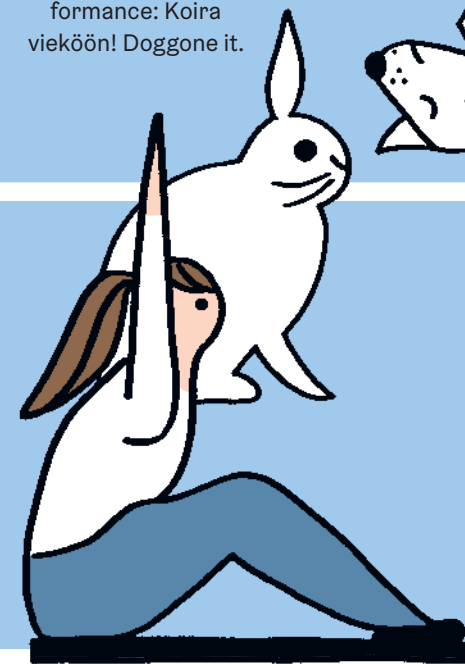
19th–23rd at Annantalo. Preschool children work at various art workshops for a week, the themes including their own animals, ceramics, graphics, visual arts, theatre, dance...

#### January–February at the Theatre Academy.

The crew is rehearsing the performance and Aki Suzuki holds butoh workshops for establishing animal characters: frogs, a moose, a rabbit, an ant, a grasshopper.

#### March 2004 Bravo! festival.

14 March Premiere of the *Koira vieköö!* production. A round stage featuring the students’ tortoise, rabbit, moose, with projections of children’s animal drawings in the background



In the lobby of the National Opera. Exhibition *Meidän eläimet* compiled from children’s animal pictures from different countries. An Indian peacock story is danced at the opening of the exhibition on 15 March 2004.

Exhibition at Annantalo on 17 March

18 March. *Rakkaat eläimet* seminar. Pedagogue and children’s theatre researcher Mafra Gagliardi speaks about children’s relationship with animals at an expert seminar at Annantalo.

## Animal project at the Theatre Academy

### Interview with Soile Rusanen

‘T’he pedagogy department of the Theatre Academy was interested in the project. The students’ work began when they attended workshops at Annantalo, establishing a connection with children and forming an understanding of what children actually think and see, what kind of stories they come up with at workshops. They involved image-based activities and theatre, as well as motion.

I was personally involved as a group member from start to finish, at workshops and rehearsals and finally in the actual performance.

The fact that the production was intended for a very young audience – three-year-olds – was new to all of us. I remember conversations along the lines of: “What? Help! They’re so young! They can’t concentrate on things for a very long time!”

### On workshop work

It was an interesting project, as Dupont’s method of working was vastly different from the typical way a theatre director works. On the other hand, he clearly had some things that he had already made his mind up on, at least to a degree. But in the actual work, he was very interactive. After all, the performance featured few words, with motion and sound serving as the basic elements. On the motion side, in the process of establishing the movements of the animals, he was receptive to ideas as to what should be done and how. But when it came to sound, he was very specific and determined. He was clearly aiming for a high level of quality in it. In the performance, all sounds came from the actors and

actresses, from either their voices or their bodies. And the rhythmic aspect of the audio material was very important to Dupont, e.g. the salience of consonants. We usually practice vowels and tend to overlook firm consonants a little. But with Dupont pursuing rhythmicity, proper consonants were needed.

Next, we began establishing animal movements. Butoh dancer *Aki Suzuki* taught us in the morning for a couple of weeks.

Suzuki's idea regarding motion was that instead of looking at the animal from the outside, you would find the movement inside your own body. We had two groups in which everyone did frog and bird exercises. But everyone also had one designated animal that they had to establish through feel. A tortoise, for example. What its head is like, how its head sways a little from side to side as if separate from the body, and the shell and its weight all the time, how it affects the tortoise's movement. Then what its legs are like, and it has a little tail, too. We would establish the movement like this instead of, say, flapping our arms a little like birds. The exercises with Suzuki were very powerful.

Aki Suzuki also held a couple of animal butoh dance sessions for Annantalo's 5x2 teachers, as well as workshops for a couple of child groups.

**On the Koira viekään! Performance doggone it!**

The *Koira viekään!* performance had an interesting set design. It was a circle in the middle of the stage that lights were shone on and that people entered from different directions. As the basis for the performance, Dupont picked materials from the children's workshops at Annantalo. To tie the whole thing together, he used elements from the fables of Aesop, such as his tale of a tortoise and a rabbit. The sound-

scape of the performance featured recordings of children's voices, and animal pictures drawn and painted by children were projected onto the background.

Before the performances, I had my suspicions regarding whether the children would have enough of an attention span – after all, the piece was rather long at 40 minutes. But it was immediately clear that they had no difficulties. The toddlers were very happy to watch and were clearly immersed in the story. I no longer have any doubts about children of that age being able to take in theatre performances. And even younger than that.

Actors, directors and dramaturges have traditionally belonged together, but the department of pedagogy has often been excluded somewhat. It is seen more as drama pedagogy than pedagogy *in a performance*. In this project, we worked together. The students and graduates involved will then take these ideas with them when they set off to carry out their own work, for children."

7 performances from France, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Nicaragua, India, Belgium/Switzerland and Spain + audience events, 33 shows, around 6,000 viewers

**Cooperation partners**  
The Theatre Academy, OOP!, the cultural centres of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, the culture division of Tuusula, the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation, the French Cul-

tural Centre, the ASSITEJ centres of Lithuania, Zimbabwe, India, Zambia, Nicaragua and Italy

**Special features**  
Animal-themed exhibitions from 7 countries touring during the festival, the *Rakkaat eläimet* ('Beloved Animals') seminar, a study on the aforementioned children's animal stories by children's theatre researcher and pedagogue Mafra Gagliardi

**The 2006 edition of Bravo! continues searching for new forms and bringing world theatre to Finland**

The 2006 festival opened on three continents and brought spoken theatre for children and young people into the picture.

The festival featured performances by theatres that were collaborating with Finnish theatre operators. For example, training courses and performances had been organised in Namibia by Finns. From there, we invited *Satu Paavola* to mentor *Richard Swartz* to perform his own solo piece *My Life*, which is about the life of a street child. The English-language performance had a powerful impact on Finnish schoolchildren.

Finnish theatre operators have joined European networks that develop cultural offerings for infants and toddlers. The first baby theatre performances took place at the 2002 Bravo! festival (Laurent Dupont). Two other pioneers of the field from Europe were invited to the 2006 edition: the French Balabik group and the Belgian Théâtre de la Guimbarde, who attracted babies and their parents in the Helsinki metropolitan area to their performances in droves.

The funding of the Bravo! festival with money transferred from the Foundation of the Helsinki City of Culture ended with the 2006 edition. After that, a new production model was created for the festival. The new model involved ASSITEJ assuming responsibility for producing Bravo! and the cities' cultural centres committing to purchasing performances that ASSITEJ brought to the festival.



8 performances from Argentina, Zambia, Cameroon, Sweden, Belgium and Slovenia, 57 shows, 8,000 viewers

**Cooperation partners**  
The cultural centres of Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa, Tuusula, the ASSITEJ centre of Estonia and a Swiss theatre participated in the visit of Théâtre du Chocolat.

**Special features**  
Performances from outside Europe, a cooperation project with ASSITEJ Zambia, touring cooperation with Switzerland, Cameroon and Estonia.

↑ Theatre du Chocolat: *Abok*, Bravo! festival 2006.



## On the significance of Bravo!

**B**ravo!'s international reputation has been good and it has enabled us to network. Since 2008, Annantalo has been an active member of the international Small Size Network, with emphasis on performing arts for children under school age.

For a long time, Bravo! was one of few festivals intended expressly for *children*. Europe in particular has plenty of festivals that are made for purchasers and attended by producers who come to see and select performances, resulting in the same acts going around from festival to festival. Children are often sidelined in them. Theatre is then brought to schools, etc., but the purpose of the festivals is to market performances. With us, the international festival is held for local children and young people.

The enthusiastic child audiences, artist meetings and discussions are the main attraction of Bravo!, bringing in significant groups to perform despite the Finnish fee level being unable to compete with that of major international festivals.

The enthusiastic child audiences, artist meetings and discussions are the main attraction of Bravo!

## Municipalities as cooperation partners

### Interview with Hannele Krohn

**I**do not think that the Bravo! festival could have been established without the collaborative operations started in the early 1980s between Helsinki, Espoo and Vantaa based on shared values and a shared view on the significance and possibilities of children's culture, as well as a good conversation atmosphere that had formed between the operators over the years. Of course, the involvement of the municipalities also brought financial and personnel resources to the table, without which a festival of this size would have been financially impossible.

For me personally, the cooperation began with the culture division of the City of Vantaa, as Cultural Secretary *Annukka Stenius* proposed that we could arrange a children's theatre tour together at playgrounds in the summer of 1980, based on offers received. The following years, we organised a young people's theatre week with Vantaa, Helsinki and Espoo, as well as Theatre Centre and ASSITEJ. In addition to Finnish performances, the programme featured foreign guests. The same operators – more or less – also served as producers of the Moving in November dance event, which was not related to children's theatre but was important in terms of deepening cooperation between the different parties and formed a basis for cooperation in the organisation of Bravo! and later the Hurraa! festival.

Instead of merely paying for performances, the Cities' culture divisions were involved in the selection process. When I began working for the municipality in 1979, it was rare for municipal workers to travel abroad

to see performances. Attitudes were changing, however, and festival producers could travel to festivals to see performances. It was important to bring some new children's theatre to Finland.

Historically speaking, Finnish theatre has been very text-oriented. The visualisation of the performances used to consist of depictions of time and place. Children's theatre in Finland in the 1990s continued to be most commonly based on children's literature. The general public also had a very conventional notion of children's theatre.

The Bravo! festival featured theatre that operated on a different dramaturgic principle. The dramaturgy of the performances could resemble a movie, theatre was made for toddlers and having children involved in the performances was not based merely on questions for the audience asked from the "stage," but on creating a shared world. The performances could be designed for a room or for arenas. The festival featured performances from across the globe, from different traditions. As such, the performances opened up the world and people's worldview.

Foreign children's performances were rare. The funds allocated to Bravo! could be used to purchase plenty of performances, which were also sold to day-care centres and schools. It boggles the mind to think about how many different performances came from so many different countries. What was important to us all in producing the Bravo! festival was excitement for something new, wonderment and the quality of the performances.

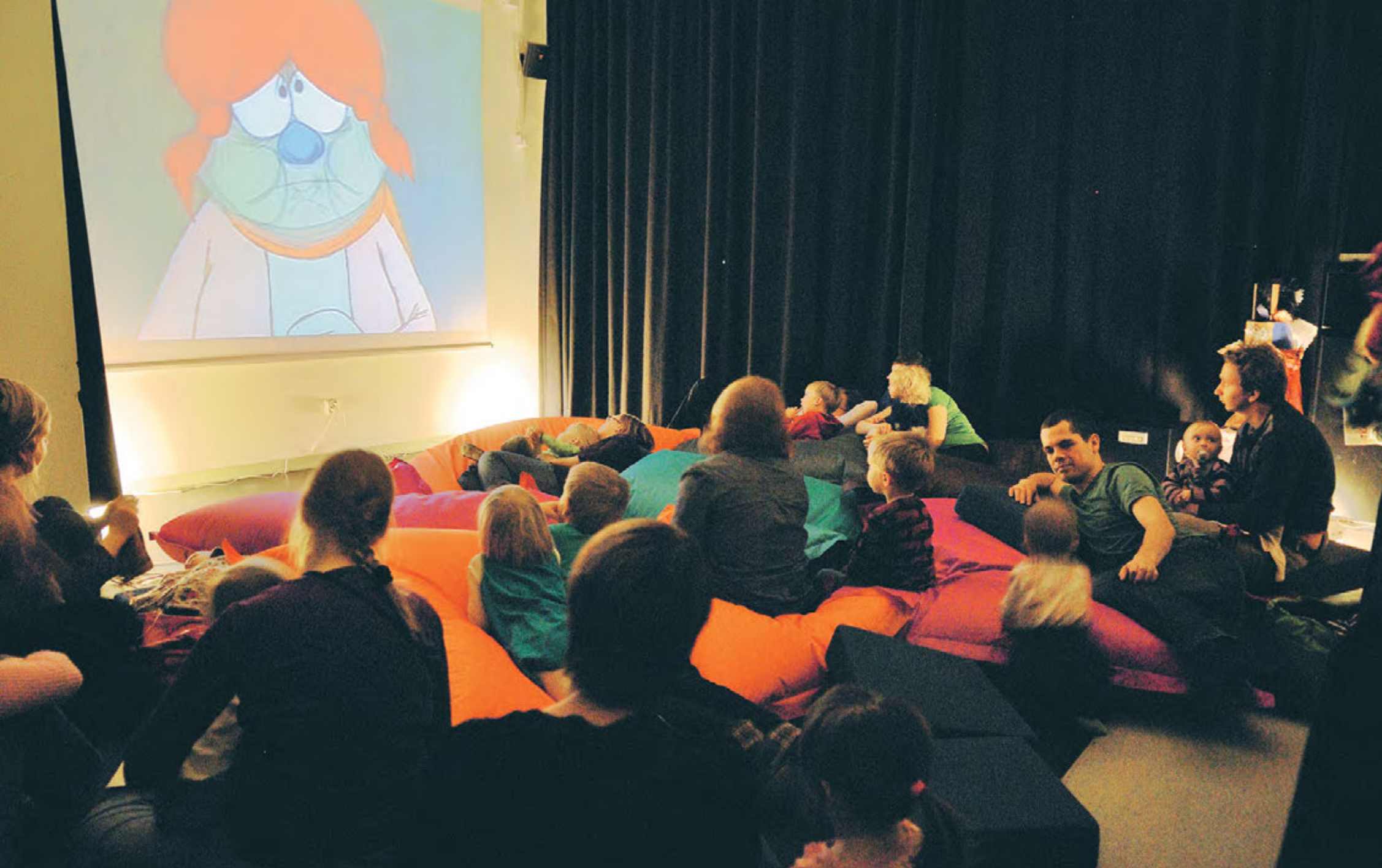
Back in the 1990s, producing international performances was a complicated process. There were no computers and internet connections. I remember how international work changed in a matter of just a few

years. Before, you would wait for agreements and photos to arrive by post. Then came the fax machine, but those things also disappeared soon after. Internet connections made interaction between festival operators both faster and easier. For producers, these things – along with transports, agreements, marketing, etc. – were a big deal that required good cooperation.

ASSITEJ has been very important to Finnish children's theatre. It is easy to forget what producing international children's theatre here means to Finnish artists as well; it broadens people's understanding of what children's theatre CAN be."

Foreign visiting performances open a broad view on the different aspirations and, in particular, means of expression of children's theatre. The performances share an uncompromising artistic starting point and implementation. For a week, children in Helsinki are provided with such astoundingly high-quality theatre that only very rarely are such offerings available in Finland.

Theatre critic Kirsikka Moring, *Pahaa sutta ken pelkäisi*, Helsingin Sanomat 28 March 2000



# Baby Kino Cinema experiences for the youngest members of the family

Operating from 2009 to 2015 as a cinema for the youngest of children, Baby Kino screened Finnish and foreign short animations that visitors could pop in to watch for a moment at their own convenience. The intimate and comfortable venue featured facilities in which parents could change nappies, feed or breastfeed their children or, say, take a short nap between films. Text Kikka Hahtomaa



**P**robably due to my previous experience with and interest in cinema, I was requested in early 2009 to plan cinema activities for young children at Annantalo.

At the time, project producer Anna von Bagh served as my working partner. We decided to design a series that consists of a two-hour set of short films showed once a week every spring and autumn. Every two-hour set would have its own theme taken from the habitat of young children: friends, family, animals, nature, the seasons, affection, etc. The films to be screened would be selected to represent different animation styles and would be silent for the most part with only music in the background. Thus, the films would be accessible to infants and children who do not speak yet, as well as children from different language regions.

#### Target group

Stay-at-home parents, family daycare providers and other adults with kids aged 0–3. Older sisters and brothers are also welcome.

#### The themes of Baby Kino

1. Friendship
2. Creativity, art and music
3. The city and machines
4. Animals
5. Nature and the seasons
6. Affection, love, illness and care
7. Adventures, trips and journeys
8. Inventiveness, persistence, courage and cooperation
9. Play, games, activities and professions
10. Household chores and food



Films that suit the themes were chosen primarily from the selection of the Suomen elokuvakontakti association. A few films were picked from the selections of YLE Finnish broadcasting company for a one-off fee. Anna watched hundreds of short films in her search for high-quality children's films to suit each theme.

The chosen films were burnt on multi-film DVDs. This enabled us to skip the time-consuming phase of ordering every film on a separate DVD to Annantalo and loading them on a computer before every screening. Moreover, we would have also had to return the DVDs.

The screening rights for some films, which were originally included in the series, ended in 2013. Thus, we had to replace those films with other short films that fit the themes of the series.

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Anna watched hundreds of short films in her search for high-quality children's films to suit each theme.

#### The facilities of Baby Kino

Our objective was to organise an event with as low a threshold as possible and easy accessibility. Admission to the screenings was free and required no registration in advance. Because leaving home with young children at a specific time can sometimes be challenging, Baby Kino was designed to be a place where people can pop in and leave at any time during the two-hour period. The durations of the films ranged from two to thirteen minutes. People could choose to watch just a few films or even all of them.

The Annantalo studio was perfect for Baby Kino, as it is easy to access and people can have breaks in the café beside. Toilets are always near, too.

Instead of chairs, Baby Kino had colourful Fatboy beanbags and pillows as seats. Since entering a dark movie theatre can itself be a new and scary experience to many a baby, the facility had several light points.

The hostess of Baby Kino played an important role in the success of the event. She took care of the screening technology, prepared the facility for screenings, received parents with their children and, if necessary, provided advice and guidance to parents and children and answered their questions. The first Baby Kino hostess was *Anna von Bagh*, succeeded by *Emmi Huhtaniemi*. From the start, the duties of the hostess included writing a report at the end of each season.

The most common attendees of Baby Kino are Finnish-speaking mothers and their children. Stay-at-home

fathers, family daycare providers and grandparents have also found the event delightfully well. Entire families have often attended as well. Baby Kino has also attracted plenty of Swedish-speaking visitors, as well as people from different countries, such as Germany and the US. Baby Kino has largely been marketed through word of mouth, and people and organisations have also promoted it independently.

The majority of attendees stay from half an hour to an hour. There have been plenty of new attendees each time, but over the course of the autumn, Baby Kino also accumulated loyal attendees who showed up every time. In the autumn, Baby Kino had a total of around 674 attendees.

At times, the event was so popular that attendees had to sit very close to one another for a time. However, no one has complained. The atmosphere has often been at its best with the studio packed to the gills with attendees.

From Anna von Bagh's report in the autumn of 2009

A few attendees are always there waiting for Baby Kino to start, and according to the building managers, some people had come to them in the early autumn to inquire when the screenings would begin again. The majority of attendees are first-timers, having most commonly heard of Baby Kino from an acquaintance or found the information online when searching for entertainment for young children.

The visitor numbers were steadily high (around 80–90 people per screening), with the exception of a strike day that resulted in only a dozen or so people showing up. Based on brief talks, almost all attendees use some kind of transportation to arrive at Annantalo, with very few people living within walking distance.

There are always a few Swedish and Russian-speaking attendees, but this season, the screenings were also attended by several Spanish-speaking people. I have heard that information about Baby Kino and other easy-to-approach programming for people of different languages is spreading through Facebook groups that are actively established by different language groups.

The significance of arranging the facility has become very apparent over several seasons. For many young children, the environment itself is exciting even without animations – almost every

time, one of the little ones shows more interest in the light next to the screen than the programme itself. When one child goes to examine the lamp, another one is bound to follow. With regard to this, a couple of attendees applauded the arrangement: the sofas, the pillows and the dim lighting are home-like and such an environment is rarely found in public facilities. Some find the dimness exciting, but it also calms children down to watch the screen.

It continues to catch my attention how young children do everything through mimicry. When one child laughs, others join in. When one is restless, it can be contagious. This also reveals guardians' different standards: some react to their child's yelping with immediate hushing, while others encourage their child to immerse themselves. – – I try to observe the situation from the perspective of adults as well, and there is usually a shared unspoken understanding of what is normal activity and what constitutes a disturbance.

Feedback from first-timers was similar to that in previous seasons: children's programmes in general have become more hectic, and Baby Kino provides a calm and thought-out alternative.

From Emmi Huhtaniemi's report in the autumn of 2015

## Cooperation partners and agreements

Even though the film sets were curated by Annantalo, they were transferred to Suomen elokuvakontakti for a fee and made available to others for renting. At the same time, the series became a national programme. Screening agreements were always made for one season at a time with Suomen elokuvakontakti. Other cooperation partners included Ateneum Art Museum (workshops, see below) and Töölö Library (an art education booklet built around Baby Kino). The cooperation partners were involved of their own will and did not charge a fee for their services.

## Baby Kino's "child-free" workshops for parents and art education materials

Every Baby Kino season involved two-session *Tutkimusmatkalla* ('On an Expedition') workshops for the parents of young children in cooperation with Ateneum Art Museum. The workshops were attended by adults, without children. They were given practical tips for talking about art with young children and making art together at home. Two workshops were held per year, in the spring and in the autumn. They were led by art pedagogue *Anne Rossi-Horto* at Annantalo and museum lecturer *Erica Othman* at Ateneum.

The *Tutkimusmatkalla* booklet, intended for parents as a companion to Baby Kino, was distributed to selected parents and at every workshop. The book features art education assignments, discussion topics and book tips in accordance with the themes of the series. The assignments based on works of art in the basic collection of Ateneum were designed by visual art pedagogue Anne Rossi-Horto from Annantalo. Töölö Library gave us tips for book and music selections.

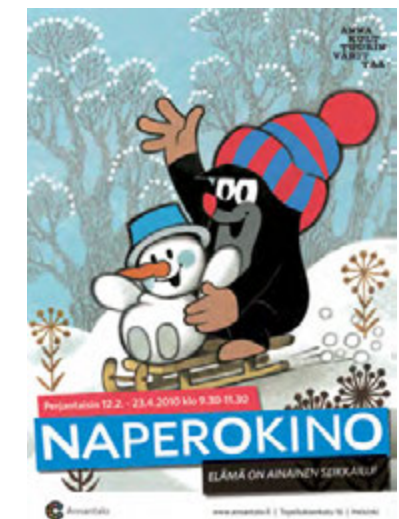
## Popularity and feedback

Baby Kino was immensely popular from the start. It accumulated a weekly audience of more than 100 people on several occasions. The series has worked well as part of the low-threshold baby culture boom in Helsinki. Judging from the visitor numbers and feedback, there was a high level of demand for such an event.

## The producer's work

As a producer at Annantalo, I take care of cooperation agreements, screening right fees, information provision, hall reservations, hiring a Baby Kino hostess, etc. Working as the executive producer of Baby Kino has been one of my most enjoyable duties at Annantalo. Having occasionally observed the activities and immersion of young children in the magical world of cinema in the safe dim lighting of Studio Anna, I have seen first-hand that my work is significant.

*Life is a never-ending adventure!*  
(the motto of Baby Kino)





# Historical City Tours

## Serious play in times past

Interviews by  
Liisa Paatsalo and  
Leila Heimonen



### The Historical City Tours working group

**Anna Finnilä**, Helsinki City Museum. Anna had just started working at Helsinki City Museum as a educational curator in 1994 when Annantalo proposed the Historical City Tours. “The historical tours then inspired me to utilise drama in the museum’s audience work.”

**Annemari Untamala**, D.A., theatre lecturer, Kallio Upper Secondary School. Annemari graduated from the Theatre Academy in Christmas 1995, having examined the Historical City Tours of spring 1995 in her thesis.

**Marja-Liisa Tuomi**, educational curator, Helsinki City Museum, involved in planning tour routes in 1994–1995.

**Anne Sandström**, Swedish-language city tour guide, operational manager at DOT ry, rector at Teaterskolan DOT.

**Nina Gran**, special planning officer, City of Helsinki Centre for Cultural Affairs. Involved in the planning of tours since 2004.

**Liisa Paatsalo**, executive producer of Historical City Tours, Annantalo Arts Centre.

**H**istorical City Tours refer to routes along which the students of Kallio Upper Secondary School of Performing Arts would perform scenes from historic events in Finland and Helsinki. The proposals and the facts came from the City Museum, and the scripts for the episodes were written and performed by students of Kallio Upper Secondary School. School classes would sign up in advance and were selected randomly to take part in the tours.

The most intensive implementation phase of the tours involved around a hundred people for a week: actors and actresses, guides, makeup artists, costume designers, assistants and the production team. The routes went around the city in various locations such as. The play-like scenes were performed along the routes in authentic locations, which attendees would tour on charter buses in the beginning and on foot later. History teacher students, class teacher students and Annantalo workers were trained to serve as guides. The attendees would discuss their experiences after the tours at their respective schools with programme brochures made for pupils. The tours were held in 1995–2006, 2012 and 2015.

These tours have also been linked to Helsinki’s celebratory years: the City’s Capital of Culture year (2000), the 200th anniversary of Helsinki as the capital of Finland (2012) and the Sibelius 150 jubilee (2015).

## Interview with Annemari Untamala and Anna Finnilä

**Annemari** I remember receiving a fax at Kallio Upper Secondary School, on thin white paper with the print slightly misaligned. The fax inquired whether our school would like to be involved in Historical City Tours. I was immediately interested in the project. I was just about to start a theatre class with the students already waiting in the hall, but I wanted to reply to the sender of the fax that they could count us in. There was a tiny phone booth at the school on Porthaninkatu, which I quickly used to make a call: "Thank you, yes thank you, we're in!"

The historical tours came about as if they were a present to us. Even without knowing exactly how everything was going to be implemented, I felt that we were about to engage in something new. Nowadays people talk about authentic learning environments, but we were already operating in those almost three decades ago! The city tours became a popular form of working and many students would have wanted to return the next year, but we usually had new students in queue already.

### On the routes and locations

**Annemari** We were aiming high when we planned the routes and locations. Whether we wanted to perform at the Presidential Palace or

**Anna**

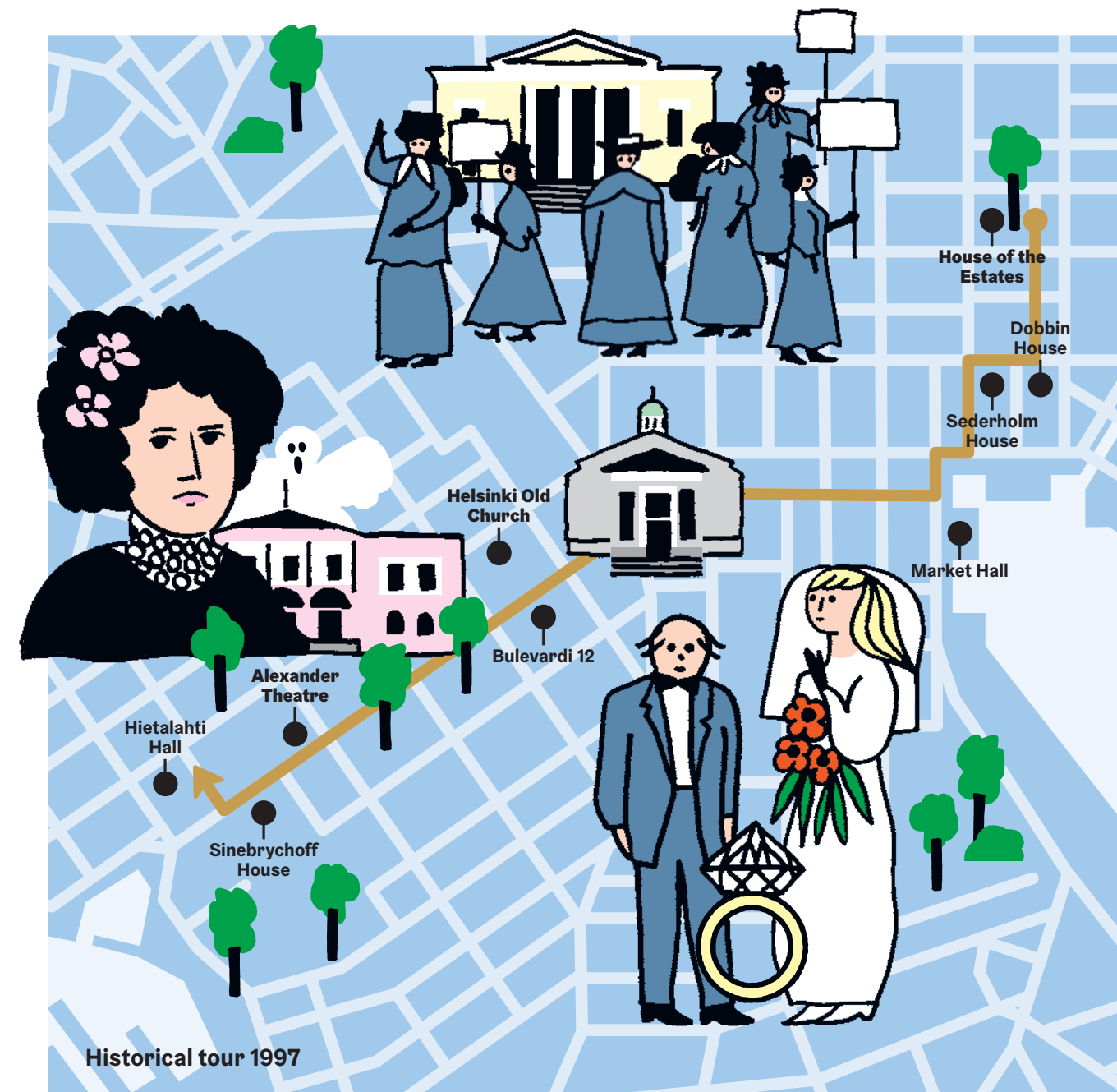
a public sauna, doors were always opened for us and our proposals were received with friendliness and enthusiasm. No location ever turned us down. Somehow, there was a shared understanding of our shared cultural heritage. Even the highly expensive university banquet hall was provided to us for several days free of charge in the early days.

### Työssäoppimista teatteri-ilmaisun oppilaille

**Annemari** The historical tours were an excellent way to familiarise the students of Kallio Upper Secondary School with working life! We carried out on-the-job learning operations – which are all the rage these days – since the mid-1990s, with professionals of different fields and upper secondary school students working together. Both the museum lecturers and the people of Annantalo were appreciative of our upper secondary school students and their contributions. The students got to see what different phases are involved in preparing performances, from brainstorming and script writing to the performance itself: we had history experts, costume designers, makeup artists, sound and light designers, and above all a well-working and professional production organisation Annantalo. All the phases of the project, from the initial planning to the final feedback processing, were organised with care.

**A&A**

We were pioneers, developers. Absolutely.







### The role of the audience

**Annemari** When we wrote scenes, we always had a role for the audience as well. We can be very proud in the sense that as far as I know, no one had put together walking dramas with this concept of “by young people for young people with everyone willing involved” before us. Others would soon follow, and of course there have since been good applications of these tours. After our tours, Suomenlinna began holding their own dramatised guided tours, DOT (*DOT rf, Föreningen för Drama Och Teater*) started to provide time travel tours in Herttoniemi, etc. In 1997, we visited an international children’s culture conference in Leipzig to present our tour concept.

What was all new in our tours was the overall concept and the art pedagogy side of the tours. Everyone involved, both the creators and the audience, learned. The students in Kallio studied history and the preparation of a theatre production and received a wealth of experience with acting and encountering the audience, and some even gained experience with performing in a foreign language. The audience were given access to history and taken on a journey through time by guides familiarised with performing, giving them an opportunity to look into history in an experiential manner and immerse themselves in it, even performing themselves.

**Anna**

It is true that there have been museum dramas around the world and in Finland, but the performers in those productions are actors, drama pedagogues or other professionals. But the concept of the tour being a pedagogical project for upper secondary school students was brand new for sure.

### Crossing service boundaries – trust facilitating growth

**Anna**

We began to cross division and service boundaries perfectly naturally and in an open-minded manner. Today, the City organisation requires that people cooperate across service boundaries and encourages it, as if it were a new idea. Being young and fresh back then, we paid no heed to any boundaries, nor did we market the tours as something that crossed divisions – it was all obvious and natural to us.

There was less bureaucracy those days – we did not have to ask for permits from so many operators and write so many documents and reports. We did not ask whether we could do our thing, nor were we told to do this or that. Managers were always very understanding and did not question the use of working time on this project. We were trusted, which gave us an opportunity to grow. Who does not want to be worthy of trust? We were young, fearless and enthusiastic, and we believed strongly in the power of drama and storytelling.



### On the roles

**Annemari** The roles were played primarily by students. Some scenes involved people from outside the school (an opera singing student, a pianist, an astronomy expert) or experienced amateur actors if there was a need for special skills that the students did not possess yet, but as a rule, the students wrote roles that they wanted to and were able to play themselves.

**A&A** The tours have examined different themes quite extensively. The biggest names found in history are often men, but we tried to shine a spotlight on the life and work of women, long before today's "exciting women in history" boom.

### On the process

**Annemari** Our working process usually began with a joint meeting between representatives of the City Museum, Annantalo and Kallio Upper Secondary school, where we agreed on the themes and possible locations of the tours. After that, Anna gave us some suggestions regarding scenes to be dramatised and I set off to work on them with the students to turn them into performances by combining fact and fiction. The theatre classes involved brainstorming and script writing on some days and acting and testing how well the dialogue worked on others. The actors and actresses were also cast at this point, and every student familiarised themselves with the historical events examined in the scenes. They also got to work on their own roles by both writing and acting. As the rehearsals went on, it was time to start the costume and makeup design as organised by Annantalo, and dress rehearsals were also held at Annantalo. At the same time, the production department was preparing aspects such as the tour schedules, guide training, programme brochures and support materials for teachers for discussing the topics of the tours.

On performance days, the actors' mornings started at Annantalo with breakfast, getting dressed in their costumes and having their makeup applied. The actors were transported to the performance sites by taxi, and they brought their own lunches. There were up to 6–8 tours and perfor-

mances during one day and 2–4 performance days, at least one of which was reserved for Swedish-language performances. After the performances, the actors would return to Annantalo to change their clothes and remove their makeup. On the last performance day, the actors received a separate certificate for their performances on the tour, and the occasion was often marked with toasts and speeches. The project was always finalised at a joint meeting that involved assessing the implementation of the tours and discussing feedback from the audience.

The name given to the tours was wonderful: *Tosileikkiä menneessä ajassa* ('Serious Play in Times Past').

**Anna** Our goal was definitely not to point out and fine-tune every historical detail. What was important was the very act of playing with the past – as well as historical empathy, in my opinion. After all, we did examine all kinds of fates in the scenes. Especially in the past, the differences between people's lives and living opportunities have been vast, and all of this was examined on the tours. For example, the *Naisia kaupungin ytimessä* ('Women at the Heart of the City') tour featured a widow and her children selling bagels on Sofiankatu. The tours enabled attendees to put themselves in the shoes of another child for a while. How does it feel to sell bagels on the street with your mother and siblings while other children get to go to school?

### Bilingual from the start

The tours were also held in Swedish from the start – and in English in Helsinki's Capital of Culture year of 2000, for which rehearsals were started in 1999.

**Annemari** The scripts were either written in Finnish and translated into Swedish or written in Swedish and translated into Finnish – sometimes by the students themselves. The Finnish and Swedish-speaking upper secondary schools learned a lot by observing each other's work.

**Anna** The Swedish language was a more integral part of the production than just a translation. When planning the episodes, I picked original Swedish-language quotes and characters from the sources used instead of merely having them translated from Finnish. This is not the most common method and it takes a lot of work, of course, but it is very valuable.

The Swedish-language tours featured some actors from Kallio Upper Secondary School, but for the most part, the Swedish-speaking actors came from Swedish-speaking schools joining the fold in the early 2000s.

### Development of the concept

**Annemari** The method used in the city tours was found to be good. We learned new things and found ways to develop the tours each year. We learned how we should take care of aspects such as training guides, scheduling the tours and taking the schools' teaching times and other aspects of school life into



account. A year clock began to gradually take shape: what had to be done in which phase, which course would be included, etc. We established a concept.

**Anna**

In the Capital of Culture year of 2000, we introduced the *Kallion kulmilla* ('In the Kallio Neighbourhood') tour, which took place in the neighbourhood of the school. The classes attending the tours would familiarise themselves with their own area and its history. The history teacher of Kallio Upper Secondary School deepened the tour experience further with an advance course in history and performing arts for the students. I visited the school as a lecturer.

**A&A**

The tours were successful thanks to a good team spirit and seamless cooperation between different operators, to which every party involved contributed. As the number of cooperation partners increased, more attention had to be paid to the division of labour, which had happened almost automatically in the early days.

### **Significance to the museum**

**Anna**

Over the years, I noticed how important it was to liven up history with presentation skills. History is considered to be a difficult and abstract subject for young people, and as such, school pupils are not taught history until the fifth grade. The historical tours were a great way to demonstrate how history can easily be discussed with people as young as lower stage comprehensive school pupils. The key is in the method and

arousing curiosity. Having an experiential approach is very trendy right now. It barely existed back then, so Annantalo was a pioneer in this respect.

### **Significance to the Kallio Upper Secondary School students**

**Annemari**

This thing suited the students of Kallio perfectly. It is difficult to find suitably challenging texts for large groups, but the historical tours provided every participant with as much acting work as they were willing to take on. Pedagogically speaking, the tours were a brilliant concept, as the students did not have to jump into bigger boots than they dared or wanted to, or vice versa: those willing could play a role as demanding and impressive as they wanted. They were also given an opportunity to go crazy and do something wild, such as a sewer rat party in a bomb shelter. Another important perspective in terms of art pedagogy is that the operations were taken out of the "laboratory conditions" of the school and into actual operating environments.

On this course, the students learned a great deal about contact with the audience in theatre performances, as the audience can be sitting right next to the actor. The students also got to repeat their respective scenes many times, feeling their own development and increasing confidence in their own acting. They had each other's support, enabling them to do well and have experiences of success.





# Developing the Swedish-language tours

All of the Historical City Tours were also provided in Swedish. At first, performing art students from Kallio Upper Secondary School performed on the Swedish-language tours. From 2006 onwards, the Swedish-language tours were produced by DOT rf. Interview with Anne Sandström and Nina Gran

**Nina**

## How did you find DOT for this?

Different languages have different realities. When I joined the working group for the historical tours in 2004, I began to think how the Swedish language could be incorporated into them. I saw how good the project was for the young people involved. However, it soon became clear that the existing resources provided little means to make progress. There has never been another Swedish-language upper secondary school of performing arts like Kallio Upper Secondary School, so we decided to try whether we could find suitable students from ordinary upper secondary schools. But it took



a lot of work. DOT was a freshly established association and an excellent solution.

My work has very clearly shown me that multilingual projects increase the knowledge and skills of everyone involved. Having the two language layers has probably been an encumbrance at times, but it gives everyone a lot. Bilingual productions such as those carried out for the tours continue to be something of a rarity to this day. At first, the time travel journeys were a sidetrack to us. Our main objective was to bring drama to schools. We now got to train upper secondary school students and hold drama and history courses for them to prepare and work on the city tours. The students got to perform in a fine project, which served as a great incentive for them.

**Anne**

## How diverse wholes are created

As a particular highlight, I would like to mention the cooperation networking that took place in this project. The project participants knew how to utilise the competences of different operators, and the tours connected and employed many operators.

**Nina**

At planning meetings, we were always excited about the fact that things were happening and being developed. We worked with gusto and big idea bubbles above our heads!

**Liisa**

Nina and I have been looking in the same direction, with the same values. When a working group has members who are comfortable with disagreeing and providing

**Nina**

alternate viewpoints, that is when good things happen, as opposed to when everyone agrees about everything.

Today, the City has different production practices. The historical tours were unique in a lot of ways. They involved creating things in the moment and as a collaboration between many partners. The current policy is such that the City supports the productions of external professionals but does not engage in production projects itself. That policy also works pretty well in some respects. But it is difficult to create such diverse programming if cultural pedagogy competence is removed from your own organisation. Purchasing a ready-made performance is completely different from building a large whole that has different dimensions and in which people are committed to the operations. This change in thinking is a big deal, and I believe that not all managers and decision-makers are even able to grasp this.

On the Swedish-language side of theatre and literary art, we public officials helped you associations by creating a platform for you and providing you with new opportunities. This is part of the overall line of thinking that we must understand how things are connected and what they entail. We have to be consistent and persistent. Building new major things is somewhat slow, and some results cannot even be seen until years down the line. This is a *question of quality*, and quality requires



Anne

time and dedication. In a way, creative processes, freedom and starting and creating something completely new is a gamble – there is no telling where you will end up.

Anne

On bilingualism

The Swedish-language upper secondary school students could not participate in the tours as part of their courses, so they were only able to take part in their leisure time. We tried for a few years, but this method was ultimately unfruitful. After that, the working group was assembled from DOT members.

The Finnish-language and Swedish-language productions were not identical. The Swedish-language tours were built on the same historical theme and basic idea as their Finnish-language counterparts, but with a separate script, director and working group.

Nina

One very important point here is understanding that if you carry out a bilingual project, a simple translation is not enough. You have to think about how things *work* in another language. We did so in many different projects of Annantalo at the time, such as these historical tours and bilingual exhibition, literature and literary art projects. Contents are never identical in different languages, always forming different wholes instead. However, they share so many aspects that we were able to carry out bilingual productions.

What was in the time?

Participation and ownership

We created new structures in connection with the historical tours. The City perhaps saw things differently, but from our perspective, the important thing was participation. When we joined the team to work on these tours in 2006, participation and applied theatre was something entirely new and exciting, and we set out to try out and build these structures with great joy.

In these productions, the story was knit so that the audience would always take part in it in some form – never so that the actors would just perform on stage for the audience or the audience would merely watch the story.

Nina

This was also part of Helsinki work. Shining a spotlight on the city has been an important aspect in this project. And an interactive and interesting experience for both tour attendees and the children and young people creating the tours.

Anne

That is where the ownership aspect comes from, that they felt that they were part of this story. That was a very strong element on the Historical City Tours. We have had quite a few children and young people participate in the history of Helsinki!

Liisa

At the time, we were creating things that did not exist in the world. Our crazy enthusiasm for doing these things in this city probably inspired our cooperation partners and different parties so much

Nina

that we got to take children and young people to absolutely incredible places on the tours.

And the non-commercial context was important. We made such big efforts and did pretty big things despite having relatively scarce resources, and people appreciated that. Indeed, we were given access to unbelievable facilities in the city. The people in charge of them perhaps realised that we were doing something unique.

Anne

Could such tours be organised today?

At DOT, we still provide time travel tours as a purchased service, but in those cases the tours are produced by DOT alone, which impoverishes the whole. What was good about the Historical City Tours was the trust and the roles, that everyone had their own areas of expertise. Nina Gran and Annantalo assembled the working group and produced the project. Anna Finnilä and Helsinki City Museum created the historical background materials and the plot, and served as historical experts. The facilities of Annantalo provided a practical setting for the work, and students of the makeup artist academy Makers got to practise creating historical figures through makeup and hairdressing. Finally, the upper secondary school students acted together with the actors and drama pedagogues of DOT, guiding one another. The historical tours have probably enriched everyone’s views. The feeling that

Nina

anything was possible made it so that one plus one equalled a lot more than two. My personal starting point was bilingualism and pedagogy, as well as the development of Swedish-language services and specific instruction in cultural pedagogy – it is, after all, a lot more than just a single procedure. But when we exit this way of approaching the big picture, instruction in cultural pedagogy is removed. Now the goal is to make different compartments – culture, exercise, young people – comparable with one another and find a shared model for all of them. But these three cannot really be measured the same way, as they are pretty different. The administrative reform of 2017 involved efforts to balance them out and make them similar. These efforts did result in plenty of bad things being eliminated, but all the high peaks were coldly cut out in the process as well. That is how it goes: if you want uniform and comparable blocks, you have to cut out all peaks and different and even original aspects. You need to have a certain amount of good craziness, as anyone pursuing creative endeavours will tell you.

The feeling that anything was possible made it so that one plus one equalled a lot more than two.

# A look back at how it all started



↑ Eino Leino and park attendant Pavel Hait on a city tour in 2002.

↗ Jean Sibelius is leaving his music as his legacy for future generations on the city tours in 2015.

When the Association of Drama and Theatre DOT r.f. was founded in the autumn of 2005, almost no one knew what to make of concepts like drama or audience development. These days, art education is very nearly a requirement for the continued existence of any art institution. The importance of Annantalo and the Helsinki cultural centre in developing new methods for art education cannot be overstated.

## Strength in cooperation

Annantalo had already organised city walks for students in cooperation with Annemari Untamala and the students from Kallio Upper Secondary School of Performing Arts for several years when we came aboard. Our Swedish-language city walks were developed using the same theme and basic idea, but with our own script and team.

Working in cooperation with the whole of Annantalo's staff, the historical experts, students of both upper secondary schools and vocational schools as well as professional actors made the artistic side very rewarding but also challenging from a logistical and scheduling point of view.

The basic idea with the city walks is to give students a chance to become acquainted with their own home city and its history, as well as give them access to buildings in the city that are normally off limits.

There is strength in cooperation beyond what individual operators can achieve. Multimedial art, comple-

menting each other's skills and the support and inspiration from the steering committee turned the city walks into a unique art pedagogical whole.

Annantalo's city walks inspired us to take a look at other time travel workshops, for example those at Jamtli in Sweden. This was the beginning of our own time travelling and other workshops for museum and archive pedagogy in Helsinki. Over the years they have multiplied.

## City walks are worth the trouble

*"Fuss, fascination and folly – Helsinki in the time of Jean Sibelius"*

This historical city walk was arranged in 2015 commemorating the 150-year jubilee of Sibelius, and I remember it as an especially successful art pedagogical whole.

The preparations included multiple phases. Elementary school teachers received tasks related to drama, history and musical pedagogy at their schools. Afterwards the school group visited an exhibition in Ateneum, *"Sibelius and the world of art"*. The students were all allowed to participate in a preparatory workshop that included practical information about the walk, some historical background information about Sibelius, and a music workshop arranged by students from the Sibelius Academy that included various tools for classical music.

After the city walk concluded, the students were given materials to work with afterwards, the purpose of which was to encourage reflection and a deep-



ening of their own experience, as well as help with further studies in the subject.

Musical educator Anna Sandström remembers how the children became engrossed in the world of classical music during the workshops and how they e.g. created soundscapes to pictures of artwork. Finally, all the students gathered in the large auditorium to together and in unison, as a large orchestra, perform the finale to Sibelius's fifth symphony using body percussion, directed by Esa-Pekka Salonen through a monitor.

Our Sibelius was played by five different actors of different ages.

In the last scene, the aged Sibelius was played by Hasse Lindroos. In the scene where Ellu Öhman played his

daughter Katarina, Sibelius remembers his life and the swans over Ainola that inspired him to compose the finale to the fifth symphony. On the monitor a video of the home in Ainola is shown while the fifth symphony plays in the background – and what happens?

The schoolchildren in the audience go quiet without prompting and start to perform the body percussion they learned during the music workshops in tune to the music. It becomes a celebration of Sibelius that almost brings me to tears.

When Hasse as Sibelius walks up the aisle and says it is now time for him to hand over the legacy to the musicians of today, violinist *Aleksi Kotila* and pianist *Virva Garam* take over and start playing Sibelius's Violin Concerto. The students sit still and listen, and in the end don't want to leave the hall.

The way the students reacted tells me we should not underestimate them but provide them with cultural experiences of the highest quality and the keys to unlock their own cultural heritage. We should invest in culture for children. This is something we've also proven through these projects. At DOT we hope that Annantalo can also function in the future as a laboratory where new methods of arts pedagogy can be developed.

Anne Sandström, director of city walks, Managing Director of DOT rf, principal of Teaterskolan DOT



# A Transforming Space

Text Erja Mehto



**T**he history of the Annantalo building goes back a hundred years and change. Built on Annankatu in 1886, the impressive Swedish-language school building was designed by a young architect named *Gustaf Nyström*, who is nowadays considered

to be one of the big names in his profession. Like his contemporaries, Nyström used ancient pillar systems to symbolise the intended purpose of the building. As such, the row of windows in the facade on the second floor is punctuated with Ionic pilasters, which were also used at universities and schools as per the classical ideal. Although Gustaf Nyström drew his stylistic choices from history, as an architect he was a reformist who was of the opinion that buildings should be designed with the latest technical possibilities in mind. As such, the school building had running water and an electric light powered by a steam engine.

The extreme symmetry of the facade was repeated in the floor plan of the interior facilities of the building as clarity and efficiency. The first two floors were dominated by open and well-lit middle corridors leading to 15 classrooms. The corridor facilities were also made bright and festive by the large west-facing windows of the staircases leading to the second floor.

The building was used as a school until 1969. After that, it was put into temporary use by the City and different organisations. In 1987, after a planning process lasting several years, the Annantalo arts centre for children and young people started its operations in this school building deemed architecturally and historically valuable by the Museum of Finnish Architecture.

## A glass end in different ways

The architecture created by Nyström was well-suited for the needs of a multidisciplinary arts centre. The spacious classrooms were turned into art classrooms, and there was plenty of space for an office and an art teachers' room, as well as a café.

Performance activities began in the banquet hall, while facilities for exhibition activities were established in the northern end of the first floor. The tall corridor of the second floor and the facilities separated with windowed partition walls at its both ends, called glass ends, are naturally suited for purposes such as holding exhibitions.

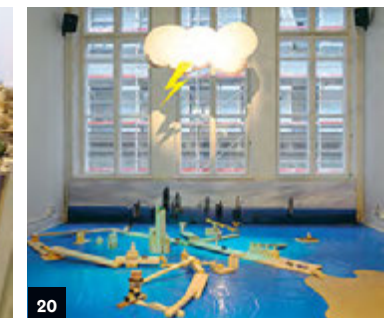
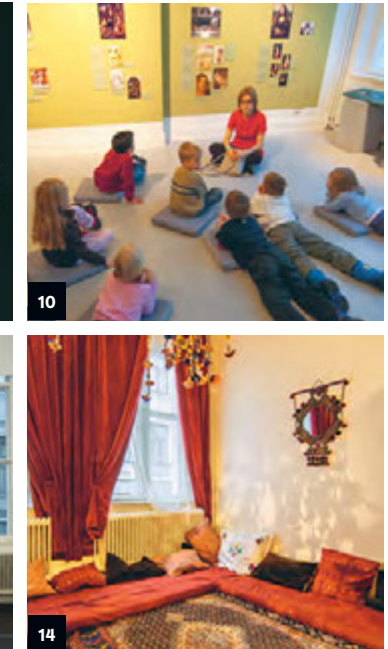
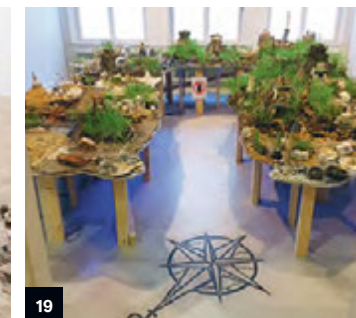
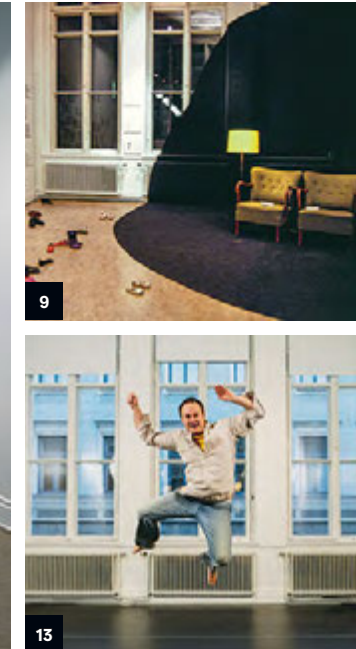
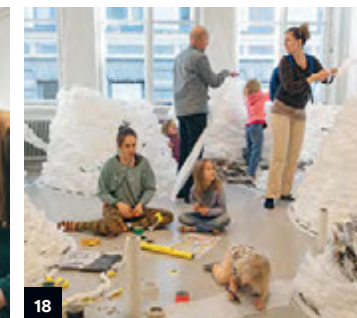
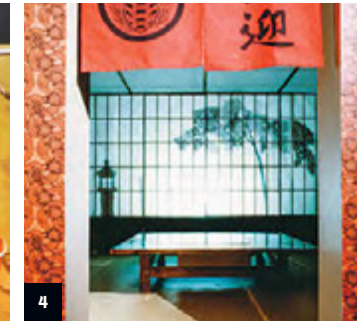
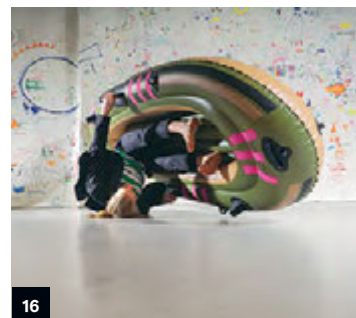
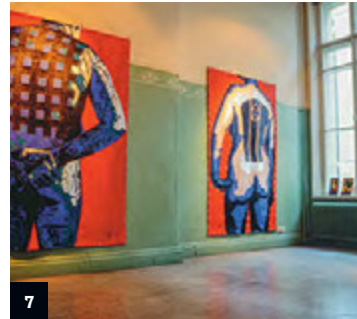
The southern glass end in particular was given different roles in exhibition activities over the years, as well as many art education related purposes. The glass end is a clear space that is small enough (approx. 30 m<sup>2</sup>) to be readily adaptable and modifiable. Over the 35 operating years of the arts centre, the space has been given a new visual style and new contents more than 200 times. The changing modes of operation in art and the emphases of art education have been concretely visible in the space. It has served, among other things, as a traditional exhibition gallery, a setting for cultural exhibitions, a community art project workshop and a practice and event space for resident artists. The glass end has served art education directly when it has been used as a space for observing and experiencing education themes, e.g. as a colour laboratory and a trial room for different senses.

Sometimes, an empty space is the most inspiring and creativity-nurturing place in an arts centre. This has often been true for the glass end. When you see it empty, you begin to think about what kind of a new world could be built in it next.



## Gems of the glass end 1989–2021

1. 'Egypt', 1989
2. 'The Maya and the Aztecs', 1990
3. 'The Heirs of Sundiata', an African home, 1991
4. Tōkaidō, a Japanese home, 1993
5. 'Visiting a Medieval Village', a medieval church construction site, 1994
6. 'Siberia – the Peoples of the Tundra and the Taiga', a sacrificial grove, 1995
7. 'The Magic of Self-adornment', works of visual artist Kimmo Schroderus, 1997
8. 'The Bold and the Beautiful of Antiquity', 2000
9. 'Dirge Space', Eppu Nuotio poems, Katja Tukiainen pictures and Tiina Aromaa installation, 2003
10. 'Take Flight, Leonardo da Vinci Exclaimed', 2005
11. 'Hinge Chapel', related to the Giotto exhibition, 2007–2008
12. 'Traces and Signs', works of Annantalo art teachers, visual artist Elisa Rovamo and ceramics artist Saana Murtti, 2012
13. Artist residence, dance artist Riku Immonen, 2014
14. 'An Afghan Tea Room', a collaboration with visual artist Tikke Tuura, 2015
15. 'The Last Dolphin', an interactive work by Veijo Setälä, 2016
16. Artist residence, choreographer Favela Vera Ortiz, dancer Jukka Tarvainen. Work entitled 'Aventurist', 2016
17. 'Brick Workshop', an Annantalo community art project, 2017
18. 'The Caverns of a Paper Tiger', a community work from the Art Clinic's workshop day, 2017
19. 'Terra Incognita', an Annantalo community art project, 2019
20. 'Flood', a play-based installation from the Art Clinic's workshop day, 2021





# Images of virtues and vices

Children's and young people's images of today's virtues and vices, based on Giotto's fresco story from medieval times.

In the autumn of 2007, a cultural exhibition entitled 'A Master Painter's Perfect Circle. Giotto's Fresco Cycle in the Arena Chapel of Padua' at Annantalo provided an in-depth look into medieval art as guided by the Italian artist Giotto di Bondone, who has been called the father of Western painting. It was organised in cooperation with the Italian Cultural Institute and the art history department of the University of Helsinki. The core of the exhibition was located in the banquet hall, which was reserved for the exhibition. The space was dominated by a reproduction of the Arena Chapel of Padua, which features a series of a hundred images of the life of the Virgin Mary and Jesus going around the walls as a cycle. The series took Giotto and his working group a couple of years to paint. Giotto brought a sense of depth and space to the art of painting, as well as strongly expressed human emotions. The fresco story, based on Bible stories, fills the entire interior of

the chapel. The bottom row of images features paintings of Christian virtues and vices as human figures.

The chapel reproduction was accompanied by works by contemporary artists depicting the same areas of human life as the frescos of the Arena Chapel. An installation by visual artist Petri Kaverma opened the fresco technique of Giotto's story as a temporal event in the banquet hall. The gallery facilities featured emotionally expressive early paintings and graphical prints of Biblical subjects by graphic artist Kuutti Lavonen. At the northern glass end of the second floor of the building, visitors got to examine the original illustrations of Bimba Landman's book 'A Boy Named Giotto'.







### Children's and young people's 'Hinge Chapel'

In the Arena Chapel, the virtues and vices were painted on opposite walls.

Over the course of the autumn, the students of Annantalo delved into the world of Giotto. The Arena Chapel's figures depicting virtues and vices aroused profound discussions about how good and evil touch us today and what the virtues and vices of our time are.

These discussions led to the idea of painting a chapel of Annantalo's own, in which virtues would meet vices as images on opposite walls like Giotto's paintings. A suitable space was found quickly – the southern glass end of the second floor was empty, so the entire autumn and coming spring could be reserved in the exhibition calendar for keeping the students' chapel project open to the public. A grid was laid out on the white walls of the space (one square = 22 × 22 cm). Some squares were equipped with a small door opening on hinges. This prompted the name 'Hinge Chapel'.

During the work to prepare the space, art groups gave thought to what virtues and vices would best reflect our time. The list of suggestions was long,

so a vote was held and the five most popular suggestions were selected. The virtues selected were ecologicality, forgiveness, generosity, courage and love, while the vices selected were vengeance, anger, greed, wastefulness and cowardice. That autumn, the notions of good and evil touched the students in a surprising and profound manner as a serious school shooting occurred in Jokela in November, while the chapel illustration work was under way.

Children and young people aged 5–18 in different art groups and 5×2 teaching spent several months illustrating the Hinge Chapel. An entire group would be present at times, individual students from different groups at others. There was usually someone working in the space at all times, and people passing the end could see how the work was coming along. Around 400 children and young people drew and painted their own interpretations directly onto the gridded walls of the chapel.

The chapel illustration work involved both very individual and communal efforts at the same time, and every artist's own private image was clearly part of a large, shared work.







# Who am I?

## The theme of self-adornment in the art education of Annantalo

Text  
Erja Mehto

**T**heme-oriented working became a factor that unified and defragmented the teaching provided by Annantalo back in the early days of the arts centre, as there was no curriculum for art education. In the 1990s, Annantalo held major cultural exhibitions that spread out into all the facilities of the building on an almost annual basis. These extensive exhibitions, held in collaboration with several operators, presented subjects such as Japanese and West African culture, Finland in medieval times and the life of the indigenous peoples of Siberia. In terms of Annantalo's art education, the cultural exhibitions were awaited treasure troves rich with content, and they were formed into shared teaching themes almost automatically. The preparations for the exhibitions yielded plenty of content materials, which were utilised in art teaching – and to top things off, the themes presented in the great exhibitions could be literally entered by simply opening the classroom door to the exhibition in the corridors of the building. All of a sudden, visitors would find themselves in a Siberian sacrificial grove or at an African well, in a Japanese home or in a medieval church. In addition to the subjects provided by the cultural exhibitions, the themes of art education have included subjects such as animals, natural phenomena, dreams and colours. These themes have arisen from in-house discussions and topical subjects in art.

The thematic work has involved various scientific and cultural approaches, with art providing means to find answers to questions arising from the themes. The phenomena can be approached from a variety of standpoints: as an aesthetic experience, a myste-

rious riddle or a scientific fact. It is important for the teaching process to be interactive and individual. Not everything is nailed down immediately at the start. Instead, as the work progresses, the children can influence what matters are examined and how. There is room for the children's own questions and thoughts. At its best, the theme work gives children some understanding of a world that is ambiguous, a network of different factors and concepts.

As the theme process has made progress, the skills of everyone working at Annantalo have been needed. The most visible work has been carried out at art lessons, but another important aspect has been the production of teaching materials, as well as the documentation and assessment of the teaching phases. Specialist lectures on the themes for the teachers and staff of Annantalo have deepened their knowledge and brought them together to work on something shared. Working on a theme has often ended with a joint exhibition in which children and others in the building can see the different ways in which the subject has been approached.



# Dialogue between contemporary art and the teaching theme

In the autumn of 1995, the senses were chosen as the art education theme of the year. This was based on the notion that the sense of sight and seeing appeared to be overemphasised in teaching. So, we closed our eyes and opened up our other senses. This brought a new corporeal and strongly sensory element to the work.

Consequently, the next spring's pupil exhibition provided the audience with an opportunity to have diverse and surprising sensory experiences. The exhibition showcased works that could be heard, touched, seen and smelled, such as fragrant sculptures, haptic paintings and musical instruments made from junk.

The significance of experientiality and a strong presence of the body was strengthened with the sensory theme. The goal was to deepen this observation by finding a new perspective in which the mind and the inner world would be represented more strongly alongside the body. This resulted in the idea of using self-adornment as a follow-up theme. The inspiration for exploring corporeality was not only boosted by experiences gained in teaching work, but it was also highlighted by the art of the time, the number one subject of which appeared to be the human body.

## Corporeality in art in the 1990s

The art education providers of Annantalo were very aware of what was happening in contemporary art and took influences from Finnish and international art alike. Interesting operators were found in fields such as performance and installation art, as well as land and conceptual art. Ateneum's extensive contemporary art exhibition Ars 95 steered interest towards a corporeal human being as the subject of art. Around the same time, Helsinki Art Museum (HAM) showcased the art of *Louise Bourgeois* (1995) and *Ana Mendieta* (1996), two artists with a strong presence in and influence over world art, in its museum building in Meilahti in extensive exhibitions. In the winter of 1997, the spotlight was given to Mexican painter *Frida Kahlo*, who is known for her self-portraits. The students of Annantalo became familiar with the art of these artists through exhibition visits and their complementary teaching materials.

The art education providers of Annantalo were very aware of what was happening in contemporary art and took influences from Finnish and international art alike.



↑ Leather images of tattooed people and a soft skeleton by Kimmo Schroderus at Annantalo's exhibition on self-adornment.

**Ana Mendieta** (1948–1985) was a Cuban-born, US-based sculptor and performance and video artist. She was known for works such as her extensive series of silhouettes built into a landscape, consisting of the earth and the body.

**Frida Kahlo** (1907–1954) was a Mexican painter known for her extensive series of self-portraits. In her paintings, she tackled subjects such as difficult experiences in her life, e.g. becoming disabled, and the emotions arising from those experiences. Kahlo's works reflect the strong colour conventions of the peoples of Mexico.

**Louise Bourgeois** (1911–2010) was a French-born sculptor and drawer who moved to New York in 1938. Her drawings and sculptures were often based on her childhood experiences and had a strong psychological and sexual tone.





## Self-adornment as a theme

The teaching theme process with its work and exhibitions has usually lasted a year and change at Annantalo. The theme work is also preceded by a deep-delving period during which the teachers come up with ideas for the theme and let the ideas develop in their minds and at joint meetings.

Usually, the theme has had a teacher instructor. The instructor's duties have been diverse, including the work of both a producer and a curator. For the theme of self-adornment, textile artist *Virpi Vesanen-Laukkanen*, who was Annantalo's textile art teacher, was asked to assume the aforementioned duties. She was assisted by a working group consisting of Annantalo staff members: senior art teacher Erja Mehto, exhibition designer Mauri Tahvonen and communication officer Leila Heimonen.

The self-adornment theme work was carried out in both 5×2 art teaching provided to school classes and leisure time art groups for children and young people aged 4–18. The teaching materials opened different perspectives on self-adornment. For example, slide presentations focused on the subject of adorning the body and the face, headwear and hairstyles, and clothing and jewellery. The work in the art groups showed that toying with disguises and self-adornment means examining your own identity and reinventing yourself. The groups also gave thought to how our culture influences self-adornment, and when self-adornment is forbidden and when it is desirable.



Traditionally, art groups have chosen their own ways of working on and delimiting the teaching theme. Now, the groups were also given two shared assignments. The first assignment was to design and implement a piece of jewellery. The idea was for the groups to take the special characteristics of each art subject (e.g. a graphical, sculptural or painting-like piece of jewellery) into account and give thought to the opposite pairs of differentiation and relation, and attraction and rejection. They were also asked whether the piece of jewellery could speak to our different senses and what ringing, tactile or tasting jewellery could be like. The second assignment was to adorn the body and document the result in a photo at a shared photography studio. The assignment was inspired by French visual artist Anette Messenger's photos of parts of the human body adorned with colour pencils and acrylic colours. The adorned students posed for standard printed photos, which we used to build a shared photo sheet entitled '*450 Ways to Self-adorn*'. The title indicated that the work involved almost all of Annantalo's art group students extensively and from different art subjects.



### On the commitment of art teachers

In order for the theme work to be a true success, the art teachers must become enthusiastic about the subject and commit to long-term and persistent working. Having an interesting theme and carefully preparing inspiring teaching materials related to the theme have been helpful in this. Joint meetings and thought exchanges along the way are important and open possibilities in terms of cooperation between teachers and groups. Over the course of the self-adornment theme, teachers shared teaching experiences at meetings, came up with contents for the upcoming exhibition with Virpi taking the lead, and received lectures on the self-adornment traditions of different cultures around the world.

The discussions involved critical assessments as well (for example, a shiny material suitable for arts and crafts was found to be challenging to work with and thin in terms of content). This exchange of thoughts led the participants to also give thought to the significance of materials and working methods in art education at large.

### A carnival and an exhibition – the zenith of self-adornment

1997 marked the 10th anniversary of Annantalo, and to celebrate, a carnival was held in April. Preparations for the celebration began well in advance after Christmas. The students received an invitation to the spring carnival, with the information that they could also take part in a competition for the best costume. They could prepare their costumes both at home and in art groups at Annantalo. The celebration culminated in a joint Macarena dance session instructed by dance legend *Aira Samulin*.

The carnival also served as the opening of the self-adornment exhibition. There were works created by children and young people with different techniques displayed across the building on two floors. Their names referred to adornment of the body: *'A Giant's Rings'*, gigantic ceramic rings, *'Heavy Metal Tattoos'*, etching on leather, *'Strength in a Shoe'*, clay shoes, *'Mirror Mirror on the Wall'*, mirrors and *'All Kinds of Heads You See Herein, Time for a Wedding to Begin'*, ceramic sculptures.

Because contemporary art's perspectives on corporeality had been present in the work of the art groups throughout the year, five contemporary artists who had examined this theme in their own ways were also invited to take part in the exhibition. The artists were *Aino Favén*, *Helena Hietanen*, *Taina Kontio*, *Katarina Koskivaara* and *Kimmo Schroderus*. This was one of the first times that an exhibition at Annantalo presented the works of children, young people and artists side by side.

In connection with the self-adornment theme, a weekend event focusing on sculptures was held in March and led by art teachers of Annantalo, visual artists *Marjo Levlin* and *Antti Arkoma*. For the event, 15 pupils over the age of 9 built two large, naked human figures from foam plastic, plaster and fabric. The enormous figures lying on the floor were roughly four metres tall and were named Eeva, the great woman, and Sergei, the great man. They played an important follow-up role in the exhibition: visitors got to make giant jewellery for the figures and tattoo their naked skin by drawing. In the late 1990s, self-adornment with tattoos was not as common as it is today, and the large nude tattooed figures took many a visitor by surprise and prompted some benevolent smiles.





In tribal cultures, self-adornment is often strongly visual and an important part of communal life. Exhibition attendees were provided with a window into such cultures through a multi-image slideshow featuring different ways to self-adorn. These examples – representative of a long tradition and still vital to this day – were henna tattoos on hands in Tunisia and Yemen, ‘sing-sing’ gatherings in Papua New Guinea, and jewellery in Tanzania and Kenya.

### Open self-adornment Sundays

On four Sundays, the exhibition provided open activities for people of all ages with the themes of transformation, jewels, foreign cultures, and contemporary art and corporeality. Experts gave lectures on the topic of each day, and the artists of the exhibition told about their artistic work. Workshop attendees got to delve deeper into the subject of the day through their own activities or just relax and model for makeup artists, hairdressing students and henna tattoo artists of the Somali community. One of the Sunday events also involved digital image editing – top-of-the-line technology at the time – in which adorned children were photographed and the photos were edited on a computer to make them look even wilder.



### The Magic of Self-adornment exhibition and its events received plenty of media attention

In her article, reporter *Satu Tiainen* from *Ilta-Sanomat* showed enthusiasm for the jewellery made by children, saying that they “-- attract, frighten and captivate. No imagination has been spared in the material selections: iron wire, textiles, stone... and, perhaps less than surprisingly, many of the young artists have dedicated their jewellery to their mothers. This indicates that jewellery continues to be associated almost exclusively with the highlighting of femininity.” (*Ilta-Sanomat* 18 April 1997)

The exhibition prompted reporter *Anja Huumo* from *Suomenmaa* to think about the age-old question: “Who am I?” Her article states the following: “In primitive communities, self-adornment served as a sign of humanity. The ability to modify their bodies separated human beings from nature and made them part of the community. The skin was the first painting surface.” About children’s self-adornment, Huumo writes that in addition to perhaps being a desire to imitate adults, it can also be a need to become someone else. When dressed as a character, a timid person can become bold and someone mundane-looking can become a princess. (*Suomenmaa* 22 April 1997)

In an article published in *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Säde Nenonen* brings up the self-adornment theme’s connection, through performance art, with corporeal presence and the body as a material for art. As an example, Nenonen mentions the performance ‘*A for Behaviour; or, Jane Gathers the Lions with a Roar*’ at the exhibition closing event by the group *Gloria Sisters* formed by *Pia Lindman*, a visual art teacher at Annantalo at the time, and her students. (*HS* 18 May 1997)

## Continuing the theme of self-adornment

### In art education

Many of Annantalo’s teaching themes remain in its educational contents and pedagogic practices. There have been cases of the influence of the theme being present in the teaching years later. This was the case with the self-adornment theme as well. The well-prepared slideshows served year after year, helping students interested in headwear, hairstyles and jewellery come up with ideas. They remained in use until nearly all educational materials were made electronic and Annantalo’s last slide projectors were shut down. The self-adornment books of the teacher library were also worn in use over the years.

### Out of the house

Annantalo’s theme contents and work results have often spread outside the arts centre as well. The student works of the Magic of Self-adornment exhibition were used to build a small and limited touring exhibition that fit inside a transportation box. The exhibition was featured in locations such as the Kullo Children’s Gallery in Tallinn and Lönnström Art Museum in Rauma. Furthermore, many art teaching seminars in Finland and countries such as Latvia have featured lectures on the self-adornment theme work.



### In the Capital of Culture year

Helsinki was one of the European Capitals of Culture in 2000. The programme for the year included the Kontti 15 project, in which art workshop activities were provided for three weeks in shipping containers in key locations in the Helsinki metropolitan area. Annantalo took part in the project, and the instructor of the self-adornment theme, *Virpi Vesanen-Laukkanen*, planned a workshop the starting point for which was identification and separation. The workshop involved random passers-by – children, young people and adults – designing and implementing a piece of jewellery. Almost every piece was documented in a photo, and the creators talked about their creations in writing. The workshop first stopped in the city centrum, on the pavement by the metro entrance, for two weeks, followed by a week at the Hietalahti beach and, finally, a weekend in Kaivopuisto park. Some 600 Helsinki residents passing by, most surprised by the opportunity, created a piece of jewellery of their own in the self-adornment container, drew a picture of it and wrote about the meaning of it.

# 1995

**ARS 95**  
at Ateneum – focus  
on human beings

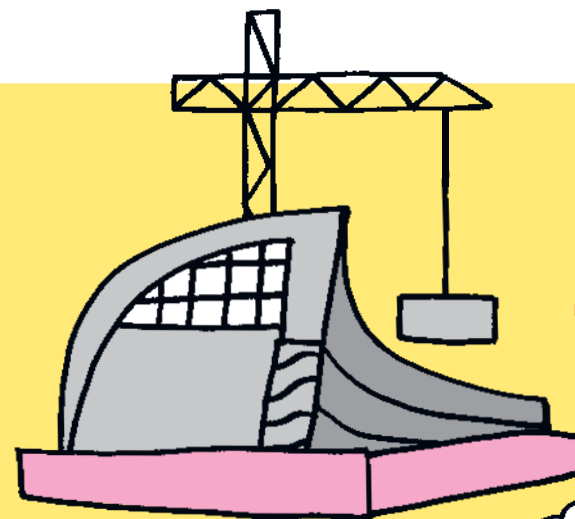
**Louise Bourgeois**  
at Helsinki City Art  
Museum in Meilahti  
28 April – 16 July 1995

# 1996

**Annantalo's 10th anniversary approaches.** How to combine the anniversary with theme teaching? A capital idea comes about: self-adornment. Artist teacher and textile artist Virpi Vesanen-Laukkanen is appointed the producer curator.

## KEVÄT

The art teaching theme of the senses is being run at the same time. Children's works on the senses are displayed – sensory spaces, fragrant sculptures, compositions for junk instruments.



The art world has a strong focus on corporeality, body modification, tattoos, performances, a multi-sensory approach, photography and video art. Kiasma is being built, surrounded by a pink fence.

**Teaching materials are procured and prepared**  
– slideshows, books, art photos.

**26 Sep: art education meeting.** Self-adornment that combines the mind and the body. Is this art? Shared assignments for art groups: 1) a piece of jewellery and 2) adornment of the pupil's own body, photography (in the studio).

**23 Nov: jewellery course for teachers**

**The great sculpture weekend.** 15 young people over the age of 9 build large naked human figures (á 4 m): Eeva and Sergei.

**A two-week photography studio** where adorned children have their photos taken. The photos are used to build the work '450 Ways to Self-adorn', size 480 x 140 cm.

**21 Mar: art teaching meeting.** How has the theme work been going?

**Annette Messenger's book as inspiration**

**20 Mar – 6 Apr: a tattooed Ålander at the gallery.** A producer of Annantalo receives a tattoo.



**Art teaching spring meeting at Cultural Centre Caisa on 9 Jan**  
Inspiration lecture: silversmith Eero Taskinen talks about the self-adornment rites of the Nambioik tribe in Papua New Guinea.

## KEVÄT

**Frida Kahlo**  
at the Helsinki City Art Museum  
28 Jan – 24 Apr 1997



# 1997

**Saturday 12 Apr: Annantalo's 10th anniversary carnival and the opening of the Magic of Self-adornment exhibition.** Dance legend Aira Samulin leads the attendees into dance.



**12 Apr – 23 May: the Magic of Self-adornment exhibition.** Works by children and artists are displayed side by side for the first time. Exhibition attendees tattoo Eeva and Sergei and make jewellery for them.

**18 May: Dough!** Contemporary art Sunday. Performance 'A for Behaviour; or, Jane Gathers the Lions with a Roar' by Pia Lindman and her pupils (Gloria Sisters), in which Pia is baked into a dough.



**Exhibition on the road:** the Magic of Self-adornment exhibition is turned into a mini exhibition that fits in a wooden box on wheels – Rauma, Turku, Tallinn, Iceland, Lithuania.

## SYKSY

## KESÄ

# 2000

**Self-adornment workshop container on the corner of Forum.** "The piece of jewellery I made is an urban creation. It symbolises my soul that wants to get out but has not found the key yet." Mikko, 16





# An artist teacher as a theme work producer

Virpi Vesanen-Laukkanen started as a textile art teacher in the freshly opened Annantalo Arts Centre in January 1987. The arts centre began its operations in cold conditions: the wind would blow snow through the window frames and the pupils had their winter coats on.

**Virpi Vesanen-Laukkanen, artist, art pedagogue**

**1987–2001** Textile art teacher at Annantalo

**1996–1997** Instructor of Annantalo's self-adornment theme. Worked previously as a teacher at Aalto University and the Helsinki Adult Education Centre, among others. Has had her own works displayed in several exhibitions both in Finland and abroad

**2008** Artist of the year (Ornamo Design Award)  
**1983** Textile artist, School of Arts, Design and Architecture  
**1994** Artist's pedagogic studies, School of Arts, Design and Architecture  
**2008** Master of Arts, art education, School of Arts, Design and Architecture

→ Virpi Vesanen-Laukkanen and her work 'Evening Dress for Wäinö Aaltonen's Statue 'Maiden of Finland'', 2012.



**V**irpi taught textile art in both 5×2 teaching for schools and hobbyist groups in evenings. In the spring of 1996, she was

asked to serve as the instructor of the self-adornment theme in art teaching. The duties were broad and multifaceted. They included producing and organising the teaching theme, e.g. developing educational contents and preparing teaching materials, as well as planning and curating the exhibition and planning side programming for it.

25 years later, in the winter of early 2021, Virpi was invited to Annantalo by head visual arts teacher Erja Mehto and communication officer Leila Heimonen to talk about the theme and its culminating exhibition. The weather was freezing again, but this time around, the coronavirus had quieted the house down. Only the youngest of pupils were attending their art classes. The classrooms were empty, save for art teachers – called art educators today – holding classes for older pupils remotely (the sudden leap into digital technology covered art teaching as well). We had discussions behind masks.

## Why self-adornment?

The teaching theme of self-adornment was preceded by the theme of the senses, which kicked off the exploration of corporeality. Self-adornment brought a communal and cultural dimension to the proceedings. I was interested in textiles, the messages of clothing and fashion. All of these things

are related to self-adornment, which sounded like an intriguing and unusual theme for art education. It was interesting to find perspectives on the theme together with the people of Annantalo.

The world was opening up at a rapid pace and ethnicity, multiculturalism and aspects such as world music generated interest among Finnish people. As such, foreign cultures were given a strong presence in the self-adornment theme work. What was fascinating about them was their strong visuality – not just their exoticism. They also felt like a mirror in a way: by examining them, we discovered that similar beliefs and needs affect our lives as well. People use clothing, jewellery and hairstyles (as well as body inking and modification nowadays) to separate themselves from others and identify with their own reference group.

We were also preparing for Annantalo's 10th anniversary, and self-adornment went well with the occasion. As such, the anniversary was celebrated with a carnival. After all, carnivals have to do with transformation, adornment and making an appearance, being seen.

## Art teachers' inspiration by the subject – how were the teachers brought onboard?

The art teachers of Annantalo were provided with a full suite of inspiration and support for their teaching: the teaching materials were prepared with care and featured elements such as slideshows about headwear and body adornment. We acquired plenty of



books and collected articles on the subject. Back then, we had no internet to choose teaching materials from.

The art groups were also asked to take part in two shared assignments. One of them was a piece of jewellery and the other a photo sheet consisting of photos of adorned pupils. Not all of the teachers were familiar with jewellery-making techniques, so a jewellery course was held for them. They were also given expert lectures on the subject. What helped me understand the wishes and needs of the teachers was the fact that I had 10 years at Annantalo under my belt – in other words, I was very familiar with the teachers and the working environment.

Annantalo had some 50 art subject teachers, who were working relatively alone. In a situation like that, having a theme deepens the teachers' work and facilitates different perspectives and sharing. Basically, the teaching theme can be anything – everything can be interesting. What is essential is how the theme is approached.

The theme was also discussed and assessed at joint meetings during the process, but it was not really reflected on as the concept is understood today. In general, reflection was still in the process of being established in art teaching at the time.

It was extremely important that cooperation between all the different employees of Annantalo worked. Everyone knew what was happening and what the situation was. The cooperation went smoothly. In addition to the



exhibition working group, the process involved Annantalo's other teachers, material procurer, costume designer, exhibition builder, producers, communication officer and management.

**Would this theme work with today's hot-button issues of cultural appropriation, gendered dressing, sustainable development...?**

It definitely would not work the same way in today's climate. For example, the lexicon would have to be updated. We could also take a more reserved approach to corporeality when working with children. Nowadays, children come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The nudity of Eeva and Sergei could be found offensive. However, the subject is more topical now than it was back then. People modify their bodies and images of their bodies, and making yourself the object of attention on plat-

forms such as Instagram is the norm. Also, climate thinking was yet to be topical in the 1990s, but ecologicality and environmental art were on the rise. It was new and inspiring, and we used plenty of recycled materials when working with pupils.

What was also new about the Magic of Self-adornment exhibition was that children's works were displayed alongside those of contemporary artists. The artists also gave their own adult perspectives on self-adornment in the exhibition texts. During the exhibition, the theme of contemporary art and corporeality was also displayed at a weekend event for performance art.

The goal was for all the children and young people to have their works displayed, and this was achieved with the '*450 Ways to Self-adorn*' photo sheet. This worked across artistic boundaries, and there were also children studying performance arts involved, meaning that almost every Annantalo pupil took part in the work. And this also brought the entire teaching staff together to work on the theme concretely.

**You are both an artist and an art pedagogue. How do these roles manifest themselves in your teaching?**

Being an artist teacher is evident in the way you approach the subject at hand. An artist's approach to instruction is holistic, not focusing on technique first and foremost. Your personality is a factor: everyone approaches teaching in their own way, through their personal

history and current situation. An artist teacher will take what they have discovered and learned in their own art and utilise it in their teaching. Having a direct connection with the field or art is also a factor, as it can be a source of new ways to approach things.

My pedagogy studies have also supported my teaching work. They provide you with tools for approaching the things that you are teaching. The teaching provided by an artist teacher is built on artistic work, but having pedagogic knowledge on the side will help you not burn yourself out, for example. You can put things into different perspectives.

**Working with your hands and the significance of materials to children?**

In an urban environment, materiality – touching and working on things – is not a given for children.

There is a connection between thinking and working with your hands. The processes of working with your hands can be time-consuming and require persistence. When working with children, you have to provide them with joyful experiences and enable them to take baby steps towards their own thing. You can fix and change things made by hand, which is great.

However, I am not inspired by material-based art education alone, as I am a text-based art educator. The text basis is important to me as an artist. The way I have defined it is that my works come about when a story and a material come together.



**Child orientation – how was it implemented in connection with the self-adornment theme?**

A genuinely interested adult is the most important factor when a child and art meet. The child will feel that they are unique and their work is interesting. The starting point is based on Annantalo's basic principles, i.e. that Annantalo will provide children with the best possible facilities, as well as professional-level materials and equipment. The facilities are often better than the artist teacher's own!

When we worked on the self-adornment theme, we had plenty of room for play, such as makeovers and masquerading. Through play, children learn new skills and things about themselves, their friends and other people.

Participation and equality are inherently present in Annantalo's structures, such as its 5x2 art teaching, providing

many children with an opportunity to establish a connection with art. That is valuable! My own pedagogy in terms of the self-adornment theme was based on the children making discoveries. I gave them a certain framework, but I helped them discover and implement their own solutions. I encouraged them to make their own individual choices. And what is important is that this was made possible by – and hinged on – small teaching groups and a calm situation with unhurried progress.

**In 2021, Virpi had the following to say about her own art:**

“In my art, the subject determines the implementation method. I make reliefs from recycled materials, dress sculptures from paper and soft sculptures from fabric. I use handiwork methods as well as textile materials and techniques. My output also includes photos and small-scale video works, as well as environmental and community works of art. In my art, I interpret myths and images of womanhood and play with clichés. Now, the theme of my work is the notion of a person's grandmother's place. It is a space, time and place in which different generations and two different cultures meet. I marvel, play and expose myself to things happening. Through art, I perceive a space in which something new is created in dialogue between different ages.”



# Cultural Courses

## A multi-art approach to current phenomena

Annantalo's cultural courses for lower and upper secondary school pupils have provided phenomenon-based learning for two decades. The courses delve into current phenomena, tackling even challenging themes. The courses consist of performances and exhibitions picked from art operators' seasonal programmes, expert lectures, artist meetings and workshops for different art subjects.

Text Kikka Hahtomaa

**T**he cultural courses originate from the Cult Card. It was a benefit card distributed to ninth-graders that gave access to the art institutions of the Helsinki metropolitan area for a very low price or even for free. The Cult Card ultimately did not see much use among young people, so the programme was ended in 2008. However, it led to the creation and development of significant procedures and projects that have enriched and benefited the cultural and art education of schools and the development, expansion and establishment of art operators' audience work at

schools, as well as art operators' networking and the focusing of programme and event marketing for schools.

At first, the plan was for schools to organise culture courses to support the use of the Cult Card and for Annantalo to hold workshop-focused art familiarisation courses. However, the schools lacked the resources and know-how needed, so the courses were instead produced by the Centre for Cultural Affairs. Once the operations had found an established format, it felt natural to transfer the production of the courses from the Centre for Cultural Affairs to the Annantalo Arts Centre in 2002.

In theme-based courses, different phenomena of life are studied with varying themes. The culture courses were trendsetters for phenomenon-based learning and expanding the learning environment to cover the entire city

### Cultural courses

Planning work for the cultural courses began some 6–12 months prior with inquiries about the programmes that cultural and art operators in the Helsinki metropolitan area had for the next season. We would come across some interesting exhibition, programme or performance around which we would start planning other events. Or we would be interested in some theme or phenomenon based on which we would examine the upcoming programme offerings.

In other words, we did not discover anything new, but instead we combined the operators' existing offerings. When deciding on the themes, it was important that they corresponded with the contents of the curricula and contributed to the objectives of the larger subject wholes. In addition to familiarisation with art, we complemented the course with expert lectures and workshops, among other things. We strived to plan the themes so that they would interest young people and teachers alike. We would also realise a teacher's wish for a certain theme and use that as the basis for planning other course contents.

More than a thousand pupils would attend the courses annually, with 20% of the attendees being special needs class pupils. Roughly 15% of the courses focused on other cultures, immigration or otherness.

In a way, the cultural courses were ahead of their time and served as trendsetters in terms of phenomenon-based learning and expanding the learning environment to cover the entire city.

### Tripartite model and cooperation with the university

Practical considerations yielded a tripartite model based on cooperation between the Centre for Cultural Affairs, the Education Department (schools and teachers) and cultural and art operators in the region.

We made an agreement with the University of Helsinki that I would regularly have students in the culture course team as trainees.

### Cultural courses from the perspective of the Centre for Cultural Affairs

The City of Helsinki Centre for Cultural Affairs was tasked with creating a favourable atmosphere and conditions for making and experiencing art and culture in Helsinki. The culture courses contributed to that task by familiarising young people with the City's art institutions. Another objective of the courses was to make art and culture more accessible and cooperate with schools to provide young people with art education regardless of the financial, social or cultural situation of their families.



As some of the course events were also held in these regional cultural centres, awareness of them increased among young people, lowering the threshold to join in. The culture courses continued the objectives of 5×2 art education for lower stage comprehensive schools, with the world of young people kept in mind.

Artist meetings, looking behind the scenes and the close participation of a cultural producer in the course events broadened young people's views on the structures and possibilities of the cultural world.

From the producers' perspective, planning the courses was motivating. They were able to utilise their own interests and their extensive knowledge of culture and art in selecting themes and planning contents. Joint retreats and regular meetings with other colleagues producing cultural courses developed each producer's professionalism almost without realising it as everyone shared their know-how and knowledge. The team meetings were also important in terms of receiving peer support.

### **Cultural courses from the perspective of cultural and art operators**

At the end of the 20th century, audience work was still in its early stages in Finland. The largest museums already had their own museum pedagogy departments and larger art institutions had established audience work units. However, they largely carried out their audience work in addition to their other duties with limited resources. Helsinki's role as a Capital of Culture in 2000 and related projects and excursions to countries such as the UK also increased Finnish people's awareness of the school cooperation and audience work carried out over there.

From the perspective of cultural and art operators, the objectives included expanding the audience base, increasing awareness and strengthening cooperation between schools and art institutions. What was delightful was that more and more art institutions found it important to have an opportunity to utilise the cooperation with schools to deepen young people's understanding of the art-making process and the art experience, thereby also providing them with new experiences and discoveries. Direct interaction with the young audience and encountering the world of young people also gave art operators an opportunity to broaden their perspective in their own audience work and develop their work that way as well. For individual artists, the culture courses also meant increasing work opportunities.

### **Cultural courses from the perspective of schools and teachers**

From the perspective of schools and teachers, the courses served as a tool for implementing larger subject wholes and integrative learning. Schools had reduced their art lessons and elective courses, so the courses supplemented and supported their other art and cultural education endeavours. The courses brought themes to the schools' teaching that were close to young people's own experiences.

[In 2003, a class of Helsingin yhteislyseo attended the course '*Tough Guys Don't Cry*'.] "Pupils particularly in eastern Helsinki have received pleasant experiences. They have familiarised themselves with true stars and seen that culture belongs to everybody. It is neither elitism nor the privilege of only a few.

The fact that the course familiarises children in Helsinki with locations of their own city, starting from metro journeys, has not been without its challenges. The courses have lowered the children's threshold to go to the ticket booth of a theatre themselves, for example." – Finnish language lecturer Anita Koivulehto, *Kulttuurikurssit. Opettajan opas*, 2003

Several special groups and classes took part in the courses, including 'my own career' and 10th grade classes. The pupils of such classes have a great need for tailored teaching that deviates from normal teaching methods. The goals of the courses included strengthening the pupils' social skills by enabling them to take some responsibility in the organisation of the course events, and the classes were divided at the workshops into small groups of a few pupils where possible in order to facilitate more personal instruction.

"On 7 December 2004, Q-theater premiered a performance entitled '*Blind Spot*'. The performance was written and performed by special needs pupils of Naulakallio School in Helsinki. The starting point of the project was to prepare a performance based on themes arising from the performance '*Foul-mouthed Princess*' featured in Q-theater's programme this autumn. I took young people to see the show, after which we talked about what we thought it was about and began to use the themes we identified to build our own performance. -- All of the special needs pupils of Naulakallio School have underlying issues that prevent them from doing well in conventional

comprehensive school; usually serious social problems (the majority of the pupils live in an institution) as well as learning and attention disorders. -- I believe that the greatest accomplishments of the project have to do with the young people getting an opportunity to understand themselves and matters related to their own lives, making them visible to others. -- The young people's desire to finish the performance improved their ability to take responsibility and demand responsibility from others.

The young people's journey as self-expressers, from "fuck that, I'm not doing it" to acting on stage independently for 45 minutes and bearing responsibility with pride, has been something to behold. -- In this sense, *Blind spot* was professional theatre; everyone was 100% responsible for contributing to the whole in order to realise the shared vision, whereby they also received an experience of how it feels to be trustworthy. -- A boy with a serious attention deficit disorder told me after the first performance that he liked performing because time disappears on stage. "You just are there and do what you have to do to make the scene work." I would call that an experience of presence put into words." – Jaana Taskinen, theatre director, Q-theater's audience work executive

Feedback from both teachers and pupils indicated that the courses increased group bonding and learning motivation. Several teachers found the unconventional studies to be a breath of fresh air, and at best, they received some new tools for teaching.



“We are major consumers of the cultural courses: our school has taken part every year, sometimes twice. The reasons are clear.

It is fantastic for the school that the City provides tickets free of charge. Before coming to us, some of our lower secondary school pupils had only seen puppet theatre performances with their daycare centre, and many of them had never visited a museum, either. The expert speeches and various workshops of the cultural courses have served as an excellent springboard for independent thinking and activities alike.

For teachers, the cultural courses have provided welcome inspiration and ideas for planning their own teaching as well. For their part, young people should discover that institutions with the word ‘national’ in the name are not necessarily just dusty old relics. The courses have changed many people’s notions of theatre, opera and museums.

‘Art for the sake of art’ does not appear to be a cornerstone in our thinking: we have usually attended courses that have some kind of a societal theme. This is also indicated by the names of the courses, such as ‘*Climate Art*’, ‘*Societal/Political Aspects in Art*’, ‘*Unruly Rule*’ or ‘*Good, Bad Human Being*’. Art does not exist in a vacuum, nor is it an island, and as such, it should not be aimed at sensitive poet girls and ladies with flower hats exclusively. When new people encounter art, it may be surprising for both the creators and the recipients.”  
– teachers Eveliina Ventelä and Elena Kotala from Herttoniemi Coeducational School

### Cultural courses from the perspective of young people

Even though we had plenty of art services available in Helsinki – and still do – too many young people miss out on them because of financial, social, cultural or other obstacles. With the cultural courses, we have strived towards getting as many young people as possible in contact with art experiences regardless of their place of residence or level of wealth.

Among other things, the cultural courses provided young people with keys for encountering themselves and the world, as well as joyous and even comforting experiences and discoveries. The art performances helped them distance themselves from difficult topics and process them better.

“When selecting the course programming, it is important to think about how we could also provide young people with new and fresh art experiences, showcase art in a diverse manner and, on the other hand, offer something suitably safe and age-appropriate from the offerings intended mainly for adult audiences. The purpose of the cultural courses is to provide a point of contact with the field of art. Furthermore, the culture courses make it possible to bring up topics related to young people’s life and identity in a subtle manner that is not possible in conventional school teaching. Feedback received on the culture courses also supports the belief that the events of the courses sensitise young people to notice certain things and phenomena around them and give thought to the surrounding world and themselves as part of it. --

The artist meetings of the courses provide an opportunity to experience something that cannot necessarily be experienced otherwise and that attendees can look back to later. The effect is not one-way, either, as the artists visiting the courses often applaud the experience in their feedback. --

-- Surprisingly many people go to a theatre, concert or dance performance for the first time in their life on one of the cultural courses.

The cultural courses realise the democratic ideal of culture in the best possible way. Having lower secondary school classes as the most significant target group of the cultural courses is justified, as the best way to reach socially and financially different groups in Finnish society is through comprehensive schools. In particular, the courses reach pupils who might otherwise never find the field of art and culture.”  
– Anna von Bagh, university student, internship report



### Tools to support teachers

**The Teachers’ Guide** was first distributed as a copied handout and then as a printed publication to schools to support the planning and implementation of cultural courses. The guide was connected to an article by actress *Virpi Rautsiala* from Kuopio City Theatre, in which Rautsiala gives plenty of tips for producing cultural courses in other parts of Finland as well. We distributed the guide across Finland through the Taikalamppu network. As the cultural course method developed, a revised edition of the Teachers’ Guide was published in 2006.

**Training for teachers.** In addition to meeting with the teachers of each course before the courses began, we provided them with a training day once every autumn and spring semester. The topics have included titles such as ‘*Participatory School – a Threat or an Opportunity*’ and ‘*The Pull of Work, Renewal, Dedication, Commitment, Profit Sharing... – Sound Familiar?*’. The training days always included lectures, discussions and group work. At the same time, the training days served as information provision events. At the end of the day, we provided the teachers with an art event to which operators gave them affordable tickets.

We also held “pupil-free” culture courses for teachers. They were approved teacher work day (VESO) courses, and the Education Department paid the substitute expenses of all attending teachers. The same themes were usually applied to courses held for young people, albeit with slightly different perspectives and emphases. The basic idea of the cultural courses for teachers was to think about ways for teachers of different subjects to integrate art into their own teaching.

**Pupils' Workbook.** Published in the spring of 2004, the Pupils' Workbook was part of project producer Tiina Susiluoto's master's thesis. The book provides pupils with keys to understanding the significance, essence and importance of art. Among other things, it provides instructions for creating a portfolio, tips and help for interpreting works of art, and information about the status of art in our society.

**Teachers' Cultural Calendar.** The Teachers' Cultural Calendar was created in 2000 to reduce the flood of information targeted at teachers and centralise the information provision of art operators. Cultural and art operators were not the only sources of marketing materials aimed at schools. In order to mitigate the flood, I first delivered art operators' flyers and brochures to the Education Department's postage centre, from where they were sent to schools. However, working as a postage intermediary took up an unreasonable chunk of my work resources and was arduous and difficult.

The National Opera's audience work officer at the time, *Ulla Laurio*, brought a printed "Kulturtermin" for teachers from Gothenburg. It was used as a model for creating the Teachers' Cultural Calendar that featured not only the contact information of operators in the Helsinki metropolitan area, but also cultural events for children and young people, featuring workshops and art education projects. In its initial years, the calendar was published four times a year and distributed to schools free of charge. It also served as a free marketing channel for art operators. The calendar immediately became so popular among operators that the first issues featured more than 200

events, performances, exhibitions, etc. from roughly a hundred different operators.

## Kultus.fi

The www.kultus.fi website was developed in 2003 to complement the printed calendar. Based on user surveys, teachers and many operators continued to wish for a complementary (and increasingly thicker) paper calendar for a long time after the website's launch. Smartphones and tablets did not exist yet, and even laptop computers were somewhat rare. However, the publishing schedule of the paper calendar was cut down to twice a year, and the name was changed into '*Kultus – Teachers' Cultural Calendar*'.

Eventually, as Kultus.fi updates and smartphones became more common and teachers had more computers at their disposal, the publishing of the paper calendar was ended.



## Tools to support cultural courses – kulttuurikurssit.fi

The Kulttuurikurssit.fi website was launched in the spring of 2005 for both teachers and pupils to use. The website was open to all, but course participants would receive additional services by logging in. The website featured updated course information and links, articles and assignments related to the themes of the courses. One objective of providing open access was that the materials and guides of the website could be utilised by teachers anywhere in Finland or operators such as Rovaniemi Theatre when planning the integration of culture and art into school teaching.

Back in the early 2000s, computers and the internet were used at schools very sporadically. We were ahead of our time! Updating the website took up too much of the producers' time in relation to how little it was ultimately used, so after a few years, we decided to shut it down.

## University trainees and report

Since nearly the very beginning, my working partner was a trainee from the University of Helsinki. In the first couple of years, we had two trainees simultaneously for three months each semester. Since 2003, we hired one trainee for roughly half a year at a time, one for each semester.

In addition to acting as the project coordinator for the courses, the trainee would observe course events at schools and performances alike. At the end of the

courses, the trainee would collect feedback from the teachers, the pupils, the lecturers and the workshop leaders and write a report on the courses of the semester to cap off their training period. The reports served as a valuable basis for the producer team in the assessment and development of courses.

The trainees' role and participation in the culture course activities and their development was absolutely invaluable. They still had clear memories of their own school days and youth-related growing pains. On the other hand, growing up and studying at the university had given them more perspective on things. The trainees brought in fresh ideas for selecting course themes and views on societal phenomena that were important from young people's perspective.

For myself as a senior worker and executive producer, working with the trainees was the best part of my job. Interesting and inspiring discussions about values and morals were a daily occurrence with them. To prevent sticking to routines, I can sincerely recommend trying close pair work with young sincere, wise, idea-rich and enthusiastic trainees.





## Expert lectures and artist meetings

Over the years, young people attending the courses would encounter often well-known experts and artists representing different fields. We producers played an essential role in facilitating and arranging these encounters. Through our work, we knew a lot of people in the field of culture and art in particular, while our university trainees would have knowledge of or experience with experts of other fields.

Although the experts and artists invited to the courses were for the most part professionals of their respective fields and seasoned public speakers, it was occasionally confusing how many of them were even intimidated by the prospect of meeting young people. As very many experts had turned to us for help with encountering young people, cultural producer *Hanna Westerholm* from Stoa wrote a booklet entitled '*Tips for Cultural Course Lecturers*' for them.

### What kind of a lecture?

"You should begin your lecture by telling the audience who you are. Young people are always interested in who they are dealing with and why. Tell them about yourself and your work, how you ended up in your field, what you are interested in, why you in particular were asked to talk about this subject. Once the audience have established some kind of a connection with the visitor, they tend to be more interested in the subject as well.

When talking, keep in mind the audience's age, level of knowledge and language. The young people have come to the lecture with

their class as part of the course programme. It is very probable that they are not particularly well-versed in the subject at hand – on the contrary, your job is to pique their interest in it.

Avoiding academic speak is recommended; there is no reason to use difficult words or special terminology. Clear spoken language works the best, and if difficult words are unavoidable, be sure to explain what they mean.

Select perspectives that you would imagine to be of interest to young people. Give them plenty of concrete real-world examples. Humour, anecdotes or even gossip are not forbidden, either!

Forget references to well-known theorists, thinkers and sources. If you drop too many unfamiliar names, the audience will grow frustrated.

The back row will also pay more attention if you take a conversational approach. Get the young people involved right from the start, e.g. by asking them easy questions that anyone can answer. Remember that the majority of the audience never experienced the 1980s – much less the 1970s. They are not likely to know much about the aesthetics of French cinema or what the theatre group *Jumalan teatteri* is remembered for."

Remember that the majority of the audience never experienced the 1980s – much less the 1970s.

## Cultural course workshops and their instructors

What was essential on each cultural course was the workshops and the activities themselves, while the workshop instructors varied depending on the theme and contents of the course. They were mostly professionals of their respective fields, very often art pedagogues from Annantalo, but occasionally enthusiasts and hobbyists, too. We also carried out regular cooperation with a sexual educator.

### Art in a shopping trolley – Working as a cultural course workshop instructor in 2005–2017

"In the spring of 2005, Annantalo producer Kikka Hahtomaa asked me whether I would be interested in holding a course for lower secondary school pupils that would involve giving thought to sexuality and gender identity through art. This first cultural course kicked off my long stint as a cultural course instructor.

For an art educator, the world of cultural courses provided a unique setting for developing my own professional identity and way of doing things.

The themes of the courses were often taken directly from the core of life and such that they are featured in the ponderings of almost every young person, e.g. love, death, loneliness and fear. We did not shy away from even challenging subjects when selecting themes. When planning visual art workshops, I examined and felt out the theme both

in my mind and concretely, thinking about what methods and viewpoints I could use to get young people to tackle the subject in a diverse manner. In terms of content, I based my planning on needs and intuition in the worlds of contemporary art, art history, popular culture imagery, different visual expression techniques and surprising materials selections. Over the years, I have planned workshops for more than 50 different cultural courses.

The most exciting points in the concretisation of workshops were the moments when I arrived at a school with a shopping trolley full of material. Of course, stepping into an unfamiliar school, into an unfamiliar teachers' room and in front of unfamiliar pupils time and again will improve your ability to seize such situations quickly and confidently. The next critical moment comes when I begin to prepare the pupils for an image-based assignment. Young people can be quite merciless when assessing an adult that steps in front of them with things

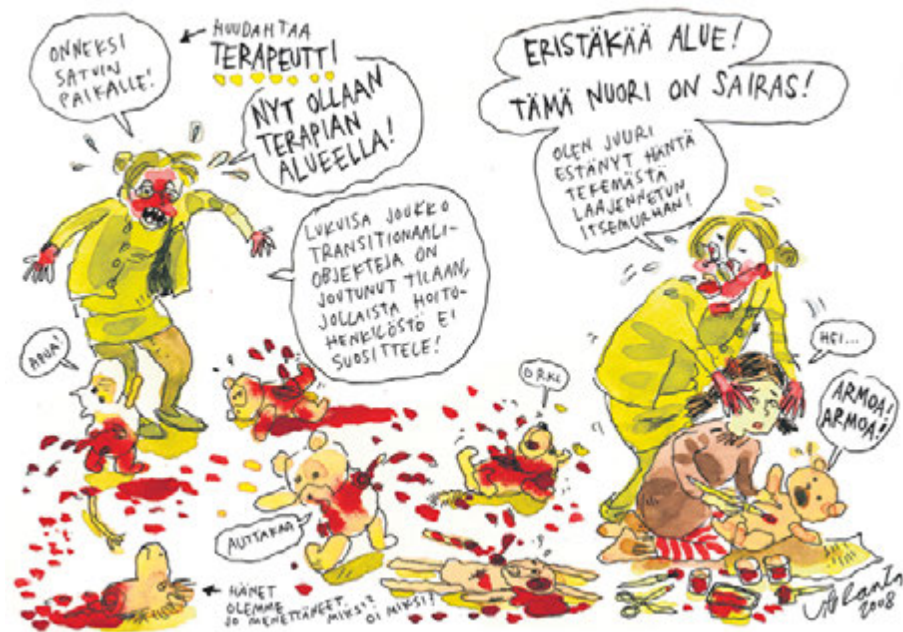


to say and contents that they themselves find important. You only have a few minutes to win them over. Either they become interested or the game is up. What is essential here as well is to have interesting themes, as they serve as dynamos that power activities and against which thoughts are mirrored.

I find it significant that every school had an identical opportunity to participate. For myself, this has naturally provided a magnificent perspective into different school realities in Helsinki and how being young appears to be a universal experience at its core. I did, however, also observe occasional major differences depending on which part of Helsinki the young people live in.

The fact that visual arts are included in Finnish comprehensive school subjects has influenced the contents of my workshops. The way I see it, visual art workshops should provide elements and methods that are not necessarily included in the subject of visual arts or the curriculum, or at least are not the primary content of the teaching. My objective has not been to really teach image-making techniques, for example, but to provide surprising interventions in everyday school life and the pupils' thinking through means of art. The theme being discussed is at the centre of everything at all times, and visual arts are merely one way to work on it."

– Anne Rossi-Horto



← On All Saints' Day 2008, Helsingin Sanomat featured a front page article on its culture section about one of the workshops of the 'Lovely, Ghastly Horror' cultural course. The course was taught by Anne Rossi-Horto. The workshop involved using discarded plush toys as materials. The article caused an unprecedented turmoil in the media and on online platforms. Cartoonist Ville Ranta's cartoon commented on this controversy, especially the panic and worry about what kind of thoughts young people have and how those thoughts are allowed to be made visible in young people's art work.

## Empowering workshop methods – Breakaways

During the second Taikalamppu season in 2006–2008, the key objective was to develop workshop methods aiming at empowerment on the cultural courses and deliver these methods to teachers in the form of guides.

The drama, visual art, literary art, photography and video workshops of the cultural courses were instructed by the same pedagogues for two years. They were *Jaana Taskinen* in drama, *Anne Rossi-Horto* in visual arts, *Liisa Vilkkumaa* in literary art, *Heidi Koljonen* in photography, and *Ismo Kiesiläinen* and *Mikko Toiviainen* in video. Based on their practical work, research literature, self-assessment, lectures, feedback from pupils and teachers, and discussions with each other and other artists or pedagogues, they each developed a discipline-specific workshop method that provided pupils (and why not teachers themselves) with experiences that were restorative and empowering, sometimes considerably so. The workshops involve breaking away from familiar school routines, which is why these workshop methods for different art subjects were given the shared name *Repäisyjä* ('Breakaways').

In addition to all lower and upper secondary schools in Helsinki, the method guides were distributed to all Finnish Taikalamppu Centres and made available to everyone interested online.

## Annantalo as a facilitator

In the early 2000s, Annantalo had established its position as an arts centre for children and young people, and as an expert in the field. Among other things, Annantalo had developed a 5x2 art teaching programme for lower stage comprehensive schools and high-quality pedagogic cultural and theme exhibitions that encompass all of Annantalo's activities.

With different projects, it was discovered that both schools and art and cultural operators worked well in the field by themselves, each depending on their resources and interests. In order to make the audience work aimed at schools extensively a goal-oriented and established operation, structures and a coordinator were needed. The task fell upon Annantalo.

In addition to planning and implementing the cultural courses, the coordination work involved creating and maintaining a network of operators, holding training events and seminars for teachers and operators, and making all kinds of cooperation between schools and operators easier. Personally, I saw Annantalo and my role in it as an intermediary and facilitator first and foremost, as well as an acquirer of financing.

## Cooperation with art operators, HIMO seminars

Joint network meetings gave us audience workers, museum lecturers and cultural producers – who otherwise tend to work very much alone – an opportunity to meet colleagues, exchange opinions and test our own ideas.



The meetings gave birth to the idea of organising an *unboundedly multidisciplinary* (HIMO for short in Finnish) seminar, the first edition of which was held in November 2005. HIMO2 was held in 2007, HIMO3 in 2011 and the last edition HIMO4 in 2013.

The two-day seminars always followed the same structure: interesting case presentations, Finnish and foreign expert speakers and workshops held by operators in the network.

The main responsibility for the arrangements and funding acquisition fell upon Annantalo, but the network member operators made an enormous contribution by inviting and hosting speakers and planning and holding workshops. All of the HIMO seminars were characterised by unbounded enthusiasm and the joy of working together.

#### **As an art operator on cultural courses**

“In my recollections, the beginning of the current millennium was characterised by the creation of new things. We developed museum learning with great enthusiasm and in a communal manner. We kept ourselves up to date on what others were doing, sought good models from around the world and studied together. We wanted to change museums and based our belief in the future on museum pedagogy.

The pioneer years, as I see that period of time, were characterised by communality and creativity. Back then, there was not such an abundance of events and platforms, the diversity of creators was the starting point, and stagnancy was gone, for the most part. Having a low threshold and a good kind of mundanity

worked. The cooperation provided training and peer learning as much as a morale boost.

I remember our joint meetings at Annantalo. A nicely mixed group of art institution people gathered in the hall. We were told about ambitious and exciting up-and-running projects. I also got to proudly present things from my own museum – and ask for advice.

The ceiling was high, but our approach at first was quite hands-on. When schools needed to be informed of the museum programme, I would print A4s and haul a tall stack of them to the Education Department for distribution to schools. The Teachers’ Cultural Calendar – later called Kultus – published first on paper and soon after online brought about a major change. The information reached teachers, but we at the museum also received a whole new outlook on what our field of operation was like. As such, the joint marketing efforts aimed at teachers have increased understanding of schools’ practices and helped operators develop their own offerings – this is service design!

20 years ago, having a phenomenon-oriented approach was not mainstream, but the power of the culture course method was plain to see. It has been inspiring to see what kind of larger wholes the people of Annantalo have nabbed our programme for at a given time. What has been important is that our contents generate interest, but the recipients have no desire to influence them. And that the professional production was taken care of by a top-of-the-line expert, Annantalo.

Those days left me with a permanent strong appreciation for the work of my colleagues. Cooperation and co-development are in my blood and a continuing pursuit of mine. The best lessons always come from working together. It is never straightforward and can often be difficult, but progress is always made.”  
– Leena Svinhufvud, educational curator, Design Museum

### **Cooperation with schools and the Education Department**

Naturally, working with schools was the most important aspect, but it was also the most challenging. The range of things affecting everyday school life – timetables, courses, exam weeks and various work practice periods, autumn breaks, etc. – was and is enormous, on top of which it also varied from school to school.

Even though the schools were in a relatively autonomous position, interaction and cooperation with the Education Department was extremely important as well. Cooperation with two institutions vastly different in terms of size and operating culture was challenging at times, and annual funding negotiations were tight. However, the Education Department had plenty of information about aspects such as schools’ operating modes, bureaucracy and administration that can be nebulous to external operators without close cooperation. For our part, we producers had robust know-how related to culture and art, as well as good networks. As such, not only

were we indispensable to one another, but we expanded each other’s expertise. However, our goal was ultimately the same: to increase young people’s well-being.

### **In conclusion**

Looking back, it is a joy to see how pioneering our work was and how we were even ahead of our time in many respects. I believe that a lot of this can be attributed to the fact that there was less bureaucracy in the early 2000s. Workers were free to implement their own ideas and views for the common good, and that was valued. Sure, there were some inevitable blunders along the way, but we learned from them and never dwelled on them.

All in all, searching for and going through documents and materials spanning nearly two decades has been trying at times, but it has also been very fruitful and rewarding. What I remember the most is the joy of working with the dozens and dozens of teachers, art operators and colleagues, as well as the wonderful trainees with whom I got to work in accordance with my values, hopefully making a small contribution to building a better world.

Children will get the world  
from our hands / they’ll  
plant immortal trees

Nazim Hikmet (Let’s Give the World to the Children)

# Glossary

**5×2 art education** Free-of-charge art education periods that Annantalo has provided to schools since its early days. The course duration is 2 hours a week for 5 weeks.

**Annantalo’s cultural and theme exhibitions**

Self-produced major exhibitions spreading over the entire building that featured an extensive side programme for daycare and school groups and the audience alike (guidance, workshops, lectures, event days, publications). In Finnish and Swedish.

**Children’s Book Café Haitula** As far as is known, Finland’s first book café for children operated at Annantalo in 2012–2018. The café’s patron was poet Kirsi Kunnas.

**Art Clinic** Art activities intended for children aged 3–5 and together with their guardians to support art education at home.

**City of Helsinki Cultural Office** Currently the Culture and Leisure Division’s Cultural Services. The administration of Annantalo was transferred from the Cultural Services to the Cultural Promotion unit in 2020.

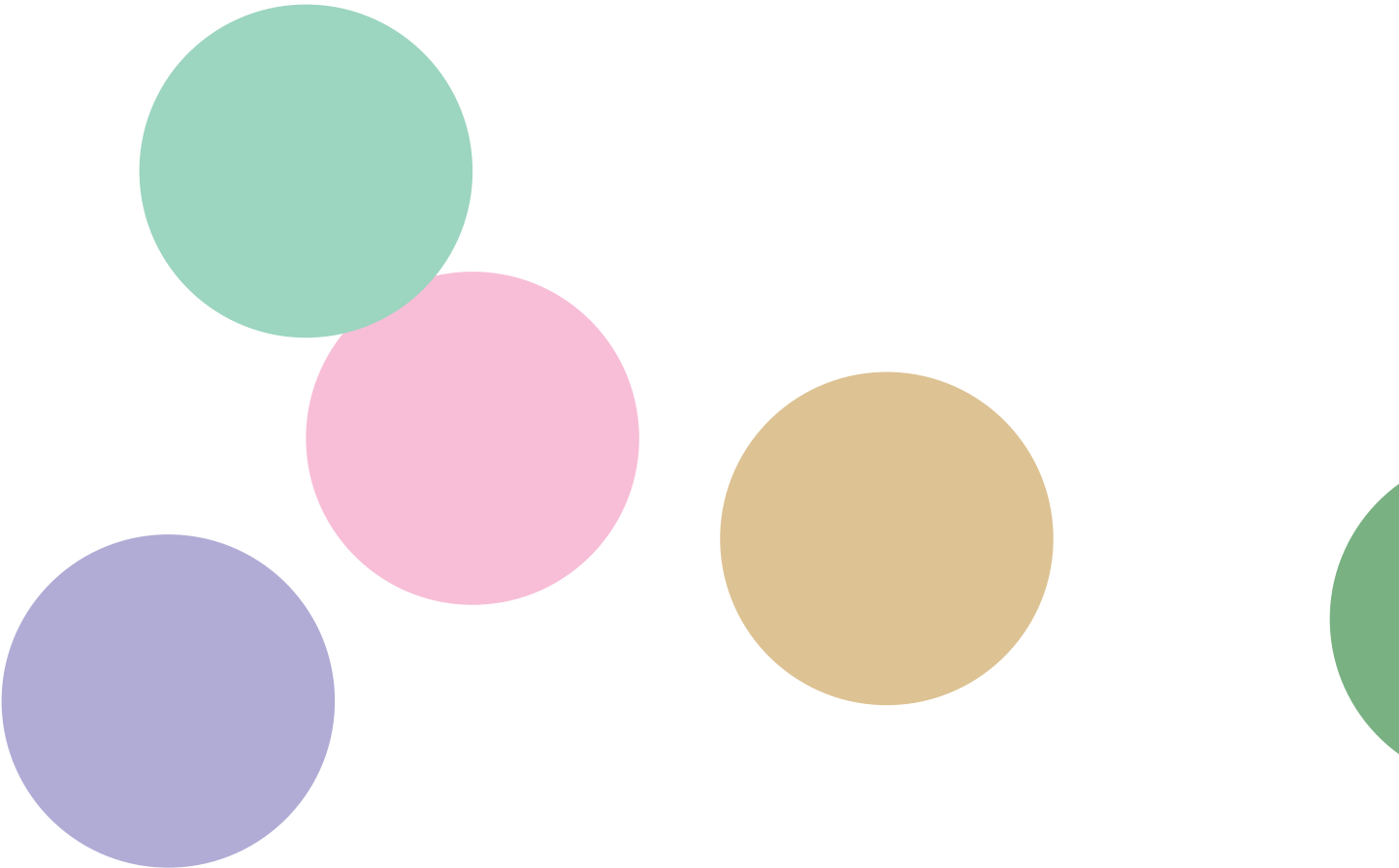
**City of Helsinki Education Department**

Current Education Division

**Taikalamppu** (*‘Aladdin’s Lamp’*) A network of children’s cultural centres appointed by the Ministry of Education in 2003, currently the Association of Finnish Children’s Cultural Centres. Annantalo has been involved since the beginning.

**Annantalo’s cultural and theme exhibitions since its establishment in 1987 to the 100th anniversary of Finnish animation in 2014**

- 1987** *‘From China’*
- 1989** *‘Egypt then and now’*
- 1990** *‘The Maya and the Aztecs’*
- 1991** *‘The Heirs of Sundiata’*, an exhibition on the present day in West Africa
- 1992** *‘Helsinki 1917 Shortages and Face Powder’* (Year of Finland’s independence)
- 1993** *‘Tōkaidō – A Highway on the Eastern Sea. Annantalo’s Japan Exhibition’*
- 1994** *‘Visiting a Medieval Village’*
- 1995** *‘Siberia – the Peoples of the Tundra and the Taiga’*
- 1997** *‘The Magic of Self-Adornment’*
- 1999** *‘The Bold and the Beautiful of Antiquity’*
- 2001** *‘Exhibition on Drawing’*
- 2001** *‘Exhibition on Colour’*
- 2004** *‘Rolling – Action! A Brief Grammar of Cinema’*
- 2005** *‘Take Flight, Leonardo da Vinci Exclaimed’*
- 2006** *‘The Enchanted Forest – the World’s of Grimm’s Fairytales’*
- 2007** *‘A Master Painter’s Perfect Circle – Giotto’s Fresco Cycle in the Arena Chapel of Padua’*
- 2009** *‘Pablo & Aleksander – Playing with Picasso’*
- 2012** *‘ART LAB Activity Galleries The North • Bird Nests – Architecture by Birds and other Flying Creatures • Austerity and Splendour – Japanese Tales of Flowers and Beauty • Everyday and Festive Play’*
- 2014** *‘Animakers – an Activity-based Animation Exhibition’*





This publication presents the history of Annantalo through productions and projects that we believe to have significance to this day. In these projects, art has served as the starting point for everything and given birth to new pedagogical innovations and methods, boundary crossings and cooperation partnerships. This book serves as a deepener of understanding and a source of inspiration – as well as information – for younger producers, art teachers, art education researchers and virtually anyone interested in the subject.

**Helsinki**

CONTAINS INFORMATION AND MEMORIES  
35  
YEARS

These recollections commemorate Annantalo's 35th birthday on 23 January 2022.