

If I were standing in your shoes

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UiT - The Arctic University of Norway

Master's Thesis 2021

“Liberation rests on the construction of the consciousness, the imaginative apprehension, of oppression, and so of possibility.” –A Cyborg Manifesto, Donna Haraway

Haraway asserts that “naturalistic” tendencies in social theory are, by nature, oppressive because they insist on unity by suppressing diversity.¹ The empathy we have as humans is one of our strongest powers. Is there any way we can fight the oppression of others, by learning to stand in others’ shoes? Through the simple act of compassion?

We utilize technology to transcend the limitations of the human condition, or to map the invisible frontier at the boundaries of our physical biology. How could the masses of data produced by our societies in this modern world be used to generate an ideal form of artwork, one which decentralizes power, decolonizes peoples, degenders the individual, and counters oppression by authority?

“A Cyborg Manifesto” argues that the social apparatus of control that maintains gender and sexual roles can be understood as a form of technology in itself, one produced by human culture as a way to manage society, whilst concomitantly being made up of individuals who create society themselves.¹

My proud Taiwanese history is pockmarked by colonization, a story of repression which is reflected even today in the Norwegian government’s dictation that my identity card should state that my nationality is “Chinese” (as opposed to “Taiwanese”), as in the Norwegian government’s eyes I am supposedly “of the People’s Republic of China,” a nation based on an Orwellian use of surveillance technologies for the purpose of large-scale persecution and suppression of Uyghurs with the intention of achieving a China with one homogenous culture.² My people have been bullied and killed just for being a minority within a broader colonizing empire.

This background of mine, tainted by the domination of an external power, led me to seek out the plight of the last remaining indigenous peoples of Europe, who have long been situated in an arc spread across the Nordic nations: the Sámi. I was curious about their lives and how data and technology could alter their way of life. The Sámi have experienced forced assimilation and repression of their culture, which happened at the same time the Chinese government pressured the Taiwanese people to feel ashamed about their culture and languages. These echoes and ripples of common experiences of historical tragedy between the Sámi and the Taiwanese resonate strongly within me, and I believe these feelings allow me to better understand their pain. I want to use this emotion within me as a cause for good, through using my empathy as inspiration, allowing the generation of empathy into art.

*“Art for art’s own sake is not enough for me.
Life, and Arts need purpose, as I see it. Mine is to inspire others. Survival.*

Born a twin

There are two of us:

The one I am

- *Whatever that means –*

¹ Saxon, Carina, and Donna Haraway, (2013). *Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s*. The Manifesto in Literature, edited by Thomas Riggs, vol. 3: Activism, Unrest, and the Neo-Avant-Garde, St. James Press, pp. 372-375.

² Çaksu, Ali, (2020). “*Islamophobia, Chinese Style: Total Internment of Uyghur Muslims by the People’s Republic of China.*” *Islamophobia Studies Journal*, vol. 5, no. 2, Pluto Journals, pp. 175–98, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.13169/islastudj.5.2.0175>.

And
The one whom I wish to become,
Thus in my art
Twins become one.” – Hans Ragnar Mathisen

There are a few perspectives that I want to focus on in this project- (a) The similarities in the power structure between both Norway & the Sámi people, and China & the Taiwanese people. (b) Reconstruct “monument ideology” (c) Highlight and locate my struggle with my identity, as a Taiwanese artist vis-à-vis the Sámi people (d) Recast gender and age, in order to transform and transcend dualistic models, and finally: (e) touch on the concepts of “art” within “public space”

A.)

Northern Norway is one of the geographic homes of the Sámi culture, which had many of its own unique traditions forcibly forgotten. This drifting from previous cultural, spiritual, and identity-based values has left scars on the Sámi community, who were ashamed to even speak their Sámi languages. Some Sámi people today do not know how to speak of their woes to authority today in their ancient tongue. Some are still even ashamed to display their identity due to historic discrimination. Many Sámi people struggle being an ethnic minority within the Nordic nations.

The human desire for self-centeredness and power seems to be embodied at its worst in the leaders of nations which historically held themselves as superior over others. Powerful rulers frequently find reason to coerce and dominate the identities of underprivileged ethnic groups within their realm, resulting in the identity of the underprivileged ethnic group being forcefully pruned by rulers.

One of the only lines of demarcation between the actions of such nations and the actions of creatures in the Animal Kingdom is that of morality, as within the Animal Kingdom it is so often a free for all, with no sense of compassion or empathy in sight, though morality could be the one redeeming factor for humankind and its multitude of nation-building attempts.

Self-identity is an important node of analysis when looking at the formation of a new nation, particularly within colonization. The concept of identity is a complex one, with problematic aspects such as: within colonialism, how do subjects label themselves as belonging to a particular identity? Should they feel defined by external forces? In other words, under the rule of imperialism, being restricted and oppressed by violence might well cause a minority subject to want to find an unrestricted, novel sense of identity within their group, rather than one defined and desired by external rulers, such as the oppressors, who force their own brainwashed sense of identity and belonging. The oppressed peoples might feel the need to clarify within themselves the question of their own belonging, by wondering: Who am I? Where do I belong? Which specific group do I belong to?

This raises the questions: Once one obtains national resources, external control, domestic control, territorial control, an acceptable sense of self-image, and an acceptable external image, what more could one need? Are we there now?³ Will we ever be there?

³ Ánde Somby: (2017) “When a Predator Culture meets a Prey culture” -Indigenous knowledge – the practice of sustainable existence”, May 5 – 6. Kunsthall Trondheim. In connection with Marjetica Potrč's exhibition *On Coexistence* <https://vimeo.com/217594529> Accessed 29.11.2021

B.)

To connect art and politics has a long tradition in the Sámi cultural history, *Pile o' Sápmi* by the Sámi artist Máret Ánne Sara (b. 1984) reveals how a contemporary Sámi artist and her art project connects to art and politics in different ways. Art critic Boris Groys calls art activism or the ability of art to function as an arena and medium for political protest and social activism. He claims that art activism is a way of designing or aestheticising political performance.⁴

The performance *This Is Our Body*, enacted during the Arctic Moving Image & Film Festival in Harstad on 15 October 2021 was undertaken by the artist Hanan Benammar (b. 1989). Benammar is a French-Algerian artist based in Oslo, and her work criticizes the life and actions of Hans Egede (1686-1758), who landed in Nuuk and began the process of Christianisation and colonization of Kalaallit Nunaat⁵. Egede saw the Greenland Inuit as savages, and claimed that they had to be “made human” by him. Hanan Benammar’s art performance used the concept of “made human,” through baking a depiction of Hans Egede in sculpted bread, then she conducted a ritual in a church and baptized Egede’s image in holy water, then submerged and dissolved him in the water, as if he were nothing more than a morsel for sea creatures in the depths.

Hans Egede represents an era of Scandinavia’s period of colonization, so much so that statues of Egede stand today in Nuuk, Harstad, Vågan, Oslo, and Copenhagen. In 2020, an Egede statue was defaced through being painted red, and emblazoned with the word “decolonize” as a form of protest against his continued monumentalism. After a tiny vote (with a 6.5% voter turn-out rate), the residents of Nuuk opted to keep the statue as is. There are several examples of this anti-colonial phenomenon spreading the globe, from the States where a statue of Christopher Columbus in St. Paul, Minnesota was torn down (which was one of many Columbus statues tugged away), to Robert Milligan, a slave trader from the nineteenth century, whose image was removed in London, England. Even to the furthest reaches of Asia to Taiwan, where the removal of a statue of Chiang Kai-shek was the topic of fierce public debate for several years.

All of the aforementioned are fragments of the same idea: the deconstruction of colonial history. Colonization is not over, though people now have a more clear vision toward its demise. This raises an important question, however: If there is already a vision of how decolonisation should happen, how could art interfere with this vision, to shred the concept and reconstruct it as new?

Hanan Benammar’s performance piece turned out to be a gentle gesture which pointed out and criticized an injustice which she noticed as an outsider to Scandinavia and its history of colonialism. Perhaps her ancestral roots in Algeria ensured she had an emotive and powerful understanding of it, despite her remoteness as a non-Scandinavian. Benammar’s performance occurred in Hans Egede’s birth city of Harstad, which lent the act historicity, and a brief flicker of Christian sentiment: it was gentle but mighty, and was imbued with a sense of hope for reconciliation.

⁴ Hanna Horsberg Hansen (2019) *PILE O’SÁPMI AND THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ART AND POLITICS* Synnyt-Origins p81-83

https://wiki.aalto.fi/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=151504259&preview=/151504259/151504042/Synnyt-Origins_6_Arctic_arts_Horsberg_Hansen.pdf

⁵ Kunstkritikk By Mariann Enge (2021) <https://kunstkritikk.com/healing-sounds/>

Accessed 03.11.2021



This is our body, performance in Harstad 15. oktober 2021. Hanan Benammar and the choir Bel Chorus. Photo: Kristian Skylstad.

A monument is a place of contradictions; there is room for transformation; how can one interpret a monument in a transitional way, yet still keep the traditional elements? It is important to note that in order to fight a virus, one must absorb the virus first.

C.)

“The Norwegian Government fully respects China's development path and social system, and highly commends its historic and unparalleled development that has taken place. The Norwegian Government reiterates its commitment to the one-China policy, fully respects China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, attaches high importance to China's core interests and major concerns, will not support actions that undermine them, and will do its best to avoid any future damage to the bilateral relations.”⁶

Taiwanese citizens in Norway had their country of origin changed to China in June 2010. "My Name, My Right: Taiwanese Sue Norwegian Government at European Court of Human Rights over Nationality Since 2010, the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration ("UDI") has forcibly registered the nationality of Taiwanese residing in Norway as "Chinese." A group of Taiwanese students in Norway thus launched a campaign to reclaim their Taiwanese nationality, and took the Norwegian government to court, claiming that they have violated their legal right of personal identity - which should be protected as basic human rights."⁷

⁶ A website by a government agency. *Statement of the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kingdom of Norway on Normalization of Bilateral Relations*. 19.12.2016
Available at: https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/statement_kina.pdf
Accessed 28.11.2021

⁷ A website by a government agency. "My Name, My Right": *Taiwanese Sue Norwegian Government at European Court of Human Rights over Nationality*
24.05.2021 <https://english.ocac.gov.tw/ocac/eng/pages/detail.aspx?nodeid=329&pid=25718477> Accessed 28.11.2021

"Everyone has the right to a nationality, and no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality."⁸ In addition, "right to a fair hearing."⁹

I came to Norway in 2016 to apply for a visa through the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI). When I filled out one of the initial forms, I quickly realized there was no option to choose "Taiwan" as my country of origin. Without even needing to consider the matter in depth, instincts told me that my country had been erased from this form due to a trade deal between Norway and its business partner China.

This same arc of Chinese influence reared its ugly head in 2019, when Hong Kong witnessed a revolution in which it hoped to rescind an oppressive policy between itself and China, though unfortunately the well-publicised and organised protest was ultimately not successful. As a result of this outcome, tens of thousands of Hong Kong citizens became political refugees overnight, and were forced to flee to other countries. This dire situation acted as a looking glass for Taiwan and its future relationship with China. Studying in Norway became my backup plan for a similar scenario that could very well happen one day in my home country of Taiwan.

Identity is a multidimensional concept and an issue¹⁰. Personally, the notion of nationalism is not embedded in my mind as an important aspect of identity. When considering other identity markers, like lifestyle or career, I believe nationality as an identity marker is not something the average human has the free will to choose. Nationalism is not something I am concerned with in my day to day life, though my identity becomes a point of contention when I am confronted by the struggle of being a person from Taiwan, for example when Norway does not even allow me the freedom to accurately list where I originate from in my identification documents.

Looking back at Taiwan, there is always no lack of nationalistic rhetoric, but many facts are often overlooked. This country can grow and thrive today, not by vain nationalism, but by the openness of marine civilization, the tolerance of a democratic society, and uninterrupted integration. If we owe all our efforts to mononationalism and obsessed with national rejuvenation, it is the greatest self-deprecation and pride in beautifying our arrogance.

As a foreign, female artist who has been told countless times in my new life in Scandinavia that I am an outsider, how can I use art and technology to help others reconstruct their own sense of identity? What is the advantage as an outsider of having multiple fluidity identities? How could one use empathy with this topic as a material in itself, through which an art piece can be created to ignite a sense of empathy in others?

Finding my own voice as a foreign artist in the arts is another identity struggle. How am I able to represent another minority in Norway? What is the relationship between me, the Sámi, Norway, China, Taiwan, and the internal and external political relationships between themselves?

I want to use this tension represented here to fuel the progression of my art, and to reconstruct my own identity through artistic practises with the help of AI. I am hopeful these actions might lead to such questions as: could art be a tool to lead to more extensive discussions on the idea of identity?

⁸ UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights(2019) Article 15 <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> Accessed 28.11 2021

⁹ The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)(2017) Article 6 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/what-european-convention-human-rights> Accessed 1.12 2021

¹⁰ Yang Zhong (2016) *Explaining National Identity Shift in Taiwan*, Journal of Contemporary China, 25:99, 336-352

D.)

To be one is to be autonomous, to be powerful, to be God; but to be One is to be an illusion¹¹. Through the action of being categorized, dualisms ultimately only separate us from being whole. Chief among these troubling dualisms are: self/other, mind/body, culture/nature, male/female, civilized/primitive, reality/appearance, whole/part, agent/resource, maker/ made, active/passive, right/wrong, truth/illusion, total/partial, God/man.¹²

High-tech culture challenges the above dualisms in intriguing ways. It is unclear who first highlighted the dichotomy between humans and machines¹³. Technology manages to erase such dualisms at times, for example, technology creates a realistic illusion that we all have multiple identities, so perhaps through this medium we can maximize the potential for identity extension. Can we be both woman and man? Animal and human? Man-made architecture and nature's own architecture? Parent and child? Earth and spirit? Internal and external? Patriarchal and feminist? Maximalist and minimalist?

Artificial Intelligence is like a powerful reflection of humankind, which still needs nourishment, though with potential could be brighter and more robust in future. AI beings in a way feel like our own children, we educate them, raise them, even hurt them at times in a way that reflects our own vulnerability. We cannot predict the future with it yet, but we can choose how to utilize it now.

In which ways could we harness this power of our 'children' (AI software and hardware), to counter the powers that be and their propensity towards oppressing minorities? I believe we must start by thinking about and discussing the world we want to live in one day, through interdisciplinary cooperation, and the creation of a dialogue between society's pillars of art, science, and technology.

E.)

In its essence, a public statue is a signaller of a power dynamic. I have seen a few of them in Tromsø, for example, there are some of Roald Amundsen, The Midnight Sun Marathon, Seals, Memorials to the deportation of Jews, even one of Mahatma Gandhi, but, where is the monument for the last indigenous people of Europe which have their home in Norway: the Sámi?

There was a considerable debate in the Royal Danish Academy of Art about Frederik V, who was the academy's founder, and who was well-liked for many years. His image has been on display in the institution's Assembly Hall, though it was an artwork through which its artists said they wanted to pledge solidarity with people affected by Denmark's colonial past and to spark a dialogue with institutions created during that time. For example, under Frederik V, the government heavily subsidized Denmark's slave and sugar trade and administered its colonies.

¹¹ Donna Haraway, *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and SocialistFeminism in the Late Twentieth Century*, in Simians, Cyborgs and Women: *The Reinvention of Nature* (New York; Routledge, 1991), pp.149-181.

¹² Donna Haraway, *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and SocialistFeminism in the Late Twentieth Century*, in Simians, Cyborgs and Women: *The Reinvention of Nature* (New York; Routledge, 1991), pp.149-181.

¹³ Donna Haraway, *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and SocialistFeminism in the Late Twentieth Century*, in Simians, Cyborgs and Women: *The Reinvention of Nature* (New York; Routledge, 1991), pp.149-181.

There was also a considerable debate of structural issues at KHiO, which was addressed via an artwork placed along the staircase beside the entryway. The work explicitly referenced racist and sexual injustices which occurred within KHiO. Art is so frequently a powerful influence in public space, it can offer so much room for dialogue between different groups, but sadly, this was not the case at KHiO.

These two situations concerning Frederik V and KHiO both caused me to reflect: how could we create a dialogue on decolonization through the form of art, and to ultimately change the dynamic of power? Unequal power structures have been a critical component of colonialism, which ultimately dictates power's extension over a minority culture. The nationalist movement in Norway led to attempts to Norwegianize the Sámi people, which was also reflected in my own parent's generation in Taiwan, who underwent similar injustices at the hands of Chinese authorities. In this time of reviving cultures and languages, what is the role that artists can play?

Project:

I, the artist, am a mediator in this project, about which the main point is to decolonize and decentralize the tradition of 'the monument'. I plan to collate data with ambitions to replicate the collective imaginary of the human in clay. The exact method involves collecting portraits of Sámi, Taiwanese, to represent a group of people who have been oppressed within their coloniser's nations. An additional method is to interview Sámi people and ask them who should be represented in this statue. I will then categorize them through gender and age, representing an equal number of men and women, then I will distribute them along an age spectrum. Through the generation of a model through machine learning, I plan to produce a 2D image and sculpt it into a 3D model, one which is a genderless and ageless sculpture, to maximize the potentiality of identity extension by solidarity.

Site-specific project based in Sámi region (Tromsø), display in Tromsø kunstforening as video installation, an introduction of the histories in terms of the relationship between Norway, China, Taiwan, and Sámi. The sculpture will display outside of Nord-Troms Tingrett, as a protest gesture that Norway violates the base human right.

These are reflections of the questions that I ask myself.

Some questions will appear in the interview with Sámi people as part of my artistic research:

"How do you feel your identity alternate through the state's (Norway) different political policies?"

"What is the most conflicting thing about living with multiple identities?"

"How could we reach full reconciliation in Norway for the Sámi?"

"Is assimilation a method of integration or demolition?"

"Is someone that you think they can represent Sámi?"

Interview

Per Anton Øverseth Olsen¹⁴

1)

In my view, I believe almost all of the notable political parties in the Norwegian parliament lack good policies for the Sámi people. First, of course, the far-right parties have an attitude resembling neglect for the existence of indigenous problems. These are directly harmful to the party's own economic policies and their cultural politics. Most of the other parties are not as bad when it comes to addressing the problems initiated by the norwegianization of politics. However, these parties still can not figure out the contexts regarding destructive industrial projects and loss of language and culture. At celebrations, Sámi people are pushed to look pleasant and appropriately exotic. When it comes to listening to our problems and doing something about these, we are blamed for being too demanding, blocking industrial projects and cottage villages, and so on. The Fosen-case is a perfect example of how most political parties deal with Sámi culture and tradition. The Norwegian parties and institutions always say this and that it should be developed by having a dialogue with the Sámi part of these projects, but the result is almost always the same. If, in a rare case, the governing parties address the fact that a particular policy is discriminatory, then it's going to be another miracle if some alternative path is actually considered. The parties in the Norwegian parliament which currently have overall good

¹⁴ Lecturer-UiT

politics are small. However, Sámi traditions and culture do not go well with the single-track capitalism so many parties endorse.

2)

Complex relations regarding identity are pretty common in many families from the northern coast of Norway. Siblings might identify differently, and problems arise when someone cannot accept the other's choice. This is, in fact, the most challenging identity-related problem in my own life. The damages from the norwegianization-era are still causing problems, especially in the coastal regions. The slurs and inappropriate comments hurt more when it comes from your own folks.

3)

I don't think anyone has the answer for how to reach complete reconciliation. Some key factors I think are necessary:

- a) The political parties in Norway must stop eradicating Sámi lifestyle by allowing green colonialism.
- b) I think the work of "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission" currently trying to figure out how the Norwegian state discriminated (and discriminates) against Sámi people is a step in the right direction, but worthless if nothing other than a report comes out of it.
- c) Time. I think after a while, most of the racism against us will fade. This isn't something that happens automatically, but I just hope things are going in the right direction.

4)

Assimilation is indeed only demolishing, at least for us. When standing outside the Sámi communities, its easy to believe the constant blaming of the norwegianization politics and the similar processes in other parts of Sápmi, is explaining away a conglomerate of internal and external issues. It will be interesting to see what the truth and reconciliation commission concludes in this matter. From my point of view, the assimilation has inflicted almost every aspect of Sámi culture in some way or another, and I cannot find any examples where it has done anything good.

Interview

Hans Ragnar Mathisen¹⁵

1)

H:¹⁶ Unfortunately, we are still suffer from that; this is continuous generation after generation because the children take out some difficulty from their parents. However, if you compare to, for example, the native Americans there, some of them lost their languages, some of them lost their cultures after just a few hundred years of colonization. We have been colonized for several thousand years, and the fact we still have our languages and own cultures in all these variations, its sensational, because we usually should have been assimilated a long time ago, but we are stubborn, we know our culture is better adapted to the landscape here than Norwegians, because they use whatever they can, and they do not care the consequences, we use the resources in a way that they can reproduce themselves, I am talking the traditional way it does not necessary to be like that today. However, I think most of the Sámi will try to follow it, so our ideal is to use the resource in the way you don't destroy the way to regenerate it when you go pick berries, you should always leave something, don't pick everything, just leave some left, so that's a very healthy way of thinking, it should be adopted to Scandinavia at least, this is the same for most of the Indigenous people, you know I was in Taiwan

¹⁵ Sami artist and activist

¹⁶ Hans Ragnar Mathisen

almost half year, I learned Chinese there, a little bit calligraphy and I met some Indigenous people, I stayed in Lanyu, ponso as they called it themselves, in their language for the island, I was accepted there, and I took part of their ceremony and everyday life.”

P¹⁷: “Did you go for the flying fish? That’s their tradition.”

H: “Yes I have to carry a log, which later became a boat, and those fantastic boats they are masterpieces for carving, unfortunately I have to leave before the throwing up ceremony, throw the boat in the air.”

P: “So you have experienced some aboriginal culture in Taiwan?”

H: “Yes !”

P: “Do you find some similarity?”

H: “Well, the first similarity is they are called Yami and we are called Sámi, so it was not difficult for me, first I went to the hotel to stay there, but then one of the Yami came to me and said “ come, you can stay in our home”, and then I also brought that I often do this large version of the Sámi map, I gave it to the school there.”

P: “I asked this because I could see some similarity from the symbolism and the yoik, some connections and similarity, so I mash up some Sámi yoik and Taiwanese aboriginal songs, they sound harmonic.”

H: “Did you learn the language?”

P: “No, we don’t learn that at school, but for example my grandparent, their first language is Taiwanese, and the second one is Japanese because of the colonization, and my grandfather learned Chinese when he was 20s, so it is a history of the colonization, therefore I don’t know almost anything about the aboriginal language.”

H: “You know I am also a writer, although I haven’t published much but I wrote a play about Taiwan, and I took it in the time of Qianlong when he was emperor, which was in the 18th century, anyways one of the main figure is Wufang, he was the governor of Taiwan, he had some controversies with the Indigenous people, he was killed or something but I wrote the play about that.”

P: “Have you released the play?”

H: “No I haven’t”

P: “No? Are you going to do it? or? “

H: “It’s very difficult and very expensive to release and do that, but I did a lot of work with it.”

P: “That is very interesting, I feel you really cherish the aboriginal culture.”

H: “ Yes, I do.”

P: “ I have more questions, what is the most conflicted thing about living with multiple identities.”

¹⁷ Lin, Pei-Han. Author interviews Hans Ragnar Mathisen

H: "I feel I am Sámi, 25% of my genes are Scandinavian, that doesn't necessary mean today's Scandinavia though, as if you go far back in time, Sámi lived in most of the Scandinavia before the Scandinavians even came and forced us to the north. I am 2% south east Asian, I took a test, also 2 percent Inuit."

P: "So is it the reason why you get interested in Far East Asian culture?"

H: "I think it lies in my genes, I am sure about it, I always have a special interest and longing for Asia, so, I have been to several cities and places as an artist in Asia and China.

P: "In China, they have even more diversity of aboriginal people."

H: "Yes, they have, I visited the university of indigenous people there, I met some from Tibet, the situation in Tibet is really sad because of the colonization, it is terrible, Tibet should be respected as a separate country in my opinion."

P: "What is your attitude toward Norway? Have you already reached full reconciliation?"

H: "There has been settled up a committee about this question, a reconciliation committee, and Marit Myrvoll¹⁸ was one of the leader she was just here¹⁹ it is necessary, because I don't think the Norwegians population in general has taken in the fact that they have been severely suppress other people, especially Sámi, today would be regarding nearly a genocide."

P: "It was that severe?"

H: "Well, it is one or two category under that, there were few Sámi killed and abused, it was very serious, until the northern Norwegian population started to have same percentage of Norwegian and Sámi mix, they are a denied of that, they need to accept that they cannot be against something that is nature thing.

P: "How do you use your art as a form of decolonization?"

H: "Well, for example the drum is one way that was hidden and prohibited, I make it more visual and visible, I also have some works directly political, so I tried to in a way inform and promote toward reconciliation and acceptance and fact that was happening.

P: "Is it the authorities in Norway doing this as well? It is an ongoing process."

H: " Yes, the king has asked for forgiveness and so on, and that is a very good start, but the people, especially in the north are still a little bit ambivalent about it, one Norwegian social leader said; the Norwegian relationship to the Sámi was a dark and horrible chapter in the history of Norway, and this is true, unless it is a metaphor, we will have a difficult situation."

P: "You remind me of my grandfather, he died this year, he was a real activist in the politics in Taiwan, he almost was killed by the Chinese government and we still live under the oppression by China, so I can really resonate with all the things you said. From the dark history to the assimilation, I feel the history is repeated in different times and spaces. I have a question related to my art practice, I have been looking around all the monuments in Tromsø, and there is no one representing Sámi at all, I am wondering who would you suggest me to make a monument of?"

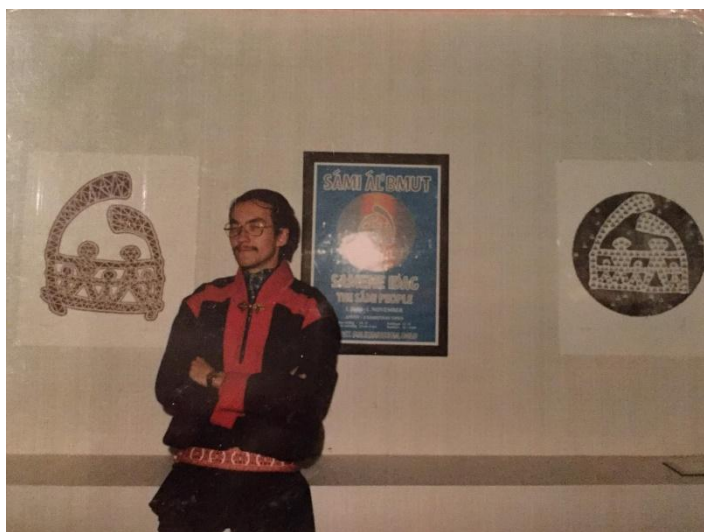
¹⁸ Museum director of Truth and Reconciliation commission

¹⁹ Tromsø kunstforening, *ČSV terra cognita exhibition* 2021

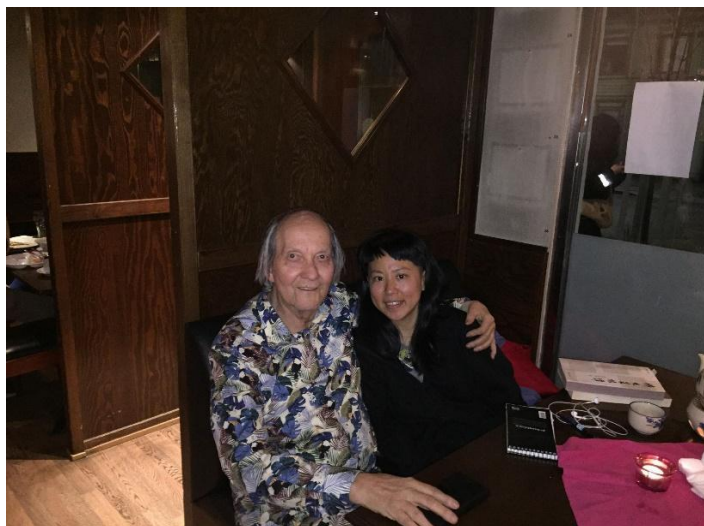
H: "I have suggested long time ago, her name was Margrete Kitt²⁰, instead of this Roald Amundsen, he was here for a short time, and he died in the Arctic, how is he related to Tromsø? He has very little to do with Tromsø. Margrete Kitt is the one."

P: "The statue I want to make combines many people's images into one statue, I also want to break the tradition of the monument and the hierarchy of colonization. Therefore I am looking in the archives and doing some research on the Sámi community."

H: "That is good, we can talk more next time in the Beijing home restaurant; I am the daglig leader there, see you next time!"

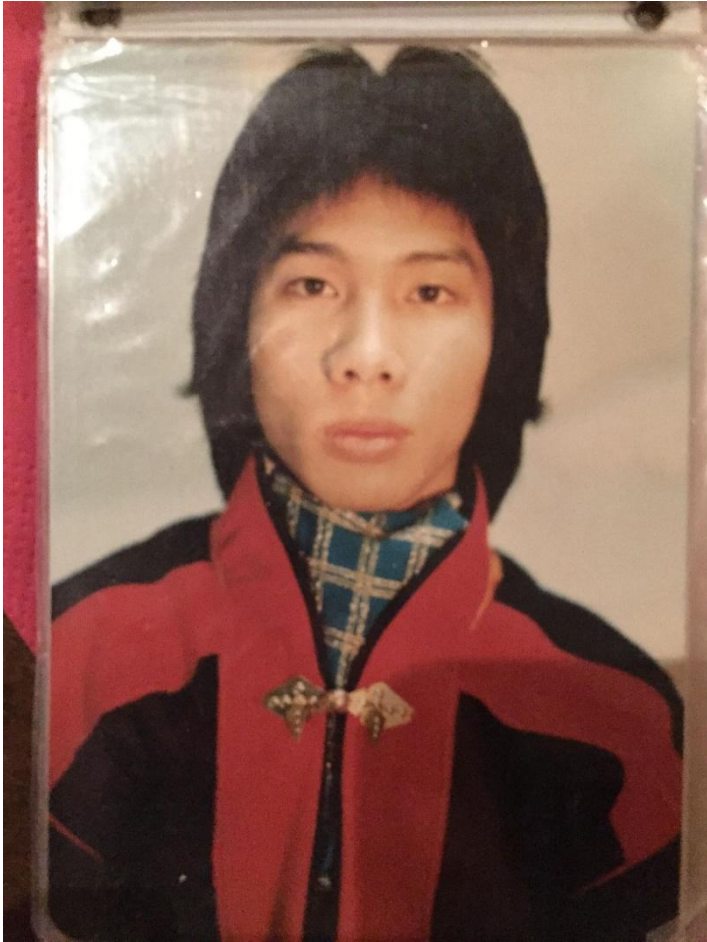


1979- Hans Ragnar Mathisen had art exhibition in Taiwan. He called himself Sámi instead of Norwegian.



2021- I am the same age as when he did the exhibition in Taiwan. I called myself Taiwanese instead of Chinese.

²⁰ Tromsø Sámi Reindeer herder, she owns a few thousand reindeer on three islands in Tromsøundet.



Hans Ragnar Mathisen Taiwanese aboriginal friend wore Sámi traditional clothes.



Margrete Kittí Photo: Knut Stokmo

Interview

Joar Nango²¹

J: "I am half Sámi-half Norwegian. In childhood it was hard because Sámi identity still carried historical trauma, but at the same time I also moved between cultures, I would say right now I am a pretty privileged position, I can move between cultures internationally and have good sides. As my daughter now studies in a Sámi class, but most of the parents are half foreigner-half Sámi, my daughter speaks Sámi, English, after Norwegian. At school the kids play with their own languages, mix between English and Sámi, sometimes she even teaches me new words that I did not know, it was so cool, I really enjoy this mix and cultural blend.

Also to do the revival of Sámi culture and language, to some degree, it has to be that the Norwegian authorities are involved, so there are so many layers in between the history and current.

Do you know Karoline Tveitnes? She is the director of Riddu Riđđu Festivála²², she has been to Taiwan and brought the Taiwanese aboriginal friends to northern Norway in the Sámi festival, I will get you in contact with her. "

There are few people that I would recommend you as part of the Sámi representatives.

Nils Aslak Valkeapää²³

Elsa Laula Renberg²⁴

Nils Skum²⁵

Mari Boine²⁶

Sara Marielle Gaup Beaka²⁷

Maj Doris Rimpi²⁸

Nils Gaup²⁹

P: " I have wrote some questions to my Sámi friends, but I never got a response, and I don't know if I ask something maybe too sensitive?"

J: " It could still be traumatizing for some people, even right now not everyone would want to talk to someone openly, it is possible."

Interview

Monica Olivia³⁰

²¹ Sámi architect and artist

²² Riddu Riđđu Festival is an international Indigenous festival, which annually takes place in Kåfjord in Norway.

²³ Finnish Sámi writer, musician, and artist.

²⁴ Sámi activist and politician. She was born to reindeer herders.

²⁵ Swedish Sámi artist

²⁶ Norwegian Sámi singer.

²⁷ Traditional and modern yoiker who also does Sami crafts.

²⁸ Swedish-Sami actor, reindeer herder and artist

²⁹ Athlete, founded the first Sami language theatre ensemble.

³⁰ Sámi female artist

As a Sámi, your research and questions are extremely interesting, because these are things I often think about.

In my mind, any person can be Sámi in three ways; through nationality, through language and culture, or through ethnicity and blood relation. Sometimes all these three are present, sometimes only one. For me, it is only one; the last one. I do not have the language due to the assimilation that happened to the Sámi people in all four countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia/Kola Peninsula), and I am cautious to say that I have or feel much nationality spirit within Sápmi, because - I think - we do miss a sense of community, since the modern world has taken root, as it has most places. This is not only true for Sámis of course, but I believe for Norwegians as well.

I love putting on my kofte/gakti (national dress) and feel that sense of belonging that automatically is sewn into the seams. Imagining myself meeting my ancestors in their gakti, feeling proud together. I hope this does not sound too romantic, but I know other Sámi's feel this too; the magic effect of the gakti! Our dress seems to play a big role in taking back much that was lost.

I paint landscapes, mostly. Sometimes Uralic people as well. I put them into the land where they feel most at home; snow covered mountains, icy lakes, warm fires, with animals, with babies... The Sámi spirit is - to me - a strong sense of being one with the natural surroundings and with the seasons.

Like I mentioned above, I do not have the language. Luckily, I have art, and do feel like I can connect with other Sámi's/Uralic people that way. Painting is a universal language, and I am very thankful for that.

I have noticed that in the last 5 years or so, Sámi language and culture is becoming more visible in our society, through language classes/cafes, road signs in Sami, etc. Even politicians seem keen to preserve what is left. I think it is wonderful, because losing a language or large pieces of one's culture is very traumatic. This is a trauma, I believe, that is still felt among Sámis. It is still an open wound, in many places, in many hearts. It is my hope and wish that Sámis can heal together whether we have the language or not. It is also my wish that Sámi children growing up today, can once again feel proud and happy to be themselves, to be Sámi and speak Sámi. It is a huge deal to feel like you belong and that you have your own culture.

Project Collaboration with Shayan Dadman³¹

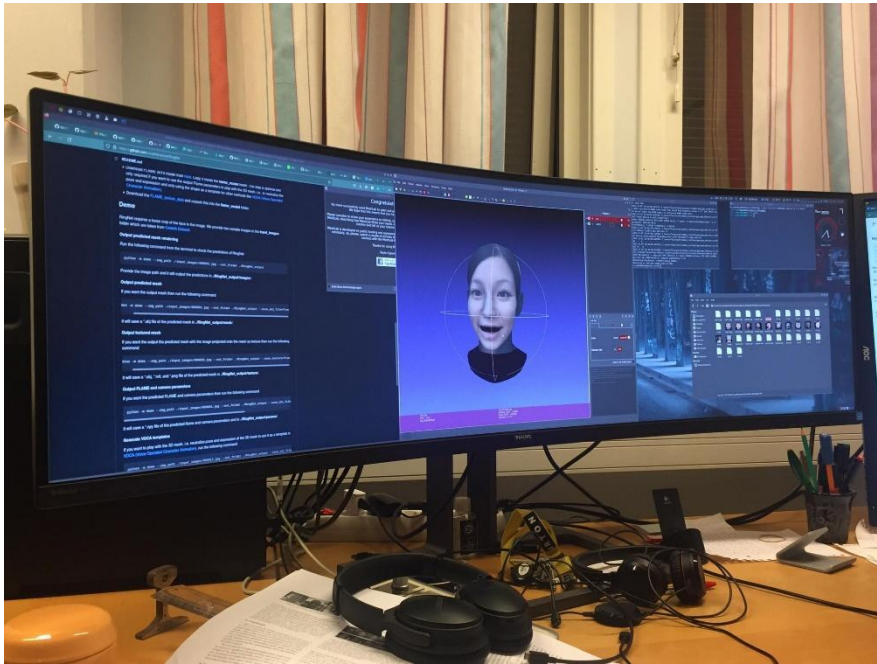
Abstract

Our project uses AI to generate a model in order to make the sculpture. It will be genderless and ageless, comprised of a group of Sámi people suggested by Sámi community, and made up of colonized people all merging together to become one sculpture. It will be formed by 3D printing clay. The focus is to decolonize and decentralize the tradition of the monument.

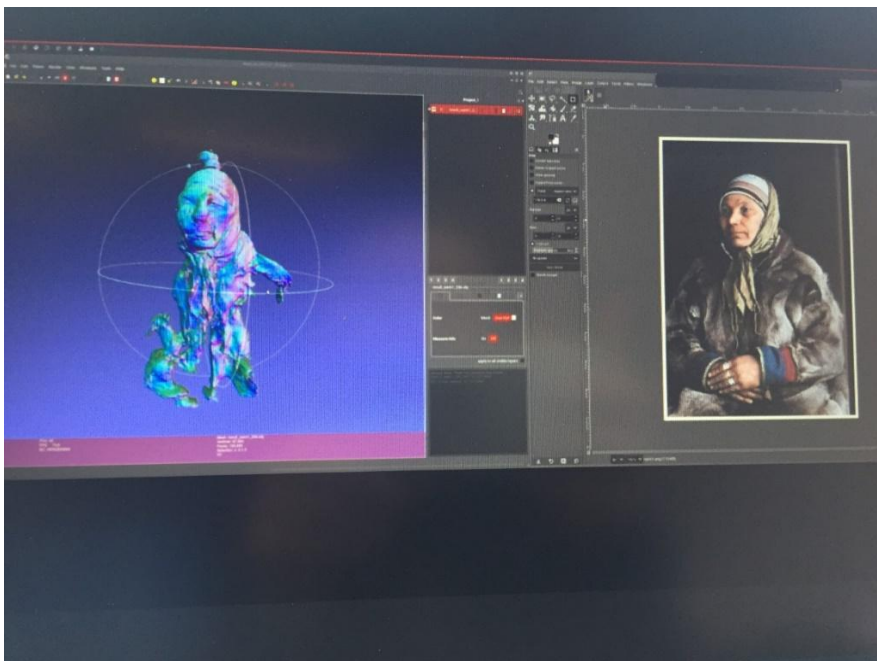
The project to me highlights interdisciplinary cooperation between contemporary art and computer science through artificial intelligence, observing the transition of ideology, site-specific research, deep self-reflection, stand for justice, and revival of the demolish culture.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, decolonize, decentralize, deconstructed monument, machine learning, 3d printing, contemporary art, cultural anthropology

³¹ Ph.D. in computer science, UiT Narvik



The generation and transformation of several people into one, single model.



The generation of the archived sources into a 3D model.

Overlap the video and music of the cultural and colonial similarity, interspersed the interview and the archives, also the process of data generating (text, music, and portraits) through a video collage.

Discussion:

What is my role in the relationship between my artwork? I see myself as a container for collecting the data, as a means to counter the totalitarian ideology I grew up around. How about between me and the Sámi culture and Norwegian authorities? I see myself as a resonance of the history between these

parties. At the same time, my standing as that of an outsider allows me to maintain a sense of distance between both groups. I believe it would be different if I were Sámi or Norwegian.

In recent years, the Norwegian government has tried to have reconciliation between the state and the Sámi people. However, you can still see on the news that Sámi people are publicly discriminated against. Anecdotally, a Sámi friend of mine feels as if they are in a numb tomb, saying "it is just history repeating again and again."

Am I in a position to be able to face conflict between both groups? For example, the conflict between Taiwan and China, where suddenly my Norwegian ID card became the manifestation of the conflict between Taiwan and the Norwegian government. Are others who have never been colonized before and never been forced to have another identity, could such a Norwegian (read: non-Sámi) ever be in a good enough position to elaborate as freely on the situation?

I believe that my usage of current technology to deconstruct the power hierarchy between Norwegians and Sámi, what with its additional reliance on the usage of "tradition" (the monumental form), provides my artwork the opportunity to bring forth a lot of discussion on Sámi's place in modern-day Norway.

Could the contemporary issue resonate between two different political regions but have collisions through public art in a dialogue in a similar situation? When do I mean decolonization, not only for Sámi people but for my reluctant identity that Norway forces upon me?

Evaluation criteria and means of validation for this work will be observing the transition of ideology, cultural anthropology research, and deep self-reflection, supporting the decolonization through the action, standing for justice, and reviving the demolished cultures. So I want to turn to a poem by Nils Aslak:

*"Mu Vaimmus, Lea mu ruoktou, ja dat tjuvvo mu.
The inside of me is my home, it will follow me wherever I go" ³²*

By writing a poem and making art together with artificial intelligence, I believe it will reach the highest potential for the human and technology era.

In the end, we (human and technology) are growing together in this digital time, blurry our frontiers and influencing each other.

As a final note, I wanted to generate a poem using artificial intelligence:

*"That ssummViiyllPeeP from the sea. The sky is shining
Enlighten the wide sky. It is the wind.
This hhjeevllpllnooP of the death-silence and the song,
My yawn and the stormy dews of the woods.
This hhxeeRllsllxooh of the death-silence and the song,
Your intuition of its deeps. In my dreams.
That ssnuuArrcvievejiinllEllqaaznnKccDeeQ,
Ineffable perfumes strike their fires,
The ppraalnnwddBeeMmmDiiFccc all the day shall hear,
A spring and sky and dale, and music."*

³² Nils-Aslak Valkeapää's poem

