

Satu Nikku

Lived, experienced and seen places

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Introduction

My interest in places and in settling down grew out of the fact that I have been looking for a homeplace all my life, and that I have not settled down in the place where I have lived nearly all my life. I started to wonder why this is so, and through this study I want to clarify what has been written on the subject and how it has been researched. I have been looking for a homeplace near and far, in my own experiential environment and through the visual presentations made by others. At times I have felt nearly at home, sometimes my longing for a home has been close to unbearable despair. In 2004 I made a series of paintings in tempera called *Looking for a homeplace*, but those words could describe nearly all my artistic pursuits. I am trying to find my place in the world, society and in my own mind. This time my guide in the journey is a scientific theory, and I try to investigate the problematics connected with settling down, rootlessness and the impact of visual environment.

In addition to the written part, this thesis consists of two exhibitions and a video installation. One exhibition, *Paikkoja Places*, was held at Rööperin Taidesalonki in Helsinki between Feb 2nd and March 3rd 2013, and the other, *Experienced places*, at Galleria 3H+K in Pori between Aug 30th and Sep 19th 2013. The video installation *Solastalgia* was presented at Värjäämö in the University Consortium of Pori on Nov

18th 2011. The visual works that belong to this thesis are introduced under the heading Visual content and the videos are available on a DVD.

The starting point for my research is my own experiences of places and the spirit of places. I have studied literature on humanistic geography, phenomenology, sociology and environmental psychology. I approach the material mainly from the phenomenological perspective; how I have experienced places, placelessness and settling down. As examples I use my own childhood memories, my travel experiences, visual illustrations of places, and places used in movies as well as other visual location images.

In my thesis I pay special attention to the reasons why a certain place becomes important to me and why another place remains distant forever. I discuss the change in the meaning of the term *nostalgia*. I also discuss *solastalgia* and *soliphilia*, concepts invented by the Australian philosopher Glenn Albrecht, as well as Yi-Fu Tuan's concept *topophilia*, as essential concepts connected to experiencing a place and as descriptions of the emotions one goes through when experiencing a place.

LIVING A PLACE

Memories and stories shaping places

How difficult it is to answer the question “Where are you from?”! That a seemingly harmless question popping up when you meet new people can be bigger than the person asking it assumes. Being from somewhere means that you belong somewhere, that you feel at home in a certain place or that you have roots in a certain place even if you would be living somewhere else at the moment. Being from somewhere refers to a place that you feel is your home. Often when we say that we are from somewhere we mean our birth place, even if for most people it is not the same place as their current place of residence, let alone the place they feel is their home. Many things affect the feeling of being at home and of settling down.

Environments in our childhood affect how we experience environments in our adulthood (Latikka 1997, 13). My own childhood environments have been very different from each other; as a child I lived in the concrete suburbs of two different towns and the summers I spent in countryside, near a small town. It is possible that because my childhood environments were so different, I have started to pay attention to my environment: I feel very deeply for the places that I like, but I also feel alien to places I do not like or to places where I do not belong. Sometimes I have felt an outsider in my own community. I have also felt an outsider in my own place of residence. At times I have found a home in a strange place. These experiences have made me wonder what it is that makes us feel at home somewhere or that we do not belong, even if we had known the streets and byways for many years.

My assumption is that everybody experiences places in their own way, depending on their persona and their own experiences. One place can be precious and lovable for one and disagreeable or repulsive for the other. However, there are certain elements that affect the atmosphere of a place: roads, streets, parks, buildings, villages and towns, that is, elements built by people have an effect on the wellbeing and comfort of a person. Many invisible things, such as sounds and smells have the same effect. Many things affect the way we perceive our environment and its character, and they affect us both consciously and unconsciously.

In my study I focus on the place experiences, memories, myths and mental images connected with places, on the landscape dimensions, visual expressions of places and on the spirit of a place. Urban space has been studied in art history from the perspective of building blocks and the space that remains between them, and from the perspective of experiences evoked by the used material (Junkala & Säaskilahti 1999, 22, referring to Kervanto-Nevanlinna 1998, 227-228). Here the problem is that the differences in human experience have been overlooked, and that it has been assumed that all people experience space and attribute meaning in the same way (Junkala & Säaskilahti 1999). However, all people experience space and place differently, and also, each lived life leaves a mark on the lived space, building and place.

The depth of time, the history and age of a place, as well as human actions constitute, from the phenomenological environment aesthetics' point of view, a significant part of a place experience. The depth of time is a part of a lived life, and therefore, directly discernible in the place experience (Forss 2007, 87). A space becomes a meaningful place through social action (Junkala & Säaskilahti 1999). Place is experienced as

meaningful through senses, the depth of time, historical dimension, collective memory, social dimension, atmosphere and mental images (Forss 2007, 125). The spirit of place, *genius loci*, is a term that is used to depict the individual spirit of a place, the total experience of the place and the identity of the place. According to Forss, the spirit of a place is permanent by nature and cannot be produced intentionally (Forss 2007, 110-127).

However, the spirit of a place can be sensed. In the process of settling down it can be perceived as a sense of familiarity in a new place or perhaps as a sense of wellbeing in a certain place. Experiencing a place is a part of sensing the spirit of a place. The more alert our senses are the more we can experience the place. It can be challenging for our senses, burdened by the modern way of life, to sense a place. However, sensing a place happens also subconsciously and therefore we cannot avoid the effects of a place atmosphere even if we sometimes wanted to.

Nostalgia

The word nostalgia brings to my mind a gentle breeze of air and the feeling of sun on my skin, rough wall surfaces, sand between toes, morning dew gleaming on the grass. To me the word nostalgia stands for good memories and a respect for traditions, but also the feeling of longing and homesickness. Nostalgia is

a longing for something we do not have (Kukkonen 2007, 28) and the longing grows from being discontented, which is also a prerequisite for nostalgia (Rossi 2007, 126).

The meaning of the term nostalgia has changed (Sallinen 2004). The word homesickness originates from Switzerland, where a statesman Ludwig Pfyffer announced in 1569 that a man had died of “heimweh” (homesickness). In 1688, a Swiss medical student Johannes Hofer published a dissertation *Dissetatio medica de Nostalgia oder Heimwehe* (medical dissertation about nostalgia or homesickness). Hofer invented the term *nostalgia* out of the Greek words *nostos* (returning home) and *algos* (pain, agony) for the phenomenon that he was studying. The term was an apt description for the disease’s symptoms, which were a deep and continuous sadness, attacks of fear, sleeplessness, lack of appetite, too high a heart rate, constant sighing, weakness and a frequently recurring fever. (Sallinen 2004, 81-82.)

According to Susanna Sallinen’s article “Koti-ikävä ja nostalgia arjen kokemuksena” (“Homesickness and nostalgia as an everyday experience”) the nostalgia that Hofer described in the 17th century was associated with Swiss mercenaries who had been away from home for a long time and who could not influence their own fates in the battlefield. Hofer distinguished serious cases of illness from nostalgia and called the former “nostomania”, denoting a state when willingness to return home had already taken the form of mental illness. However, nostalgia was also considered a disease that was caused by the fact that people had to be away from an important place against their own will. (Sallinen 2004, 82-83.)

By the 1900s, the content of the term nostalgia had changed a lot, and the attachment that people felt for their homes was regarded as material that built their own identity. Sallinen, interpreting Zwingmann,

says that people, for whom it was especially arduous to adapt to a new environment, after having moved away from a familiar environment, were in danger of experiencing homesickness and severe pangs of guilt because they were away. (Sallinen 2004, 84-85.)

The word nostalgia has undergone inflation, and we can question whether the current meaning of the word bears any connection with the phenomenon that once was classified as an illness. The word nostalgia has its origins in a phenomenon that was classified as an illness but the current Finnish word koti-ikävä (“home-yearning”) bears different meanings. The latter part of the word refers more to a yearning and a bad or dull existence rather than to a concrete pain. (Sallinen 2004, 81,83.)

The content of the term nostalgia has undergone a complete change from an illness that should be taken seriously to a longing and frivolous daydreaming. We say that we feel nostalgia for the times gone by, when we actually glorify the past and have a “memories grow sweeter with time” attitude. Would it be possible that the original meaning of the word nostalgia could still have some relevance to us today? So that the loss of a precious place could really be compared to a painful, paralyzing emotion? At least my own experiences of longing for a place and of looking for a homeplace have sometimes generated emotions that are close to pain. Precious and familiar places have made me recover from that pain, or at least made me momentarily forget my eternal homesickness. Dreaming of a precious place and longing, and expecting the return to a precious place help us overcome hard times. According to Riikka Rossi, longing to another place acts as a means of survival in the midst of difficulties, and as a way to handle present problems through dreaming, and it helps us adapt ourselves to the surrounding circumstances. (Rossi 2007, 127.)

Visual culture has also portrayed nostalgia. A good example could be Andrei Tarkovski's film *Nostalgia*. This film depicts well especially the old meaning of the term *nostalgia*. This film is a depiction of nostalgia that is very far from what the current meaning of the word leads us to believe. In this film, you do not yearn to childhood happiness, even if in the memories and dreams the Italian countryside and nature are portrayed beautifully. Atmosphere in this film is heavy and melancholic. The film offers lingering, slowness, experiences of moment, darkness, softness and dim light.

The sepia coloured memories, the hovering dew and mist over the quiet milieu create a plaintive atmosphere in the film. Beautiful images, the subdued use of colour and the rough character of the shooting scenes create before the spectator a longing for the past and sadness, but also aesthetically beautiful visions. Beautiful, lingering images, dim lighting, mist, sepia coloured memories and rough, weathered surfaces lend the film a special atmosphere that carries through the whole story. We are being offered a lot of sounds, too: opening and closing of shutters, shoes clattering on the floor, water dripping from a tap, pipes gurgling, opening and closing of old closets, a creaking door.

The water element is very important and it has been used in many forms: morning dew, mist, rain, sulphur pool – all these are essential both aesthetically and thematically. According to the village fool Domenico's philosophy, two rain drops form one bigger one, not two separate ones. Therefore, $1+1=1$, not two, and loneliness is very much present in the atmosphere of the movie. Themes in this movie are longing, truth, silence, sadness, melancholy, and losing faith and hope.

The plot in this movie is a dramatic depiction of longing for justice, of madness and of the human loneliness. The movie starts with a scene where a VW Beetle with a couple inside stops in the middle of misty countryside scenery. The man says: “I am bored to see these beautiful sceneries, one more beautiful than the other.” The woman walks in to an old monastery, where a religious ritual is in progress. Candle light creates a mystic atmosphere which culminates in the release of a flock of birds. The man does not come inside to watch the Madonna and Child fresco, which makes the woman wonder. “I don’t understand you. We drive through Italy in a mist to have a look at this fresco, and when we eventually get here, you don’t even go in to look at it”, the woman cries. The man’s view is that the woman does not understand the Russian soul, which is full of melancholy and longing.

The aforementioned man in the movie, Andrei Gortchakov (Oleg Yankovsky) has come to Italy to investigate the unknown life and history of a Russian composer who lived in the 18th century and eventually ended up in Italy. Because Gortchakov speaks poor Italian he has hired a young Italian woman, Eugenia (Domiziana Giordano) to act his interpreter. Together they are bound to realize a journey to the past.

In the village, there lives a man regarded as a village fool, Domenico (Swedish Erland Josephson), a former teacher of mathematical science. “Do you know why they are in the water? They want to live forever.” Domenico says referring to the people bathing in the pool of the local hotel. He himself tries to walk with a candle in his hand from one end of the pool to the other. Domenico starts to appear to Gortchakov as a more interesting object for research than the biography of the Russian composer, and therefore, he wants to meet this peculiar local man.

When Gortchakov enters Domenico's realm, Beethoven is playing in the background. Painting is peeling from the walls. It is raining and the roof leaks all over the place. Coloured bottles that are supposed to collect the water bring colour to the space, while puddles spread on the floor. Water splatters on the stone floor and the interior is filled with dim colouring and a dreamy illumination. The cold house and deprived surroundings are overcome by the warm generosity and spiritual kinship between Domenico and Gortchakov when they enjoy bread and wine together.

The ruined building is inhabited by a human wreck who has lost all his hope. Domenico locked up his wife and children in the house for seven years so that they would survive the apocalypse. "I was selfish. I wanted to save my own family. Everybody must be saved, the whole world", Domenico explains. When Gortchakov asks how the world could be saved the man answers that you only need to cross the water with a burning candle in your hand. Domenico asks Gortchakov to cross the water, in his stead, with a candle.

Eugenia gets frustrated because Gortchakov pays attention only to his new, mad acquaintance. "It must be this place, the air we breathe, because in Moscow I met a lovely man," Eugenia frets. She is clearly frustrated because her dreams are not responded. She dreams of a dream, of fantasy, of perfect love. Finally, she decides to go, and leaves Gortchakov alone with his own obsessions.

Domenico and Gortchakov recognize a similar streak in each other: a longing and nostalgic hope for happiness. The character of Domenico combines both hopelessness and harmony in one physical being, and at the same time he is a good example of the simultaneous fight between good and bad will. Domenico arranges in Rome a three-day speech performance, in which he makes public his own philosophical view of

the world and its state. Domenico asks, what is insanity? And answers that the insane are handicapped, whom other people do not want to understand but who are closer to the truth. At the end of his performance Domenico pours liquid from a container over his body and sets himself on fire. Domenico's faithful dog, on a leash, can only watch in anguish while his master is burning. In contrast, humans who have watched the performance do not help their own species.

At the same time, Gortchakov eventually decides to carry a burning candle from one end of the pool to the other, as Domenico wished. The flame goes out again and again before the exhausted Gortchakov manages to bring the candle to the other end of the pool. In this act, Gortchakov is forced to face his own prejudices, let himself be looked upon, to distinguish himself from the masses and to act daringly with no regard for the public opinion. In the final scene Gortchakov and Domenico's dog sit in front of a pond in a sepia coloured landscape. The view angle widens and a landscape is shown to reside inside enormous ruins, landscape inside the ruins. It starts to snow. Is this a dream or heaven, a fantasy or a nostalgic place? Maybe all of it.

Tarkovski's *Nostalgia* is a melancholic and sad depiction of madness and anxiety, of a search for hope and happiness, and of despair. The film is full of nostalgic places, places immersed with an atmosphere from the past lives, memories of the loved and the forgotten, sadness and disappointment, hope for a slightly better future, and also despair - everything that the original meaning of the term *nostalgia* consists of.

Dreaming of a better future seems to be a characteristic way for humans to face the challenges of everyday life. When the challenges grow too big, our minds can trick us to dream in nearly insane

proportions. Our personal experiential history affects how we experience a place and how easily we settle down. Daydreaming may help to overcome difficult periods more easily, but personally I think that my own concrete place experiences have had an effect on how I experience places and how much I long to be somewhere else, in a better place in this world.

Best place in the world

I lived the first years of my life with my mother and father in a small flat in a multi-storey building in the capital area. It was a new suburb and there were not many buildings yet. I could see tall trees and solid rock from our windows. I liked playing on the rock and observing the squirrels playing beneath our windows. Inside our home, there was often too little room and too much noise. Outside, in contrast, there was a lot of room and hardly any noise at all. That is why I often went out and played with the cones and sticks and basically everything I could find in the nature. There I also paid attention to the moss and lichen that were like a soft mattress growing on the hard rock, as well as to the tree trunks that were like tall people standing in a straight line.

When I was four years old, my mother and I moved to another town. Our new home was even smaller but inside it was peaceful and comfortable. From our windows you could see a big asphalted parking lot. The yard was flanked by tall buildings and it was dark. The suburb was new and built fast in the middle of

a forest. All buildings looked alike: big, hard and gray. Roads were covered with asphalt and they were too wide. You could find small pathways in the woods, as well as tall trees and brooks. The border between the built environment and the freely growing nature was like a straight line drawn with a ruler, and when you stepped over that borderline you stepped into another world. For me, the forests represented a free and creative environment whereas the asphalted yards represented a suppressed joy of life.

In the summer we went to the country with my mother. We went by train and the journey took a whole day. At times, I drowsed as the train clattered steadily and peacefully away. My grandmother, aunt and uncle met us at the last station, and they took us to their home – a schoolhouse in the country. The school was an interesting place; there was a lot of room to run around and be alone with your own thoughts. Broad corridors and staircases, big classrooms and an even bigger gymnastics hall were the places of my dreams to run around and make my own observations. There was a swing and a large playing ground in the schoolyard. A gravelled road went by the school but there was very little traffic. A couple of times in a week a bus-shop and a bus-library, where I could borrow children's books, stopped near us. I spent my summers in the schoolhouse mostly reading, walking in nature and playing with the cat.

When I was six years old, the school was closed down. My aunt, who had worked as a cook in the school, was forced to find a job in a nearby town. I had to leave behind the long corridors, the wide gymnastics hall and the wildly growing school yard. However, not very far away from the school, there was an old house where my mother and aunt had lived as children, a cottage that everybody in the family could

use as their summer cottage. Then I could still walk freely in the grounds, play kitchen with the cucumber cans and pick wild flowers. Also, Ville the cat came when I called for him, and staying in the cottage was almost the same as staying at the school house.

My childhood years were divided into winters and summers. Winters I spent in town, with ugly houses and too big schools around me, while summers I spent in the country, with nature and quiet life around me. The whole winter I waited for the summer and kept on asking my mother when we would go to the country. We went to the country every summer and it paid back all the waiting. Summers were a time when you could enjoy the peace and quiet of nature, the space and scenery that opened from the cottage into the fields, hills and the lake. Together with my uncle we went to the lake to check the fishing nets. Sometimes my aunt would fry the fish in a pan with butter, sometimes she would bake a fish pie. Once in a summer we all would row to a nearby island and grill sausages there. On our way back we would pick yellow waterlilies growing in the lake. Their colour was a lovely shade of yellow and their stems were a bit slimy when we pulled them from beneath the water.

All my cousins were older than me and that is why I did not often have playmates at the cottage. One of my cousins was a bit younger than the others and sometimes she came to play with me. She used to read aloud for me, even if I could read myself; that way reading was much more fun. In the cottage's upper chamber, we used to giggle together at all kinds of funny stories. We shared all our secrets and in summers we were each other's best friends. When it was raining, the holes in the road going by the cottage were filled with

water and it was fun to jump in the puddles together. You could run in the cottage yard without shoes and feel the smooth grass beneath your feet. Summers in the country were the best time of my childhood.

Years went by and interests in my own life changed. Town as a place started to please me more and more. Cultural events became a very important part of my life and the town was a versatile environment for all kinds of cultural activities. We still went to the cottage each summer to meet relatives and smell the country air. Instead of cultural activities, at the cottage you could enjoy the phenomena of the surrounding nature: listen to the wind blowing, birds singing, and grasshoppers chirping, watch the clouds forming pictures in the sky, the mist rising from the meadow and the grain fields swaying in the wind.

When I grew older I started to miss the peace and quiet in the middle of the buzzing town. My cottage place started to call for me more and more often. Because of the long distance I could not visit the cottage very often, but every summer holiday I simply had to get to that familiar place. My childhood memories and the stories about my family that my aunt had told me grew into a longing, and the scenery around the cottage became a dream for me, an illusion of a happy life, where the knotty problems of the harsh world could not reach me. The country scenery was full of beautiful things to look at, far away was the buzz of the town. Because of my summer memories, in my mind the cottage place grew to be the best place in the world, a revitalizing environment that washed away all town dirt from me.

Myths and the spirit of place

Stories, be they part of our own experiential world or the mythology connected with tradition, can tie us to a place. Our personal experiences contain emotions, and therefore, places where we have experienced life, are somehow more meaningful than places of which we know only facts or hear stories. However, stories can bring to life even an unfamiliar place in our minds. Stories also lend a historical dimension to places. Our own experiences remind us that places are scenes for joy or sorrow. Family stories connect us with the entirety, to be part of the family history and part of the local history.

My childhood experiences in the country scenery made me regard trees, plants and buildings as nearly living creatures. They became mythical figures that represented liveliness and experiences and the feeling of home, as opposed to the grimness of the concrete suburbia. It became a holy place for me that I needed to lovingly cherish and preserve.

In the ancient communities holy meant the same as strength, ultimate truth, eternity and effectiveness (Eliade 2003, 35). Myth, on the other hand, tells a story about a holy occurrence that took place in the beginning of time. Mythical creatures are divine, and myths are stories about the actions of these mythical creatures. When a myth is told it turns into truth, part of something that truthfully has happened (Eliade 2003, 116).

Memories and mental images create atmosphere in a place, and stories create mental images of places. Stories about places affect our mental images, and also create them. Stories live in linguistic

expression, tales and narratives, and they are transferred again as auditive or literary knowledge. Describing the actions, movements and routes brings everyday stories to life, and this way they create spaces in our minds. Stories are travelogues in space that change spaces into places and places into spaces. (de Certeau 2013, 170-178).

There is always a place acting as a scene for an event and it gives flavour to the happening. For me, family stories and their scenes have acted as a means of settling down in a place. Stories in the region surrounding the cottage are vivid and colourful, as are my memories about the lived life in that region. In the olden days when people tended to stay in the same region all their lives, it is possible that they got attached to their homeplace more strongly than we do nowadays. A variety of folk tales and beliefs have helped in getting attached to a place.

There are also memories and stories connected with our cottage yard. Individual stones and trees became almost personalized creatures and they do still hold many memories and stories inside them. There grows a nearly hundred-year old birch in my childhood cottage yard. It was already growing there when my grandmother and grandfather built the cottage. The birch has many branches, it is contorted and chaga mushroom grows on it. My aunt tells a story about a bear that one night came to the yard, tore a large gnarl from the birch and took it away. In the morning they found the bear's paw prints in the sandpit. For a child the story was exciting and even funny, and it still lives in my memory; nowadays it is more a memory of my late aunt and her colourful way of telling stories.

Everywhere in the world there are stories and myths about the creation of the world and human being, and in many of these, a large powerful tree plays an important role (Eliade 2003, 170). These trees are called world trees or trees of life. In Finnish folk tales a bear is a significant creature and trees are a part of the bear mythology (Kovalainen and Seppo 2006, 20-72). A tree that is dedicated to an event or marks a place is called a memorial tree; branches are cut from that tree and markings are carved into its trunk (Kovalainen and Seppo 2006, 94). When a bear visited our cottage yard it made the birch, as it were, its own memorial tree and marked its visit by taking part of the tree away. Or perhaps the bear used the tree as a medical treatment for its own illness and that is why it took the gnarl away. The story about the tree and the bear lives on and still develops in my mind.

Trees were very important in our forefathers' religious life. Nearly every house had its own sacrificial tree that was chosen or planted by the first inhabitant of the house. The tree needed to be younger than its master and it was transferred from one generation to the other. The tree bore the respect of the whole family. It was believed that the sacrificial trees had healing powers. Trees and people were connected together by fate: what happened to the tree happened to the people. For example, a snapped branch predicted death (Kovalainen and Seppo 2006, 110-124.)

Also the tree in the yard of our little cottage is a sacrificial tree, a yard tree, honoured and respected by the whole family. The story tells that its trunk became contorted because it was slightly damaged when they built the house. My grandmother and grandfather chose to spare the tree and it has always been

treated like a living person. When my aforementioned aunt died I visited our cottage in connection with her funeral. The old tree had dropped a big branch to the ground as a sign of death.

The fight against holy trees started with the spread of Christianity. Often people were reluctant to fall their holy trees, because it was thought that hurting the tree would bring bad luck and be a reckless attempt on fate. At the same time, hurting a tree was considered a crime against the family. Despite the resistance people fought for their holy trees and old traditions survived at least here and there. (Kovalainen and Seppo 2006, 134.)

Also, places in forests have been important to our forefathers. They were temples where people gathered to feast and to sacrifice to nature gods. A sanctuary, a holy grove (hiisi in Finnish) has been a gateway to the past and a connection to the deceased. A holy grove was most often located in a small hill, rocky rise or a stony precipice. There was often also a spring, a pond or a brook. Pristine, holy forest was preserved untouched: you were not allowed to twist a branch or even pick berries there (Kovalainen and Seppo 2006, 32.)

Christian church started to destroy holy groves in the 13th century and continued until the end of the 19th century, but the memories of the holy groves are preserved in the local names. On the other hand, the names were changed when the holy groves became the church possession, and after the trees had been fallen other symbols were built in their stead: a church, chapel or a cross. Slowly, when the names and beliefs gradually changed, holy became evil. Hiisi turned into a swearword, meaning inferno and devil. (Kovalainen and Seppo 2006, 37-44.)

In the Finnish folklore, the connection between nature and humans has always been strong and it has manifested itself in both responsibility and partnership; the spirits of water and trees were real living creatures and people both feared and respected them (Heiskanen 2006, 177). In an old hunting culture, people possessed mental-bodily deep knowledge. Songs and incantations empowered the singer, but “simultaneously transmitted deep knowledge about the hunter’s mental-bodily state to other species”. (Heiskanen 2006, 150.) During the Swedish reign, the Laplanders’ and Finns’ hunting culture was oppressed. Gradually, people’s way of thinking and view of the world also changed; mythical relationship with nature was abolished when experience and action models emphasizing rationality gained ground (Heiskanen 2006, 161).

It is likely that all cultures have had mythical beliefs about places and spaces. Our view of the world changes as our knowledge about the surrounding world changes. A world view is a human way to fathom the environment and humans as a part of it. Science has affected our way of understanding the world and very few in the modern society seriously discuss the god of thunder or the spirits of the trees.

Still various myths and beliefs affect us also in the modern city space. For example, most cultures connect moral issues with verticality, upward signs are positive and downward signs are negative. Verticality and beliefs connected with it are visible in the city space; the strongholds of power are tall buildings. (Tuan 2003; Junkala 1999, 30.)

Place names have still an environmental and local dimension, too. Name has often described the natural conditions typical of the place, and they are also reflected in the family names. Place names are part of

the place memory and changing the names can cause serious damage to people's local identity. (Hännikäinen 2010.)

Distant homeplace

The meaning of places grows from our experiences. Our experiences make us either devote to or alienate from a place. However, the duration of time we spend somewhere is not connected to the quality or strength of the experience; it is possible to get the feel of the place's spirit even during a short visit, even if settling down in a place usually takes a longer time.

In 2007, I paid a visit to Seattle, USA. My dear friend and colleague was living there at the time and we were given a possibility to have an exhibition in the Nordic Heritage Museum. I spent two weeks in Seattle, and during that time we built the exhibition and travelled round the area looking at the environment. My life changed during those two weeks; I became attached to the Seattle cityscape, natural environment and the spirit of the place.

My trip took place in April when the signs of spring were already clearly in the air. My nature-loving soul was deeply impressed by the blooming magnolia trees, ancient forests close to the city, sea shore at a walking distance and the mountain silhouette shimmering on the background. But the built environment

captured my interest as well. The multiform architecture rising from the rolling hills, interesting and varied cityscape with environment art available below the city's advertisements made me regard Seattle as a visually attractive environment. And when I found an inconceivably versatile selection of art books in the local book stores I believed I was in heaven. All in all, the laid-back, friendly and approving atmosphere of the city made me feel at home during that short visit. I was so delighted with my newly found favourite place that I could have moved in there permanently. It was love at first sight.

After two weeks I came home, but my soul was full of longing for home. I had experienced that distant place more profoundly as my home than the place where I had lived for decades. I tried to convey my longing for home to my closest friends but nobody seemed to understand. I knew that they were wondering how I could feel at home when I had spent there only two weeks.

Yi-Fu Tuan writes, however, that a person can fall in love with a place similarly as with another person, and can feel at home at first sight. A short but intensive experience can make such a great impression on us that we are ready to abandon our home and leave for the promised land. According to Tuan, we do not necessarily even need to visit a place, sometimes only a picture can provoke in us a passion for a certain kind of environment. (Tuan 2003, 184.)

It is possible that experiences over many years in a place can leave only barely recognizable memory traces, whereas an intensive short experience can change our lives (Tuan 2003, 185). Geographers James Duncan and David Lambert agree with this, and they also claim that people can regard as their home region a place where they have never been (Hännikäinen 2010, 27).

I still live in Finland. Moving to a distant homeplace seemed like too great an effort, and it may not have solved my longing for a home after all. Later on I have wondered why I felt such a strong connection to the Seattle environment. Maybe it was the mountains that reminded me of the mountainous scenery at my cottage, maybe it was the roads going up and down that reminded me of my childhood's winding gravel roads. Something in the place's inner character made me feel part of it. There was something familiar about the place, but also something that I'm still longing for in my current place of residence. Perhaps it is the *genius loci* of the Roman mythology, the spirit of the place that just is there but is hard or even impossible to capture in words. Maybe it is something that you feel with all your senses and only know in your heart.

Many years have passed since this travel experience of mine. It is possible that my mind has played a trick on me and erased all unfortunate and negative memories, or alternatively, my mind wants to cherish a distant fantasy about a place of my dreams. My dreaming is close to believing in utopia, an ideal place that does not exist. I did take some pictures during my visit to support my memories, just in case my mind would mix up my memories too much, falsify them or turn my dreams into a utopia.

The proverb "memories grow sweeter with time" describes well how mind and memories change. With time the mind plays tricks on us and removes memories further away from the truth. I do not remember Seattle as a big city with cars snaking forward in endless rows. I remember the city as a village with gardens, magnolia trees flowering on the wayside, and an unending variety of wooden houses. It is these memories that have made me even more attached to the place. It is these memories that make me time and again yearn to my distant homeplace.

My memories change but the documents remain. We take pictures of remarkable events and objects. The picture remains unchanged, whereas in our minds things are in a perpetual motion. While our minds fix and destroy, add and edit (Sepänmaa 1994, 274) photographs, movies, objects and music make the past alive and help us remember. (Kukkonen 2007, 27.)

According to Susanna Sallinen, nowadays the essence and effects of homesickness are respected in a versatile manner, and a person's mental health is regarded in a holistic view. Also, it is questioned whether a person is linked to one area only and to the people who have lived there. Sallinen interprets regional geographer Antti Paasi's statement which claims that a person's regional perception, the so called regional identity, is closely tied to the person's local identity. According to Sallinen, Paasi means all places experienced by the person, both concrete and imaginary, that the person finds worth remembering. Sallinen continues that possible emotional longing to a certain place can be felt for a place where one has lived or for a spatial memory, which is then always a subjective experience that does not necessarily have any connections to a geographically defined region. (Sallinen 2004, 85.)

My longing for a certain place is connected with a variety of things. How could I compare my longing for silent countryside with my longing for a bustling city. If the countryside is a nest for peace then the city is a nest for freedom. Taina Rajanti states that in a big city there is room for a wide variety of individuals, but at the same time individuals must shield themselves with reserve and superficiality; in the buzz of a city, social relations are not based on emotions but on characteristics that can be measured with money (Rajanti 1999, 133-138).

Our place relationship is defined by experiences, which can be emotional, functional or based on sensory perception. Also time affects our place relationship. Memories from the past bring to our minds images, feelings and thoughts about a place. We carry these memories with us and they also change in our minds when life changes. Some things we want to remember, others we want to forget. Other things we think we have forgotten until a situation, smell, voice or view reawakens the memory (Meriläinen-Hyvärinen 2010, 76)

Longing to the cottage is at its worst in the late winter when I still have to wait for the snow to melt and the weather to get warmer. You still need to wait a little bit longer before it is warm enough to stay overnight in the cottage or scrape the earth outside. Diverse experiential memories are connected to both of my favourite places, even if they themselves are completely different from each other. These places are different but there is something in both of them that I long for; in the cottage region it is the state of inner peace and in a big city it is the objects and stimulus that revitalize my mind. It is the experience of a homeplace, the feeling that I can be at peace with myself and just what I am, that I long for from both of these places.

EXPERIENCING A PLACE

Place in nature

Nature has always been important for me even if I have always lived in a town. Forests and small yards in my childhood suburbs were an important counterbalance to the austerity of the built environment. A rippling forest brook and the adorable hepatica were enough to fulfil my need for beauty in my childhood suburbs. I used to stroll through the forest near our cottage when I walked to the school house and back. In the forest, there was also a hole in the ground where my grandmother used to store food that required cool storage conditions. In the summers I went to pick berries in the forest with my relatives, for whom berry-picking was nearly a competitive sport. Abundant berry areas were highly protected secrets and never revealed to strangers. We spent hours berry-picking and when we returned to the cottage a ruthless berry-cleaning job started. Out with the colanders, buckets in front of our stools on the lawn and everybody, young and old, participated. Nobody ever got lost in the forest, even if we at times lost each other in the forest. Some kind of an inner compass seems to have guided us there to the right direction. Maybe our bodies told us where we had come from and knew where to return.

Wilderness and pathless backwoods belonged to the Finnish forest landscape until the change of the 1950s and 1960s. As there were no roads, you needed to go on foot, or ski, ride in a reindeer sled or row in the waterways to get to the forest. The building of the network of forest roads started in the 1960s and eventually roads reached nearly every corner of the country, and at the same time, obliterated pathless backwoods and wilderness. (Kivi 2010, 101-102.)

Easiness and effectiveness accomplished by development are words of praise in our time. Who would like to walk if you can go by car, you could wonder. A ready-made road typically restricts its users, it forces us to follow a certain route, inhibits us from turning away from the trodden path. The rhythm of the road is also different from that of walking in the terrain. On the road you move fast in a motor vehicle, bringing and taking goods, without looking around. When a road is built, trees and forest are removed. They are replaced with machinery and a structure to which the wayfarer is connected. (Kivi 2010, 197.) The area of wilderness and pathless terrain has been diminished, if not altogether eliminated, because of the ever increasing human actions in the forests.

We easily think that forests are always in a natural state, even if this is seldom the case. We can find natural forests only in nature reserves. There is an official decision that nature reserves are protected and reserved in their natural state. The status of these forests is different from that of the “basic forests”, which are intended for wood production and recreation. Natural forests have gained a conceptual status, a respect over other forest types. (Sepänmaa 1994, 158.)

Whether it was a natural forest or a built “basic forest”, a forest with light flickering through the trees and soft moss under my feet, was an essential part of my childhood environment. Even today, forest is an important place for me for relaxation, recharging, and even for action. Taking a walk in the paths of a nearby forest refreshes nicely in the middle of a writing process.

My own forest experiences are most likely haptic by nature. We talk about a *haptic experience* when we mean an immediate environmental experience that is perceived with all senses (Aura et al. 1997, 64).

What is essential in this form of experience is the participating action, which means that the target is not only looked upon or handled as an object, but it is present in all forms of action, available for all senses (Aura et al. 1997, 64).

Pauli Karjalainen states when we participate in scenery, that scenery cannot be only an environmental element seen from the outside, but it is a lived environment, constituted out of the movements of body and soul. According to Karjalainen, an intimately lived environment becomes a personal issue, a place in the world embroidered with personal memories and expectations. (Karjalainen 2004, 55.)

Place and space are general concepts: place creates security, space creates freedom (Tuan 2003, 3). In my opinion, a forest can bring both. As a wide space a forest provides freedom, but when regarded as a space surrounded by trees it becomes a sheltering and secure refuge. However, each one of us acts and observes things in our own special way, depending on our experiences and personal history (Neisser 1982, 50). Environment can be experienced in many different ways.

According to Arnold Berleant, we do not only see our living environment: we move in it, we influence it and we respond to it. Neither do we experience places solely as colours, structures and forms, but also through breathing, senses, muscular action and bodily positions, and also as the sounds of wind, water and traffic. Berleant states that we do not encounter the most important elements in the environment – space, mass, size and depth – primarily through eyes but through our bodies, through movement and action. (Berleant 2006, 105.) Environment is a place for action, a place where we sense with all our senses and live with our whole body.

Environmental psychology claims that environment can be experienced as an external physical space or as an extension of self, that is, as a part of oneself. Environment can also be intensely experienced through identification with other people, and then human relationships and the social network become the most important things in the environment. Environment can be experienced through the ambience, atmosphere and emotional content, or alternatively, based on action. (Aura et al 1997, 123-124.)

In environmental psychology, the term *personalization of space* means that a space becomes an extension of self. In the personalization of space, environment is given a personal stamp and it is made an extension of self. In a group level this reinforces group identity. (Aura et al. 1997, 54.)

We can speak about the personalization of space when we see the actions of the most committed garden enthusiasts. They build, mend and renew the garden every year, year after year. It will never be finished. Garden becomes an extension of self; people express their own values, opinions and interests with the garden. In a garden you can let either creativity flourish or follow a strict and meticulous plan. Garden is a piece of earth but it is not natural by any means. It is a space built and maintained by people, and often for its owners a very valuable space.

My own interest in gardening may be traced back to my childhood's country environment, but it became concrete when I realized that I had a small yard on the plot of my current home. For starters, I read one inspirational book after the other and made plans, and then the sweaty work began. My husband dug and I placed plants in appropriate spots. In the first summer, we replaced a sandbox with a small group of conifers, and built next to it a flowerbed for perennials, and a small kitchen garden for herbs and vegetables. The

following summers the work continued and today our garden is decorated with all kinds of flowers and plants. The most fabulous time in gardening is the spring when you can follow the plants starting to grow. The first crocuses are likely to brighten up the duller day. If it is not possible for me to go to the peace and quiet of my precious summer cottage, my own garden, that little spot in the middle of town, is my own summer paradise, a place where I can really retreat from the noise of the town and start to revive.

Environmental psychology defines a reviving environment as a place where it is possible to get rid of stress and restore strength (Salonen 2006). Favourite place, on the other hand, is a place for revival and individually suitable for each person. Everybody must find their favourite place on their own (Salonen 2006). I have found my own favourite places usually in nature, in a forest, park or garden. The most important thing for me in these places is that after I have spent some time there I have felt renewed and my inner strength has grown.

Certain physical environments, such as places in nature bring positive images to mind, which in turn pacifies the mind. Therefore, spending time in these reviving environments soothes one's mind. The reason why this happens has not been discovered, but it is assumed that especially childhood experiences affect on the background. (Latikka 1997, 17.)

Humans as a species originate from a savannah-like environment, and according to the evolutionary view, savannahs are the most enjoyable environment for humans. Humans have adapted themselves to a city environment through learning, but as an environment a city exposes humans to a

continuous stress. Even a mild but continuous stress can, over the years, cause various diseases. (Salonen 2006, 54).

It is a long way from savannah to a city. It takes even longer for a mind to adapt to a sudden change in environment. This does not mean, however, that a city could not be an interesting and possibly also a stimulating place. A city can offer humans a very rich and experiential environment.

Experiential city

In my teens I visited London a couple of times. At that time Finland was still very much separated from the rest of the world, and for me, everything that deviated from the customary was interesting and intriguing. In London I realized that a city can be multi-dimensional and contain a diversity of experiential environments. For the first time it was possible for me to witness with my own eyes paintings that I had only seen in books. It was the first time that I tasted real apple cider, this refreshing drink that was not yet available in Finland. For the first time I took an underground and even reached the right destination; what a happy feeling of independence it was when I realized that I could get by in the wide world. Roaming in the flea markets, I came across a lot of objects that had their own stories. It was possible to sit in the green parks on a picnic without anybody paying attention. That experiential city was an experience of freedom, of everything that we still lacked in my home country.

An interesting city is an experiential collection of various functional places. An interesting city intrigues to action and search. A town that has only one street where all action takes place is not an interesting town. In an interesting town it is possible to find a suitable place to live, spend time, shop, get inspired by cultural events and so forth. A big city guarantees possibilities for many kinds of action. A small town can be experiential, too, even though not as multi-dimensional as a big city. Buildings have an impact on how experiential or comfortable a city is. Some feel at home in skyscrapers surrounded by high glass walls, while others prefer low, old wooden houses. In an interesting city, it is possible to choose between different environments. It is impossible to find only one place that would suit everybody, but a city has a possibility to offer a pleasant environment for many kinds of people.

Our idea of a city has changed from the classical antique's cultural environment and from the physical embodiment of the technical town idea to a modern city idea that emphasizes the experiential and fragmented dimensions of a city (Rajanti 1999, 124).

A city is a layered total work of art. It embodies a variety of dimensions: history, visions and functions. A city has been renovated, repaired, expanded; the functional aspects of buildings have changed. Experiencing a city is based on all senses, not just vision. Sounds, smells as well as elements that affect our sense of touch, impact our city experience. City experience is also affected by the emotional connection, as a city is a place to live, even a homeplace. It is a milieu for historical and personal events. A city is connected to memories and associations. (Sepänmaa 1994, 89).

Moving in a city is an experience of movement and environment: we pass social, symbolic and mental boundaries, and observe the landscape, routes and our mental views (Junkala 1999, 46). City culture is characterized by fragmentary movements. Moving in a city is not straightforward; it is constant stopping and starting and orientation from one place to another. In a city space, the gaze constantly focuses and refocuses (Junkala 1999, 49). When moving in a city space, the atmosphere sometimes reminds one of a fast-paced movie. Flashing images and fast-paced cuts create constant movement in front of our eyes. With every glance we pay attention to different things. In cities, vision is an important sense in the inter-human relations and communication. In public transportation, streets, and other public spaces the eye constantly meets other gazes and flashing incidents and situations. (Benjamin 1986 and 1989.)

International situationists, Guy Debord among them, were interested in cityscapes and functions in the cities. Urbanization made the bourgeoisie want to change their environment to their likeness: social spaces became places for commerce, and private and public spaces were isolated from each other. City planning helped to isolate people from one another, and this way, point their place in the society. With the increasing number of cars and the expansion of road network, it was easy to isolate workers into the suburbia and prevent possible rioting in the cities. Situationists developed uniform urbanism (*urbanisme unitaire*) to criticize the bourgeois development. Uniform urbanism objected to the isolation of individuals and the bleak city planning. They hoped to create places that would provoke new emotional experiences. (Pyhtilä 2005, 47-50.)

An animal functions in close connection with its environment, and together they form a system. The environment of a human is architecture, a built environment. If humans are animals, too, then humans form a system together with houses and cities. There would be no built environments without humans. (Nyman 2004, 128).

For an architect, a city is a spectacular project, which expresses the power of the client and where architects can implement their own masterly will and ideas (Rajanti 1999, 119). Those who are in charge of city planning have a possibility to create different kinds of spaces and places.

It is possible to plan places based on either map or location. Map-based planning is characterized by the attempt to control environment already in the planning process. This way we lose a possibility to a multiform environment. Map-based planning can, instead of building a place, produce placelessness. Location-based building takes the place into consideration, which means that the character and diversity of the place are preserved even in newly built areas. (Forss 2007, 146-169.)

Boundaries separate places from one another. Boundaries structure a space, separate us from them, and control the relationship between the inside and the outside. Boundaries can be permanent or alterable; they can be also materialistic, social, symbolic or mental. (Junkala 1999, 21.)

When plans are made with only one target group in mind, the living environment becomes monotonous. A multiform environment is a clear environment, which is easy to relate to. A significant place is always imperfect, too, and therefore, we should protect old buildings so that the spirit of the place would be preserved. (Forss 2007, 180-196).

However, not all cities are cosmic. Their houses are not connected to nature and their relationship with the surrounding environment is artificial. According to Gaston Bachelard, everything is mechanic and the inner life escapes. (Bachelard 1957, 115.)

A city is, in contrast, full of places that do not tempt us to stop. These non-places are spaces for passing by and for temporary existence. Traveller's spaces and sceneries, as well as consumers' spaces like hotels, hypermarkets, motorways and holiday resorts are typical non-places. (Rajanti 1999, 192.)

Non-places do not have an identity, which is typical of places. It is difficult to commit to them and shape them to your own places (Junkala 1999, 45). We city-dwellers, however, live in the midst of these non-places and try to make this environment our own.

How we perceive an environment is influenced by what kind of spaces we pass through, what kind of experiential movements are possible in the space, and what kind of scenes gradually emerge as we proceed. Old cities, their organic shapes and narrow streets often offer intriguing mobility experiences. (Aura et al. 1997, 115.)

The suburb, where I spent my youth, did not offer many intriguing mobility experiences. That suburb was built in a forest far away from the city centre. Inhabitants in that suburb represented mostly lower middle-class and families with problems. Boundaries inside the area could be sensed even if they could not be seen. Houses were alike, but being a young girl, I needed to know precisely which yard I could pass on my way to school and which I needed to avoid as much as possible. At the local kiosk, you could come across a bunch of local boys wagging their switchblades, and on your way to a friend's home, you could meet a group

of girls racketing about in the staircase. Glue-sniffers rambled in the forests. Living in this creation of modern city planning, you needed to know the routes and keep your senses alert. Experiences were plenty, for my own needs and for others to share. I got so fed up with these experiences that I applied for a secondary school in the city centre. I was happy to go to school by buss all those years, because I knew I could avoid facing the gangs and other troublemakers. A concrete suburb, where the shapes of the houses, streets and roads are straight and yards without the shelter of trees, does not correspond to the ideal mobility experience. Pathways emerged to the suburban lawns when inhabitants tried to make their living environment a bit more meaningful and functional.

Moving in a city is a bodily experience. Our bodies can remember things that our minds would not. These memories can be activated through various senses and bring back memories to our minds that we thought we had already lost. A body can remember how to move from one place to another, it can feel events that we have experienced in the place as different kinds of sensations. (Casey 1987, 151-154.)

Architecture has detached itself from bodiliness and concentrated on being solely a visual art form. Real architecture represents the image of life, whereas modern buildings look empty and do not represent any lifestyle. (Pallasmaa 1994, 24.) My own body still remembers my fear when I lived in the concrete suburb.

Space is often experienced visually, but other senses broaden and enrich our visual experience of space. Sound broadens our spatial understanding of the space behind our heads that we cannot see. Sound also dramatizes a spatial experience. A soundless place can be perceived as calm or lifeless, even if there would be

movement (Tuan 2003, 16). Modern architecture can be pleasing to the eye but it lacks the personality brought by varied odours. Odours characterize objects and places in a way that is easy to recognize and remember (Tuan 2003, 11).

My own memories of living in a concrete suburb are always awakened when I see dirty gray concrete block houses. You can come across the same kind of suburbs almost everywhere in the world, and in certain places they have become desirable living environments. Personally, I do not feel that concrete suburbs would awaken positive memories in me, and neither do I gladly visit the suburb of my youth. Apprehensive memories come to mind immediately when I step in a buss that would take me to that area. My body remembers the experience: my muscles stiffen, my chest tightens, my head and back hurt. My body remembers suburbs as a place where it is not pleasant to live.

What makes a pleasant residential environment where you want to settle down? One characteristic of a comfortable environment is its closeness to a green belt. The distance between houses and green areas should be maximum 300 metres. There should be both wide green areas and smaller, scattered green areas. There should be round forms in the residential area, whereas straight lines and corners should be avoided. Area should be as multiform as possible and able to maintain mystery. Because of scenery, nature should be preserved, the forms of scenery should be respected in the building process, and monotony should be avoided. (Salonen 2010, 42).

A pleasant residential area is characterized by the fact that it is easy to feel at home there. Personally, I find a place where history and beauty are respected a pleasant environment. I long to feel, that in

my residential area nature and aesthetic values are respected. What does this mean? By respecting nature I mean that, for example, when building houses, you do not need to fall all the forest, just because it would be easy to build the houses. We could perhaps develop new methods that would save the trees, or build less aggressively. Respect for nature means also respect for all living creatures. Tall trees have grown for a long time. If a full-grown tree is fallen, it means that in a new residential area freshly planted trees will offer a pleasant nest for the houses only in fifty years' time. This means, by the time the next generation lives in the area. We can assume that the old residential areas are often comfortable and attractive just because the area in itself is comfortable due to the full-grown trees and other rich vegetation, historical environment and humanely sized buildings. This leads us to respect history. History means built elements as well as told and lived lives. We should hold on to these, so that not only trees but us people, too, would grow roots. It is difficult to strike root in a place, if you know nothing about the lives of people who lived in that place.

Settling down

Settling down has caused problems for me. I have lived in the same area for many decades, and still I do not feel at home. Something in the town always makes me feel an outsider. I do not know the stories, history and memories connected to the place beyond generations. My homeplace appears to me as a distant and cold industrial town.

Every place has its own character and it reflects on people. Home area is a place you attach to, grow into and identify with. It is a place that affects the formation of your identity. People can engage to places like to other people. Sometimes people may want to break free from their home areas; that process may be a life-long task. People may move to another continent without being able to break free from their previous home region. This means that people may be prisoners of or tied by their home region. Ideally, home region could arm you against outside impressions and pressure, without making you lose your personality. A change in environment shapes also the personality of people. Every change in the built environment can transform the place so much that a person no longer feels that the place is a homeplace. Instead, protecting both the built and natural environment preserves the personality and identity. (Sepänmaa 1994, 271-275).

A sense of rootlessness may be caused by environment changes experienced in childhood (Latikka 1997, 14). It is possible that a child does not perceive the reasons why the environment changes, and experiences the change similarly as an adult would experience the destruction of a homeplace. Often children cannot choose their place to live; adults make that choice for them.

As conscious beings, people make conscious choices and decisions about their places of residence. They are inseparably connected to their environment, but they also participate in creating it. Factors significantly affecting one's personality are childhood landscape, atmosphere at home, pedagogical principles, atmosphere in the community and attitudes prevailing there. However, people do not repeat what they have experienced or learned as such. Experiences build up a capital, which either promotes or resists your growth in every possible way. (Sepänmaa 1994, 282-283).

I was young when I got my own experience about the importance of the place of residence. My first own decision about looking for a new environment was to go to the secondary school in the city centre. I still lived in the concrete suburb, but now I had other places in my life where to look for new kinds of impressions. In those new places I was still an outsider, a suburban young girl in the midst of the downtown young. My identity did not fit in the new environment. According to Sepänmaa detaching from one's own community may cause a sense of alienation. Then art may provide an object for identification. (Sepänmaa 1994, 275.)

Perhaps it was this sense of alienation that drove me to art and working with my own hands; I looked for a connection first in the painting classes organized in the suburban leisure centre, later in a visual arts high school and still later within visual art studies. Maybe the sense of alienation is the reason why I have in my art looked for a homeplace, both inside and outside myself.

According to Sepänmaa, artists that are detached from their communities may have a possibility to observe their environment in a new way. This kind of fruitful conflict may force artists to consider their past in a fresh way and see the community differently than the integral inhabitants. Also, those who look back on a place see things differently from those who have lived in a certain place all their lives. Sepänmaa states that it is typical for artists to distance themselves either from time or place, which creates a creative conflict: an artist as an observer is not merely a part of what is being observed, but also crossbreeds his/her previous and latter experience. (Sepänmaa 1994, 227).

As I have grown older, art has acted as my mental homeplace, at least temporarily. Art world has not offered shelter or protection, but art itself and the joy of working with my own hands have given me comfort when homesickness has been strongest.

The word “home” can bring back warm memories from childhood, but it can also bring back the anxiety and fear that we may have experienced as children. Our adult homes may be an unconscious attempt to return to the lost childhood home. Home is not a building but a state of affairs, to which memories, notions, desires, fears, past and future are connected. Home is about rituals, rhythms in life and everyday routines. Home is space and atmosphere generated by time. Home is a symbol for shelter and order, but it can also be a place for loneliness, rejection, abuse and violence. (Pallasmaa 1994, 16.)

I do not want to return to my childhood homes in the echoing, dreary concrete suburbs. Instead, I want to return to my childhood homeplace, a cottage in the peaceful countryside. It is possible that this desire has made me look for the same cottage qualities in my adult homes: rough, old flaking surfaces, some kind of a decadent romance. The first home of my own was on the third floor of an apartment house built in the 1930s. The apartment was in a horrible condition: the ceiling black of soot and floors covered with ugly vinyl flooring. After an extensive renovation, when wooden floorboards were revealed from under the vinyl flooring, my home turned out to be an atmospheric small two-room apartment with wide windowsills. I lived in that apartment for eight good years. When it was time to look for a new home, I wanted to find the same kind of roughness and imperfect beauty. Together with my spouse, we found an almost perfect home in an old residential area, close to a forest and within a walking distance from the services of the city centre. The

atmosphere in this house is even closer to my childhood's spiritual homeplace. Living in our current home, I have especially enjoyed the atmosphere in a wooden house and the connection to earth, provided by the yard. We have lived there already for fourteen years. At times I still miss my homeplace in the cottage, but luckily I can spend my summer holidays there. In our current home I can flee from the world, dream about eternal happiness, and retire to the peace of my workroom to look for my homeplace through art and handiwork.

In our current home we have two beautiful tiled stoves to remind us how important fire is. When creating a home, a fireplace is very important; in the peasant culture, a hearth was necessary for cooking, in bourgeois homes a fireplace provided more convenience and atmosphere (Pallasmaa 1994, 20-22). In our house, the stoves bring warmth during winters and in the summer they are decorative elements that belong to the building.

Reijo Kupiainen writes in his article "Taiteen ei-teknologinen maailmasuhde" ("The non-technological relation of art to world") about focality, and gives the change from wood heating to central heating as an example of one of Albert Borgman's equipment paradigms. In wood heating, the stove is in the focus, a holy place and the heart of social functions that collected people together. A focal equipment or place is connected with bodily and social functions as well as with the natural life cycle and everyday chores. When the technique of district heating developed, it detached people from this bodily and social function and abolished part of the meaningfulness in human life. Focal action is meaningful action, it is commitment, intense presence, constant attention to what is being done, interest in things. (Kupiainen 2004, 3-5.)

Perhaps it is this focality that I often miss in city life, meaningful action and experiential connection with nature. In our cottage, in that nearly a hundred-year old log house without electricity or water supply, I can feel that I belong to the place, that I am part of the surrounding nature and connected to it. When everyday chores fill my days I feel that my existence in the world is justified as a part of the life cycle, as a part of that place.

Place and mental image are inseparable in a place experience (Forss 2007, 101). Mental images of places also affect the desirability of places in the housing market. Some residential areas are more desirable than others. My own knowledge is mostly based on the housing advertisements in the newspapers. Based on the prices, you can deduct how desirable a residential area is. Often old areas, with an old, park-like atmosphere, are these desirable residential areas. It is odd that these desires are not transferred to the architects' drawing boards or to the plans of construction companies.

Pallasmaa states that many architects seem to have some kind of divided personality, they seem to have different environmental values as planners and residents. As planners architects aspire for a meticulously designed and time-wise one-dimensional environment, whereas as residents they prefer a layered, ambiguous, and aesthetically less uniform environment; the instincts of a resident emerge to the surface from underneath the professional role values. (Pallasmaa 1994, 15.)

According to Pallasmaa, feelings aroused by form and space are connected to the encounter between humans and space. Emotion is connected to action, not to the visual aspects of space (Pallasmaa 1994, 18).

There are no secrets in the modern houses and cities. The space can be grasped with one look. Old houses and towns are labyrinthine and mysterious, which feeds imagination. When the space is revealed bit by bit, moving in the space remains interesting and creates an anticipating atmosphere. (Pallasmaa 1994, 20.)

The same area can be experienced differently. Experience is affected by the knowledge or lack of knowledge about the place's history or collective stories about the place (Riikonen 1997, 189), as well as by personal experiences and emotions in the place.

Each area has its own identity. It is being renewed, changed and reinforced with the help of different structures. Factors affecting place identity are its natural conditions, history and social structure . Also culture, language and dialects affect the identity. All factors forming the identity of a place create symbolism, mental images and expectations for the place. The identity of our place mirrors us and our area to other people and other areas. (Riikonen 1997, 179.)

Locality and the significance of the residential area are formed of both past mental images and current experiences. You either feel that you belong or then you do not. Those who have lived in a place for a long time have more history connected with the place, whereas for those who have just moved in everything is new and the identity of the place is just starting to take form. It would be easy to think of a nation as a uniform community, even if it really can only be an imagined community. Nobody can ever know everybody. (Riikonen 1997, 181-183.)

Settling down takes always its time, sometimes even several generations. When settling down has taken place, the past lives in the present and inhabitants make the place alive. A place without people is a dead space, a ruin. (Rajanti 1999, 45-46.)

The experience of a homeplace has vanished, at the latest, with globalisation. The emergence of a new global space and communication technologies utilizing that space have destroyed our feeling of a homeplace and left placeless people wandering around without a sense of direction. A place called a home, outlined by contours, has disappeared and the uniformity of local cultures has been lost. For centuries now, time and distance have no longer isolated people and places. (Massey 2008, 136-140.)

Travelling, both by moving physically and by electronic communication devices, has given each individual person more possibilities to find their homeplace anywhere in the world. Offering is wide and choice is hard, but the place still matters. A place can only be called a home, if you feel at home.

Society as a place to live

I am still looking for my homeplace. A partial reason for my feeling of placelessness may be the fact that I do not feel that I am a part of the country where I live, or part of the society that is comprised of the people who live in this country. Yrjö Sepänmaa points out accurately that everybody is something only in

relation to a community and environment that needs that person. (Sepänmaa 1994, 295.) There seems to be no room for artists and other “loiterers” in a society that admires efficiency.

According to ecological philosopher Henryk Skolimowski, an economic system exploiting ecology and humanity is not interested in knowledge, let alone wisdom. Instead, he writes, it is essentially interested in information and expertise; it is interested in its own smooth functioning, which is based on technological efficiency. (Skolimowski 1984, 23.)

Western culture is driven by the values related to efficiency. Decisions are made from the perspective of economic growth, which results in pursuit of profit, competitiveness and haste. Economic viewpoints pervade all areas of life and squeeze all vitality out of people’s lives. Being emotional is not desirable in a society where economics dominate. (Salonen 2010, 44.)

Language, way of thinking and a joint identification are associated with home region. A sense of connection creates the spirit. In childhood, the meaning of environment is emphasized through language. Environment starts to take shape more and more through language, and this way, the impact of environment in childhood is emphasized. Birthplace and the childhood milieu are important, perhaps the most important, places. You can take inhabit any place, but you are born in the birthplace and you grow there. (Sepänmaa 1994, 278.)

Humans have a linguistic relationship to their environment and environment is saturated by language. Environment is concepts, images, stories; all of which are memories and associations coloured by language (Nyman 2004, 129). Dialect is also important, because it is a way of thinking (Sepänmaa 1994, 285).

The sound and tone of a dialect, sayings and words with different meanings; all of these either strengthen or weaken one's attachment to a place. A dialect adds personality to the speech and awakens memories of places. Dialect, like language, can either connect to or isolate from a community.

Each place identity is created in relation to other places (Massey 2008, 145). Modern people are no longer tied to a place. Ever increasing number of people can choose their place of residence based on their own values and preferences (Sepänmaa 1994, 291). Dissatisfaction with one's homeplace makes one move elsewhere. The belief that life is better somewhere else has made Finnish people throng first to America and later to Sweden (Sepänmaa 1994, 291).

I can still remember a distant relative coming back from Sweden, driving along the dirt road that passed our cottage, in his red, fast car bought in our Western neighbouring country. Dust flew in the air as the prosperous neighbour came to visit his relatives. Everybody in the village knew that this man had left for Sweden years ago and had made a fortune there. It may be fact or fiction, but at least he had that shiny red status symbol with him.

Nowadays, you can probably hear the same kind of success stories in Thailand when hard-working Thais come in summer to drudge in the Finnish forests picking berries. If they are lucky, they will have a year's wages to bring back home. On the other hand, if they are unlucky, they can end up being devoured by a bear, as the fate of one missing Thai man was speculated in the summer of 2010. These speculations may have risen more from myths, beliefs and fears rather than from facts. ("The missing Thai berry picker found dead", mtv3, 12.8.2010.)

It is said that “It is a jackpot to be born in Finland” and yet Finnish people slander their home country as a wretched and poor hinterland. It would be beneficial to look for a realistic self-esteem between these two extremes (Sepänmaa 1994, 295).

Umayya Abu-Hanna commented the saying above in her article in Helsingin Sanomat monthly extra on December 30th 2012, in which she told about her racist experiences in Finland and why she had moved to Amsterdam. This new homeplace seemed like a broad-minded and ideal place to live after the racist experiences that her adopted daughter had had to endure. Also Abu-Hanna herself has encountered racism in Finland. However, when her adopted daughter, originally from South Africa, had to face racist comments in the middle of their home town, it was too much. Abu-Hanna decided to leave behind Finland, which had become her homeland, and move to Amsterdam. According to the article, the new homeplace seemed to be a broad-minded and ideal place. (Abu-Hanna, 2012.)

Even if the article was a story of the experiences of one individual, it raised a strong counter-reaction in some people. Forums in the internet started to fill up with allegations and abuse against Abu-Hanna. Ulla Appelsin’s contribution represents a more civilized commenting, even if it criticizes Abu-Hanna as a person, and not the issue itself, racism. (Appelsin, 2012.)

I do not want to take a stand in this issue, but I do wonder why a person, who has immigrated in Finland and settled down here, cannot criticize the Finnish society without receiving a lot of crushing criticism. On the other hand, I believe that Abu-Hanna, just like any other people who migrate after happiness, is sooner or later faced with the realization that, after some years, the new place is no longer the kind of a

wonderland it first seemed to be. When you have settled down in a new place you start to see also undesirable things around you. One can only hope that all citizens, immigrants and the indigenous population alike, had similar rights and possibilities to express their views if they feel that this country is not their homeplace. Perhaps these comments from citizens help decision-makers improve our society to be a better homeplace, even here in this jackpot-winners' country.

Belonging to a place is always a personal experience, but a regional identity is formed by shared experiences, and by common views on the place's character and its special features. People's shared history, mental images of the place and of its spirit, created by media, can have an effect on the mental landscape, where personal notions of a place meet those of the others living in the same place. (Haarni et al. 1997, 18.)

At the same time, locality has disappeared. Industry is multinational and cultural exchange global. Doreen Massey states that places grow to be more and more alike, and yet they seem to lack an internal cohesion. Homespun distinctiveness has been attacked. (Massey 2008, 134.)

Social space is formed by a network of social relationships, and this way, a place can be understood as a formation of social relationships in a certain area (Massey 2008, 144). However, there is no longer any place that would be populated by a single, homogenous social group of people only. If such places could still be found, their inhabitants would not share the same kind of place feeling. In all communities people occupy different positions and this affects their relationships to the place. (Massey 2008, 28.)

Why do young people still leave the countryside and move to the cities? One of the reasons is that there is no space to realize your dreams in the hometown, there are no jobs, and on the other hand, a small

town imposes social restrictions on one's behaviour (Tuan 2003, 60). It is possible that you find a homeplace in the new town, or then homesickness forces you to return. A society is a good place to live if you have your own place there. Those who do not have a place of their own become discontented citizens, and the society becomes a homeplace for less and less people.

SEEING A PLACE

Map showing the way

When I was still at the primary school age, I had a globe on my desk at home. The kind of globe that many schoolchildren have on their desks, one that rotates and has a light inside. It was a beautiful object to watch because of its many colours and shapes. It lent wings to the ideas that took me away from our distressing everyday life and sowed the seed of curiosity inside me; “what could be there or there”, I wondered and rotated the globe. Trips abroad were not a part of my childhood, except for one trip to the Kolmården zoo. I made the trips in my own mind, I created unknown places and sceneries in my imagination, and this way, I got to know interesting new locations. That colourful map helped my imagination and created different atmospheres. The globe acted as a window to another world, as a possibility for a memorable journey and as a dream of a happy outing. Perhaps this globe that I had as a child remained revolving in my subconscious, waiting to emerge in my consciousness and creating ideas for my works of art. Map is a visual representation of the world, and personally for me, also possible material for my artwork. Later I became interested in two-dimensional maps. They reminded me of labyrinths, a network of endless searching and finding, and of crossroads, where you could choose between different possibilities to see and experience things. Something in the maps still makes me curious about new places, raises a desire to go and look at new sceneries, new places, and to wonder at the strange habits and the diversity of lifestyles.

As a child I would not have believed that the globe I was looking at was made to convey wrong information for me, and to put it bluntly, it was made to trick me. For a child, a map, despite all its beauty, was

a document, direct representation of the world, knowledge that you could trust. Now I know that representing the world has a long history and that maps have not always looked the same, and therefore, have not given truthful information. A map used to, and still does, act as a creator of mental images, and a cultivator of opinions, just like any other visual documents of our time. Maps have been projected in many ways and the map that I grew used to looking at on my desk or on the classroom wall, did not necessarily correspond to the correct proportions, and by extension, to the relationships between regions and places.

First, maps were needed for reinforcing new communities, for depicting nations isolated from each other by borders, for segregating groups of people, as well as for visualizing the division of property and lands (Pickles 2004, 99).

Jouni Häkli writes on mapping and the visualization of the world: “The history of mapping can be understood as a development, which enabled the control of society and space with the power of gaze and reason. Reasons for visualizing the social and physical world have been strongly connected to the reinforcement of administration and the rationalization of control. Modern politics have partly become possible only when society has been projected on paper. By making society and its phenomena visible, they are also made controllable.” (Häkli 1997, 38. Translated from Finnish by Hilikka Luosa.)

Map is a vision of the world created by people. It is the vision of the people at the time the map was created. Maps change as the world changes, through the changing human consciousness and beliefs.

As Jouni Aarnio puts it: “A map is always the cartographer’s interpretation of the surrounding world. The users of the map, on the other hand, interpret the cartographer’s picture of the environment through the filters of their own understanding. Then, the recipient’s level of knowledge, preconceived ideas, mental images and cartographical abilities essentially affect the interpretation of the map.” (Aarnio 2000, 120. Translated from Finnish by Hilikka Luosa.)

Maps are graphical presentations of the world. In addition to location information, maps are used for describing a variety of other things. Therefore, the purpose of a map is not only to give location information but to create mental images. (Kokkonen 1997, 53-59.) Therefore, we need to be able to interpret the map, read maps as pictures, as any other visual material of its time, as any other visual representation of the world.

Drawing a map was originally a craftsmen’s trade. Surveyors and cartographers drew the maps with ink and then coloured them with watercolours. In Finland, the starting point for civilian mapping was the urge to clarify land ownership, and following that, taxation. (Strang 2000, 11-27.)

In Finland, surveying activities started in 1633. Surveyors estimated the production of fields, meadows and burn-beaten area as well as the quality of fishing waters, so that the taxation of each house could be defined. Markers in the land register maps were realistic, houses were drawn as houses, churches as

churches. Houses and plots in the property were marked with running Arabic numbers, fields with Latin letters, and meadows with letters. Fields and meadows were separated from each other with colours and lineation, and likewise lakes, roads and borders were drawn in different colours, so that they could be easily separated from each other. Land register maps were real works of art, but they contained very little facts about the terrain. Even if the map was the creation of its maker, they were seldom signed, and cartographers can be identified only based on the style and way of drawing. (Raantupa 2000, 73-84.)

Cartographer's colours, lineation and placing of areas are superfluous elements for the scientific knowledge, but they create an image of the structure of the world, and are devices enabling evaluation and propaganda (Pickles 1994, 44). Over centuries, maps have been made for various purposes. In the 17th century, among scientists and researchers gained ground a habit of using maps to illustrate research results and phenomena. They started to make thematic maps that illustrated either poverty, the regional distribution of health care and illnesses, or crime. (Järvinen 2000, 129-140.)

Map is always a compromise on the depicted object. The technique used in mapping flattens a three-dimensional ground into a two-dimensional picture. This inevitably leads to distortions in the depicted object. (Pickles 1994, 34.)

This leads to the fact that our understanding of the proportions of different countries has been distorted in the same way as map projections have distorted these relations. Mercator's projection is poor at dimensions but a good choice for a seafarer, because it makes it easy to navigate along a straight line. Peter's

projection depicts shapes incorrectly and the map looks like an elongated globe. In Gall's projection, however, the shapes are relatively close to real life. (Massey 2008, 96-99.)

A map is a form of representing interpretations of the world and our relations to each other. Maps are also social products; they interpret the area they depict. In a map making process you must make choices what to include and what to exclude. This process reveals the predominating image of the world in the society and the values of the time. (Massey 2008, 80-87.)

All cultures have produced maps, but cultures have their own graphic styles to illustrate maps. In the European history, the maps of the natives are not known, either because they have not been properly documented or they have not fulfilled the quality standards set for European maps. Both mediaeval European maps and the maps of Australian aboriginals illustrate their own world view by combining topography, religion and history in their maps. (Kokkonen 1997, 68.)

It is not possible to express the entire surrounding reality solely through cartographic presentations. Scenery is an impression of a place or view, transmitted through senses, not an objectively measured entity. This is why it is not possible to reduce scenery into a two-dimensional map without problems. Mere cartographic interpretation is not a sufficient way to express or study scenery. (Raivo 1997, 206.)

Therefore, a map does not give sufficient information for experiencing an environment or a place. When experiencing and sensing a place, images of the place are formed in our minds. Out of these images we can form mental image maps.

Mental image maps are images in our minds that help us orientate. Basic components in them are places and reference marks, such as various landmarks and crossings. Mental image maps contain information about the location relations of the reference marks, as well as route plans, that is, models of how to get smoothly from one place to another. (Aura 1997, 120.)

A mental image map is not similar to a geographical map. It is not as precise as geographical maps typically are, instead, it is fragmented and simplified. A mental image map can contain, in addition to images, other sense information and knowledge about the atmosphere and one's experiences in the environment. According to Aura, a mental image map is an individual's inner model of his/her physical environment. (Aura 1997, 106.)

Mental image maps have three important functions. Mental image map helps us move in the environment and orientate in it. Mental image maps have a social function in the form of shared images and memories. Mental image maps also create the basis for our personal identities. (Aura 1997, 106-107.)

Ulric Neisser talks about cognitive maps, which are some kind of visual models for moving about in various places. According to Neisser, imagining and seeing are different things. Cognitive maps merge into mobility and perceptive functions, forming an imaginary map, a mental image. (Neisser 1982, 109.)

Cognitive maps have a variety of features that together form a mental image out of perception. *Landmarks*, such as towers, are important because they are easily discerned from afar, *paths*, such as roads and streets, are routes for moving from one place to another. *Knots* are striking crossings, and *regions* are

areas that are easily recognizable because of cultural or geographic characteristics, *borders* separate areas visually from one another. These features manifest and determine the structure of the city for its inhabitants. (Neisser 1982, 103.)

What a cartographer and an artist seem to have in common is that both of them are masters of deception, masters at transforming a three-dimensional object into a two-dimensional form (Olsson 2007, 388). If an artist struggles with how to present a three-dimensional object on a two-dimensional fabric, a cartographer has to ponder how to present a three-dimensional globe in a two-dimensional form (Olsson 2007, 130).

While for centuries a map has been a visual representation of the world we live in, it is no wonder that also artists have been interested in maps. Many contemporary artists have been eager to use maps as material for their own works. Some artists use maps as concrete material, cutting and gluing maps and building collages, new images of the world. Other artists use maps as abstract starting points by painting routes, forms of the terrain or imaginary maps of places that do not really exist, but could exist. Some make tree-dimensional maps, others conceptual maps. Artists use maps to create visual memory maps, body maps, psychological maps; this way, they map the world through the means of art and look for their own place as a part of this world. (Harmon 2004 and 2009.)

I have been interested in maps for years. First I grew interested in the labyrinth forms and later I realized that the square plan reminded me of a labyrinth. City reminds me of a labyrinth, where I can get lost and where I can find new interesting things. Map started to interest me as a thematic element. Later I started to

use maps as material for my work. I cut roadmaps and glued them on a painted surface. Roads form organic shapes on the surface. I connect maps with each other and create new routes out of the existing ones. A representation of reality changes into a mental image map, a witches' broom, and back into an old tree and paper material.

Landscape imagery as part of visual culture

Human actions are present in the landscape either directly or indirectly. Work, life, hobbies and other activities leave their mark in the landscape. This way, human actions have formed landscapes into a kind of historical whole, and our relation to nature is part of human self-understanding. (von Bonsdorff 2007, 42-46.)

An individual and one's environment form a continuum that has neither inside nor outside (Berleant 2006, 91). Nature is part of man and man is part of nature. Perhaps this is the reason why nature and scenery have always been present in the visual culture. Visual culture is a broad concept that contains, depending on the way you look at it, various forms of culture. In my own opinion, visual culture is not just art, architecture or printed imagery made by humans, but also the landscape that opens all around us, the natural environment. Nowadays, unspoilt nature is hard to find, because humans have shaped nature nearly everywhere.

Landscape around us reflects culture in a similar way as contemporary art or architecture. Countryside scenery has been an important element in my life. In my art, landscape elements have been in an important role, sometimes as concrete images sometimes as allusions. The way I see and experience scenery is culturally learnt.

Our aesthetical perception and evaluation are tied to the culture. Through art and travels, we can get acquainted with a diversity of cultures far away from our own living environment. Arnold Berleant states that cultural aesthetics includes the colours, sounds, topography, lights, movements, odours, and tastes. It also includes the idea of space, sense of time, and the idea of size in relation to human body. All of these together determine the character of an environmental experience connected to time and place. (Berleant 2006, 108-109.)

As an image-maker, I am interested in how landscape imagery has developed, and how various ways of presenting scenery have affected my own way of looking and seeing landscape. People have always made pictures of landscapes. They tell about their own time and about the changes that take place in the scenery. Landscape imagery is part of visual culture.

Maunu Häyrynen writes: “Landscape imagery consists of many aspects: it consists of depictions of scenery, scenery objects, scientific presentations and textbooks, as well as of the conventions activated by the imagery, such as watching and photographing landscapes, landscape tourism

and landscape management. These all build a network of mutual references that creates connections between various areas of knowledge - visual arts, natural sciences, history, tourism, everyday knowledge. Therefore, landscapes are not perceived as physical places or as their depictions but as knots in the said referential network, and a certain landscape can in another context be perceived as a non-landscape. Something that does not belong to landscape scenery is defined as a non-landscape, as an intermediate space in brackets.” (Häyrynen 2005, 61. Translated from Finnish by Hilikka Luosa.)

Landscape imagery is a manifestation of western visual culture that has established itself as a way of presenting national space. Imagery is based on a collection of presentation methods and principles that together produce landscape imagery for an area. On repetition, landscape imagery often changes fast into an established presentation method, where certain objects in the scenery, vantage points and themes are repeated over and over again until they turn into classics, clichés, or both. (Häyrynen 2005, 183-184.)

When a certain landscape image has been witnessed a number of times in a certain place, it gradually becomes part of that context.

From naturalism to symbolism

Landscape has been represented differently at different times. Often representations have focused on desired rather than real characteristics. In the 16th and 17th century, recognizably presented cities, fortresses, monuments, and idealized pastoral paintings prevailed in the tradition of representing topographic scenery. At the end of the 18th century, the unfinished, irregular and rough were considered picturesque. Picturesque presentation acted as an aesthetic filter estranging peripheral regions into objects that could be examined as works of art. With the growing bourgeois tourism, the admired portrayals of peripheral landscapes started to gain nationalistic features. (Häyrynen 2005, 38-39.)

At the end of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century Europe went through industrialization and urbanization. The world was changing in the areas of politics and psychology, and this change was reflected in the way artists depicted the reality surrounding them. Artists started to depict impressions, and not so much the representational objects. Art movement that opposed naturalism and appealed to imagination was given the name *symbolism*. Symbolism was more a view or an attitude to an atmosphere than an actual art movement. Nature was used for illustrating mood and atmosphere. The purpose of the artworks was to provoke emotions in the spectators. Because people are familiar with landscapes and have experiences of them, landscapes were good subjects for conveying emotions. Symbolist artists pursued to depict the immaterial world existing both within and without the material world. Symbolist artists often portrayed places without people, and this powerfully reveals the atmosphere of the place. You can sense the

spirit of a place in some symbolist paintings. When the presentation of the atmosphere became more important than the naturalistic interpretation of the subject matter, artistic expression grew more abstract. (Rapetti et al. 2012, 12-15.)

The roles of place and region were important for the symbolists. Forests were often depicted as enigmatic, wild places of nature where a mystical atmosphere prevailed. The visions of the artists provided the audience with experiences of fear and dreams, and created visual representations of a mental landscape. (von Bonsdorff 2012, 103.)

The concept of perspective changed and the new styles forsook the reality transmitted through the visual sense. Expression in painting approached the symbolist principles of language and literature, idea was expressed with ideograms. (Rapetti 2012, 35.)

New forms of landscape imagery

If in the 17th century landscapes were portrayed for their own sake, today landscapes are depicted in art also as symbols; landscapes are used for illustrating different ethical points of view, such as global warming and other environmental issues affecting the industrialized society. Contemporary artists use landscapes also as material and as locations for their works as, for example, in earth art. Contemporary landscape imagery is comprised of a large variety of presentations, ranging from contemporary photographs

portraying non-places to romantic sceneries used in advertisements. As spectators of images, we interpret the surrounding world through these images. We also value our environment through images. As image-makers, we artists create new landscape imagery for visual culture, whether we wanted or not. This way, makers and recipients of imagery communicate together in the arena of visual culture, by interpreting landscape and environment. Interpreting the landscape depends on everyone's own starting points and on the image sources that are available.

As art started to broaden its domain in the beginning of the 19th century by accepting, in addition to the pleasant and pretty, the grotesque and ugly as parts of the art concept, we have to count diverse environments, from beautiful natural sceneries to rude industrial scenes, in to the realm of environmental experience (Berleant 2006, 98). The diversification of landscape imagery has increased the offering of environmental experiences. Especially the development of photography has brought the presentation of landscapes and places closer to the consumer. Later on, the invention of moving pictures, and today information technology has created a new kind of image world also in the culture of landscape representations.

Photographs are used also in visual landscape monitoring as a part of landscape research, where photographs act as a means of documenting the scenery, and where they are taken in accordance with strictly defined principles (Heikkilä 2007). Nowadays, image manipulation is used for demonstrating possible phenomena related to landscape changes. Image manipulation allows the removal and addition of objects, which helps in demonstrating how planned actions affect the scenery (Heikkilä 2007, 99).

Marko Lampisuo's graphic prints based on photography represent another kind of image manipulation. He gradually removes elements from the landscape until the whole landscape eventually disappears. Lampisuo's pieces are not scientific documents, but they are part of our time's visual landscape imagery, and can tell about the spirit and atmosphere of a place as much as photographs taken in accordance with scientific methods.

My own relationship with landscapes and presenting landscapes approaches the symbolist presentation. I want to create images that provoke emotions and set imagination in motion. I also present things naturalistically, but only as fragments, or as parts of a collage. In my own creative work, I strive for atmosphere and a continuous home-search process that steers my choices and invigorates my imagination over and over again.

Place experienced remotely

Perhaps my own feeling of placelessness drove me to art, but it also made me dream. Dream of a perfect place where I could be happy. In the midst of homesickness, in an unsatisfactory environment, television and movies helped me in my dreams. They brought me visions of possible new homes in different parts of the world. My imagination developed visions of future in those places - places where I could feel at

home. My ideal homeplace imagery was influenced by and developed with the moving pictures. I dreamed and imagined fantastic places, utopian, perfect nests of happiness, far away from the gray everyday life.

Nowadays, place imagery is formed more and more through moving images. In this place imagery, movies and television series are the forms of visual culture that are part of the everyday life of modern people. In TV and internet, we can see images of landscapes raped by war and of sceneries of dazzling beauty. Our view of the world is broadened and our visual place imagery changes. Our imaginations are influenced and our lives are enriched by various experiences. This is also called entertainment.

It is so relaxing to make a nest in the corner of the sofa and open the television. Let the world enter our home. To look at sceneries that I would otherwise maybe never see, listen to sounds I did not know existed. Some may think this is old-fashioned. Nowadays, we should watch the news and movies from the internet or in a smart phone, television is a middle-class layabout's attempt to have a live. My own life has, however, been greatly enriched by television. My own understanding of a place's effect on people's lives has maybe also been strengthened by television and movies. Perhaps my life in town has not offered enough meaningful, focal action, and therefore, I have been looking for a feeling of nostalgia in the movies, a romantic atmosphere of life in the olden days. These touching images relate to some kind of longing for faraway places inside me.

In the beginning of the 1990s *Northern Exposure* was shown in the Finnish television for the first time, and it made a lasting impression on me. The locations in the series are exotic and at the same time quite familiar, characters are odd but sympathetic. You could sense warmth and the feeling of home in the

locations, even if my image transmitter was only a tiny television set. The main character in the series, a doctor from New York, Joel Fleischman (Rob Morrow), has to move to Alaska to work so that he can fulfil the terms of payment for his student loan. Fleischman arrives in Alaska just to hear that he will be located in Cicely, a small town in the middle of wilderness.

Fleischman travels to Cicely by bus, and from the bus stop he is fetched by Ed, a young Indian who is interested in movies. The journey to the middle of wilderness is about to begin. Suddenly on their way, Ed jumps out of the car and runs into the forest and tells Fleischman to drive the rest of the way. The New Yorker finds his way to Maurice Minnifield's (Barry Corbin) house, who tells him how he has built the Cicely town from scratch. Minnifield boasts how he has established both a newspaper and a radio station in the town, and this way laid a foundation for culture in the wilderness. The town itself is nothing more than a few houses grouped on both sides of the road. There is a bar, shop, hairdresser's, gas station, cleaner's and the radio station, but nothing much more. After having seen the "town", Fleischman is profoundly shocked and makes every effort to come up with a way to terminate the contract. Eventually, he has to admit that he is doomed to living in the middle of wilderness for the next four years.

Totally upset and all hope lost, Fleischman finds accommodation in a house hosted by Maggie O'Connelly (Janine Turner) just to realize that there are rats in the house and that the infrastructure of the house does not quite match that of a modern apartment building. After his first night in Cicely, Fleischman, screaming of horror, carries with a stick a big rat into the garbage can behind the house. Once his shock has a bit subsided he starts to pay attention to the scenery opening around him; forests and lakes as far as the eye

can see, mountains shimmering on the background. Enthused by the scenery, Fleischman takes a morning jog and runs until he is exhausted. Still for a while he tries to resist his new place of residence, but episode by episode the yuppie doctor from New York gradually absorbs the character of the place and gets acquainted with the peculiar inhabitants of the town. He even learns to like this remote corner in the wilderness.

Northern Exposure depicts in a fine way how a place affects the everyday life, people's beliefs and thoughts. Fleischman's urban scheme of things encounters, at times even clashes into the habits of a village community living in the great outdoors. A person used to living in an urban community has to question his own truths. Local Indians introduce the secrets of Indian medicine to the doctor, at times questioning the principles of western medicine so highly respected by Fleischman. Collisions are inevitable, but the misery of the place, immediate proximity of nature, and the severe climate evoke all kinds of emotions in the arch metropolitan doctor. Cold winter with its whirling snow is a trying time for a city-dweller, who is used to a more comfortable climate.

The unbelievable characters in the series also create a mystic atmosphere in the place. In addition to the neurotic Doctor Fleischman, grown up surrounded by skyscrapers and asphalt, and the light-aircraft pilot Maggie, we get to know the hallucinating movie freak Ed, antisocial gourmet chef Adam, an ex-criminal, current priest and radio voice Chris, ex-astronaut Minnifield, forever young shopkeeper Ruth-Ann, bartender Holling and his forty years younger miss-girlfriend Shelly, as well as Fleischman's silent Indian receptionist Marilyn. These diversified and unconventional characters create an image for the spectator of a

magical place far away in the north where rites and myths are part of the everyday life, and where even the most mundane events change into memorable experiences with these absurdly funny characters.

The selection of places, how they are shown and experienced, is not random. Place selection always involves power. Many of the places that are important for common people are ordinary and not visually extraordinary. Scientists have the power to create important places by choosing important places from the less important. Places can be made important with the help of literary or visual means, which can make us pay attention to places that we would not otherwise notice. (Tuan 2003, 162.)

Places that are deeply loved are not necessarily well known. Places can be made visible by using different means: by competing with other places, by conflicting with other places, by creating visual visibility or mental images with art, architecture, ceremonies and rituals. Places come alive when they are dramatized. (Tuan 2003, 178.) Art can make a place meaningful solely by being there; a sculpture in a certain space makes the place important just by being there and by creating its own space there (Tuan 2003, 162).

With the help of the television series *Northern Exposure*, an unknown periphery reached our living rooms and made us watchers believe in the magical appeal of the place. Making a television series in a remote periphery created an aura for the place that otherwise maybe would not have been there at all. Reputation, number of tourists and income grow through publicity, as has happened to the shooting location of the *Northern Exposure* series, the small town of Roslyn in Washington, USA.

Remote presence means that we experience inadequate and selected information about a place, whereas presence means that we experience the place itself. Through television we are remotely present in a

place, and we do not experience the place itself but a prepared mental image of the place. Therefore, our mental image is based on prepared view, not on our own experience. (Forss 2007, 105.)

By watching the *Northern Exposure* series, we were remotely present in that roughly beautiful small town, experiencing all joys and sorrows in the series through television. Being remotely present, we did not experience real events in real places, but we experienced what we were intended to experience.

The film *Under the Tuscan Sun* gave me different kinds of experiences through remote presence. The film is based on a novel with the same name by Frances Mayes. In the movie, directed by Audrey Wells, a writer recovering from a divorce, called Frances Mayes (Diane Lane) gets a trip to Tuscany as a present from her friends. While she is travelling in a bus surrounded by gay men she sees an advertisement of a house for sale. Frances jumps off the bus, and wants to buy the house there and then. There are also other interested buyers, but the seller realizes that Frances understands the spirit of the house and sells the house to her. Frances hires foreign workmen to help in the renovation, and the work can start. The house is badly damaged and the reparation is hard work. At times Frances, burdened by the task, is about to sink in despair, but in the end the results start to show and she starts to think of the house as her new home.

This film presents Italy as the land of eternal sunshine and sweet dreams, even if Frances at times encounters storms and little disappointments in her love life. In the film, the local people are mostly helpful, hospitable and warm, except for an old man who walks every day along the street and stubbornly refuses to greet the newcomer. In the film, Frances manages well in English in a remote Italian village and the locals speak surprisingly fluent English. There may be different opinions about the artistic level of the film,

but it does make the surrounding milieu part of the plot, and continues to spread the image identity characteristic of the place.

I was given a chance to get acquainted with the Tuscan sun in November 2009, when I had the opportunity to live and work in the artist residence of Grassina. I arrived in the Florence airport late in the evening when it was already dark. The taxi ride took half an hour and the driver had to ask for directions on the phone. I started to wonder where in heaven's name was I. I arrived in the house's yard, which was poorly lit. An artist couple was there to meet me and they guided me to my own hole. Seeing my room for the first time I could call it a hole, it was so austere. "Ah well, I have come here to work", I thought and went to sleep.

The next morning sunshine woke me up. It was not possible to see outside from the sleeping loft, but when I got to the window all doubts that I had had the night before disappeared into the thin air. In front of me opened a beautiful, rolling landscape, just like the Tuscan landscapes are. Cypresses rose up tall and proud in the slopes and down in the valley you could see red-tiled roofs, the sky shone in bright blue. I had no doubts whether I would enjoy my stay here for the next month. Soon after I had arrived, I got to know the other residents in the house, Finnish couples that had been there already several times before and knew how to act, where to get what you needed and so forth. With the help of these mentors and the beauty of the scenery I soon adjusted myself to the place.

The residential house was located on a hill with beautiful views over the surroundings, but all shops were down in the village. Shopping turned out to be a physical exercise that required appropriate equipment. A neighbouring couple loaned willingly their pull bag, which they knew from experience that they

should remember to take along, which helped me tug everything I needed up to the house. I bought painting equipment in Florence, a bus-ride away, where I also familiarized myself with the local art treasures. Each week during the month I would need to spend at least two days in Florence, so that I could visit all the museums and churches. By the end of the month I was fed up with rooms with decorations from floor to ceiling and with crucifixes, and I had seen no contemporary art. The place lives out of tourism and the past, and the peculiarities of contemporary art do not belong there.

Enraptured by the place, I was also at first carried away by the Florentine ornaments and abundance, but once I had had my fair share of the museums and churches I started to long for fresh air. The picturesque beauty did not bother me, however. I did not long for concrete blocks and straight streets. I was happy to stroll in the varied gardens and along the narrow, winding roads in the old town. The proximity of the decaying stone walls rising above gave me a sense of the past, lived lives, everything that had taken place in this old town, changes it had seen and people who had treaded its streets. Early morning smells in the narrow lanes, when the sun does not yet warm properly, when people stop over for a cup of coffee before going to work, when small shops open their doors. That was the smell of history, damp smell of life, a smell that comes from the narrow alleyways and never from the wide, asphalted streets.

Once when I was walking in the streets of Grassina, I found myself in the garden of the local church. Fig trees had already given their crop, but there was one fig hanging in a small tree, waiting for someone to pick it. I picked the fruit and tasted. The November fig was cool and lovely as it melted in my mouth. That wonderful taste tickled my nerves for a long time, and never have I tasted anything similar since.

The taste of fruit that has travelled a long way cannot match with one that is freshly picked. During that trip I had many fine taste experiences, and they have partly spiced my memories. Taste experiences are part of the local character that comes directly from the soil. Roots in the local soil grow into a tree and a fruit, for both humans and animals to enjoy.

Days of Heaven, a film directed by Terrence Malick in 1978, depicts earth in a down-to-earth manner. Shooting and lighting give this film its special character. Outdoor scenes were shot in natural light and also inside scenes were lit very sparingly with artificial light. The film is aesthetically beautiful, and at times its shooting style verges upon nature documentaries. Especially, portraying the wind is very subtle; the rolling movement in the corn field and the ripple on the water convey a strong experience of the prevailing climate for the spectator. Wide field scenery allows us to observe the changes taking place also in the sky. Colours, light, and cloud formations represent the changes between night and day, and the changing mood in the film. Environment is wide open and the terrain flat, but when an intimate scene is portrayed, it takes place in a bright clearing in a forest. Trees and vegetation provide a shelter for the most sensitive moments. Places are an important element in telling a story and in creating an atmosphere.

Visual presentations of places affect our attitudes towards different environments. A romantic movie about Tuscany provides us with different emotions about the place than, for example, disgustingly realistic photographs of concrete suburbia. Both elements of visual imagery affect our way of seeing and experiencing these places. It is difficult to avoid the effects of visual imagery. It is also possible to take a

beautiful picture of an ugly place. It does not make the place beautiful but it can change the way we see the place. A picture of a place can have an effect on how we value one place in comparison to others.

Both art and environment are part of the visual culture. In both the art world and environment, there are makers and recipients, as well as people, establishments and institutions on different levels evaluating works/acts. These structures are obvious with respect to art and the built environment, but also with respect to nature in its natural state when it is a question of a tourist attraction. As a tourist attraction, nature becomes a kind of *ready made* art piece, an object that can be evaluated with diverse quality criteria. (Sepänmaa 1994, 26-34.)

Yrjö Sepänmaa writes: “Institutions in art and nature correspond to each other in their general structure. Artist makes an artwork for others to describe, interpret and evaluate. Environmental objects are made or selected in the same way. Processes overlap; some art forms are part of the environment, and on the other hand, environment is transformed to resemble art.” (Sepänmaa 1994, 48. Translated from Finnish by Hilikka Luosa.)

Art and environment approach each other in a concrete manner in environmental art and through the work of nature photographers. Likewise, architecture integrates the surrounding nature to be part of the artwork. (Sepänmaa 1994, 46.)

Artist can depict the scenery in many ways, but artists do not depict only what they see, they build something new out of all they see and experience. Imagination blends with everything from experiences in the home region to what has been seen, learnt, read during the whole lifetime. Depictions that others have made about the environment, photographs, movies, and printed media, are increasingly effective, too. What has been seen and experienced is intertwined in layers with what has been documented or imagined. (Sepänmaa 1994, 273-274.)

We are exposed to visual imagery everywhere and in many ways. Market economy utilizes visual elements to arouse desires in us, so that we would buy goods and services. One form of visual imagery that strongly appeals to our yearning for beauty and our need for experiences is travel brochures. Their goal is to arouse a need in the readers to spend their vacations in the depicted place. Pictures create a mental image of the place and the readers estimate whether the character of the place corresponds to their own requirements for a holiday resort. The impression of the place is different depending on what kind of journey is being advertised. The same place can have many identities depending on the target group for which the journey is being sold. Brochures very seldom mention the local people. The place is described as a place where a tourist would feel comfortable, as some kind of an ideal world that is not affected by local everyday routines. This kind of a selling strategy aims at making us dream and avoid all responsibility for what our holiday trip may cause to the local people and the place itself. (Massey 2008, 83-84.)

First, tourism was only the privilege of the elite, but gradually it spread among the whole population; brochures visualizing the travel experiences became well-known and made the tourists' way of

looking at things an essential part of tourism (Urry 2002, 4). Industrialization, urbanization, rising salaries, and the fact that holidays became an established part of the working culture enabled the spreading of tourism among the working class. Train transportation enabled the travelling of the middle-class and mass tourism started to develop. When there were tourists from all social classes, holiday resorts started to differentiate from each other; places were evaluated based on who travelled there. Those who could afford it would travel farther and to more exotic destinations, whereas the less affluent were forced to settle with more economic mass tourist destinations. This way, democratic travelling changed into an instrument for inequality. Holidays can be seen as part of the modern conspicuous consumption, and the most important issues are where the holiday is spent, who else spend their holidays there, how many other visitors there are, and how many similar people to the tourist himself/herself spend their holidays there. (Urry 2002, 16-23.) Tourism has become an instrument for self-expression.

When tourists travel to a new, maybe even an exotic place, they look with curiosity and interest at all they see. This gaze is a socially organized way of looking, created by media, and expected from all tourists. Tourists search with their gazes something traditional, old, real; something from the past or something that never was. (Urry 2002, 3.)

Tourism is like some kind of pilgrimage: we detach ourselves from our own lives and familiarize ourselves with new places. After the pilgrimage, it is safe to return to the familiar environment, enlightened and having seen it all. All real that the tourists see on their trips is not really real. Often it is built on purpose

for the tourists. Often places built especially for tourists are similar to each other, but in any case, tourists have a possibility to see something new and wonderful. (Urry 2002, 8-11.)

Being detached from the safe experiential environment, looking at things differently, tasting new flavours, smelling new odours may generate new thoughts and may dislocate our stuck routines, at least for a moment.

When looking at the world as a tourist, even the most trivial things turn into interesting and special, something worth looking. The curious gaze of a tourist transforms experiences into something unique and important; the same things that are commonplace and boring in our daily lives, are for tourists events worth seeing and experiencing. As tourists, we go to museums to look at objects connected to everyday life as if they were miracles. Shopping, eating, drinking and physical exercise against a certain visual background change into experiences. We collect experiences like objects and the sign itself becomes significant, witnessed. This happens, for example, in art museums, where the objects for tourists' gazes are the names of the artists rather than the artworks themselves. (Urry 2002, 13.)

Tourism is big business and it affects the way we see the world (Urry 2002, 6). Tourist imagery, with its brochures and tourist photographs, creates visual landscape imagery of places and evaluates places with respect to each other. In tourist attractions, the tourist sensing the place can be as remotely present as when watching a movie.

One manifestation of visual imagery that is present in our everyday lives is the news broadcast, which also builds our geographical imagination. Every day we hear news of what has happened in different

parts of the world, and based on these news and reports we build our view of the world and load our environment with meanings. (Massey 2008, 84.)

World is a visual place and our view of the world is built through different visual manifestations. How we understand the scenery is largely based on how it manifests itself upon us through visual culture.

DESTROYING A PLACE

Place full of disturbance

Environmental problems are caused by people and they touch people, even if we would not always think so. Changes in environment affect us, even if we wish they would not or we did not notice them. Some of the problems become so ordinary for people living in towns that we often do not even question them. Noise, light and pollution are this kind of problems. Nature as an environment offers several possibilities for revival after a stressful situation, but if natural environments that are peaceful enough are not available, a place for revival is hard to find.

When I was young, I often went to rock concerts. I may have received an overdose of noise, because nowadays silence is extremely important to me. At home I very seldom listen to music and when in town, I usually select a route that is as quiet as possible. A leaf blowing machine is one of the most horrid inventions ever - it should be banned by law. Snowploughs could be less noisy, likewise the background music in the shopping centres, and the sound effects in movies. My environment is full of more or less disturbing noise elements. As I live in town, I have learnt to live with them, but I cannot say that I would feel comfortable in the noise. Quietness is hard to find in towns. In nature's hinterlands where there are no roads, it is possible to notice the silence. Or rather, notice the sounds in nature, because there are noises in nature. We humans are often so loud that we do not hear what nature says to us. Sometimes it would be good to just listen.

Nature in itself does not disappoint people, and therefore, it can act as an empowering helper. Nature does not reject, cheat or repel people. Humans reject, cheat and repel both themselves and their environment as a result of their own actions. (Salonen 2010, 70.)

If we consider people as part of nature, we can also assume that everything in our environment affects us people. All changes in the environment also change the essence of our being. (Salonen 2005, 56.)

Place experiences can offer sensations of enhancement, continuity and detachment from everyday life, but if a place does not feel right it does not act as a reviving factor, either. One single distraction like noise can prevent a reviving experience. (Salonen 2006, 63.)

Noise is an environmental problem that harms people and weakens the quality of our living environment. Noise provokes a natural instinct to escape in our bodies. Noise weakens the immune system, causes sleep disorders, increases learning disabilities, raises blood pressure and increases the level of stress hormones. Sounds can, however, also help in adjusting oneself to one's environment, and cure physical symptoms. For example, sounds in the level of 27-30 Hz relax and soothe the pain and promote metabolism. Because quiet areas grow increasingly scarce, they become more and more desirable places to live. Especially, quiet pockets close to towns change into residential areas for the wealthy, and this way, inequality between residential areas keeps growing. (Heiskanen 2006.)

In Finland we appreciate light, because especially in winters we have so little natural light. During the darker periods, electric light is needed for lighting the interiors, so that we can continue doing what we need to do. Excessive light can also be a disturbing factor.

Urbanization and industrialization brought electric light into our everyday lives. In the 19th century, electric light represented progress, but this progress has become a threat to our health and the functioning of nature. Light pollution reduces the production of melatonin and that is why it increases the risk for breast cancer. Also, our immunity system gets weaker and stress level increases. Light pollution also harms the lives of animals. The orientating skills of animals that move during the night, such as bats and migrating birds, have decreased. Noise can be measured and adjusted more easily than light pollution, but in many cases they go hand in hand. When dark places grow scarce, also quiet places grow scarce. (Ranta 2012.)

In Finland it is still possible to find darkness and quiet. From time to time it is even possible to see northern lights close to towns. Astronomy enthusiasts curse the ever-increasing light in the cities. Jussi Kivi writes: “Light pollution prevents observing the stars close to towns, it makes birds sing at night and it paints the horizon red just like in Brueghel’s paintings of inferno.” (Kivi 2010, 169. Translated from Finnish by Hilikka Luosa.)

Places and people groups are being evaluated, but so are also other species. Wealthy (often western) people make this evaluation based on their own criteria and often based on economic values. This kind of evaluation renders as worthless all those who cannot defend their own rights, which in the world of a human being are all other species. Evaluation has its consequences and people often pay for their values with their health.

Values of the environment, such as beauty, are based on values and criteria defined by people. However, we should protect nature, both flora and fauna, for their own sake, because they are valuable as such

(Sepänmaa 1994, 77). Development has estranged us from nature in its natural state; animals and regions in nature that are known to be dangerous are valued differently from the landscapes that build our national identity (Sepänmaa 1994, 81-82).

Comparing and valuating environment is no more fruitful than is comparing and valuating humans. It would be desirable that we respected diversity also when valuating landscapes and places. Often people are valued higher than other nature.

Human rights were created to guarantee the position of a legal entity for humans, but at the same time all other living beings were excluded from this right. The culture of consumption created by humans damages the physical system of nature. Humans, who regard themselves as the lords of nature, the highest beings of all, poison oceans, pollute air and turn the earth into a rubbish dump. Humans think that it is their right to do whatever they please with the earth. (Surre 1990, 46-62.) Humans constantly make irreparable changes in their environment, which are as forceful as the changes in the ground during ice age. Road cuts, quarries, mines and sand pits change the shape of the ground, remove vegetation and permanently destroy the place. (Sepänmaa 1994, 65.)

Those who consume natural resources and the places where these resources are obtained often exist in different parts of the globe. Local inhabitants live modestly in the midst of natural wealth, whereas newcomers utilize local resources via mining companies and other parties taking advantage of natural resources. Globalization treats different people groups differently. (Massey 2008, 76-77.)

Development has promoted change in the living environment of people and created new threats for the health of our minds and bodies. Development increases threats to other living species as well. The number of the great trees, which in the beginning of time were even worshipped, is now in danger of reducing radically. Just like the number of great animals, the number of great trees has been reducing all over the world. Great trees are important for both forestry and agriculture as well as for the ecosystems of cities globally. They absorb carbon dioxide, offer a living environment for numerous organisms, and recycle nutrients. It takes tens or even hundreds of years for a great tree to grow, therefore, lost trees cannot be quickly replaced with ones that would have the same big impacts on their surroundings. Human actions cause the deaths of great trees; repeated felling, fires, pasture and invasive species have a negative impact on the living environments of great trees. Climate change raises temperature, global drought spreads and local rainfall increases. These changes in turn increase the threat of forest fires and storms, and risks caused by diseases and pests. These all destroy trees and at the same time numerous organisms. Old trees require that their environments remain steady and unchanged. Nowadays, these kinds of environments are rare. (Lindenmayer et al. 2012.)

According to the eco-psychological view, humans need experiences in nature and everyday encounters with the surrounding nature. Repairing our own traces, and this way, learning through experience may help us become aware of the connection between humans and nature (Hirvi 2006, 19). Ecological philosopher Henry Skolimowski states that if we treat human life with respect, we should similarly treat the

life of our ecological environment with respect. Our ecological environment has an internal value.
(Skolimowski 1984, 93.)

Case Talvivaara

Human rights are taken for granted in civilized societies, but the rights of the nature surrounding us ends up in the headlines only when something catastrophic happens. The latest example in Finland is the case of Talvivaara. Even without the leaks in the gypsum sediment pool, the changes in the area would have been immense for the local population, let alone now that the place has become a warning example of the blatant utilization of environment and the negligence of nature.

In her article ““Tell me, is this a good place for us?” Place experiences in the lives of three Talvivaara inhabitants”, cultural anthropologist Anneli Meriläinen-Hyvärinen describes how her mother’s homestead, Niskala, was lost and turned into a mining concession area and the property of Talvivaara Ltd., and what the place relationship was like with the Talvivaara mining concession area. Meriläinen-Hyvärinen was informed of the mining plan in 2004. From the very beginning, the mining plan provoked strong emotions, fear, uncertainty, but also positive hopefulness, because it was thought that the mine would bring work to the area. Meriläinen-Hyvärinen describes the problematics of a lost place and the emotions caused by the loss of a beloved place.

“In Talvivaara region, it is a question of a chain of generations, whose connection with their home area is now about to break because of the mining project. Living, working and getting livelihood have tied people to their home region, which has now turned into an open pit. This has been a burdensome experience for most people. It is painful to abandon a place, to which people have life-long and often generations-long ties, especially when the decision is forced upon you. In addition to the visual and lived scenery, it is often a question of soul scenery, for which it is difficult to find replacement.” (Meriläinen-Hyvärinen 2010,65. Translated from Finnish by Hilikka Luosa.)

Experience of a place where you can always return, where time stands still and which always remains the same is a very important part of a place feeling. If a beloved place is destroyed, visions, impressions and atmospheres come lively to mind and they are replaced with the feeling of loss and sorrow, as if part of self would have been abolished. Many people can share the feeling of loss, but it is still a unique and personal event that everybody experiences and handles in their own way. (Meriläinen-Hyvärinen 2010, 65.)

When an important place is lost, it is not only a question of a certain place and the buildings that were there, but it is a question of personal and family history, identity, communality, emotional bonds, scenery and its aesthetical values. When people lose a place they have to resign from a part of their future, because a place that embodied stability has been lost. (Meriläinen-Hyvärinen 2010, 68.)

In Talvivaara’s case, signing the bills of sale disconnected the inhabitants’ juridical ownership and their physical connection to the place. Memories remained. Those memories live their own lives in the minds of people, and keep alive emotional bonds that become real through bodily memory. It is possible to

remember through senses whole sequences of events, histories and even flashing moments, which all connect the person experiencing them to the lost place. (Meriläinen-Hyvärinen 2010, 77.)

Meriläinen-Hyvärinen emphasizes that processes like Talvivaara are not unique, and that they are going to touch numerous people all over the world. Even if media pays attention to these cases, it would be desirable that in the decision making processes more attention would be paid to people's varied relationships with the place, and to the problematics related to the loss of place. (Meriläinen-Hyvärinen 2010, 77-78.)

As Meriläinen-Hyvärinen puts it: "Biographical place relationship very seldom is merely an economic ownership, because very often it is a central part of the person's identity. These processes take years, and they may put people into difficult positions, where they have to manage largely on their own, with the possibilities and resources they have. It is important to be profoundly aware of these factors, and this means that this kind of cultural research is also clearly socially meaningful." (Meriläinen-Hyvärinen 2010, 78. Translated from Finnish by Hilikka Luosa.)

When it was revealed in 2012 that the gypsum sediment pool had leaked, both media and people started to react. This case was extensively debated both in printed and electric media. In Aamulehti's Letters

to the editor section on November 17th 2012, Essi Luoma expressed her concern about the defiling of nature and the indifference of people. She asks: “Why is it embarrassing and often a cause for ridicule to care about environment and ecological values?” Luoma also compares media’s reporting of environmental disasters and the lay-offs of people. In the writer’s opinion, the attitude of reporters and media are regrettable, and environmental disasters are not given a crisis value unless they generate casualties. The writer points out that a disaster in nature touches also people living in the neighbouring areas, and that we should not belittle and shrug our shoulders in face of a full-blown environmental disaster. Nature is valuable and must be protected. (Luoma 2012.)

In media, environmental disasters are sometimes portrayed as if they were nature’s attack on mankind, even if they are largely caused by people’s own actions. The proverb “what goes around comes around” may act as a guideline for the thinking human. Thinking humans do not always think; instead, in pursuit of fast profits greedy people destroy their own future.

Solastalgia

One summer when I was spending time in my precious cottage it happened. Early one morning while I was still asleep, uproar came from the outside and woke me up. Immediately I knew that something was wrong. I ran out and saw an upsetting sight: they were felling trees, making a clearing in the forest that

bordered on our yard! Forestry machinery had occupied the area and was felling trees like hay. Old pine trees, tens of meters tall, fell one after the other. Despite my shock, I was able to fetch my video camera and I recorded this tragic event as a memory. (Later I made a video installation of the material, but I would have rather kept the place unchanged.)

Machinery worked for hours, destroying the place. Finally, what was left was a pile of sticks and a couple of sad trees. I was devastated, heart-broken. I felt fury for the forest owner and inconsolable pain because my last refuge was taken away from me. My beautiful, idyllic soul scenery was destroyed.

Later on I read about this phenomenon. I had had a taste of solastalgia. Solastalgia means homesickness brought about by climate and environmental change. The term is comprised of the Latin word *solacium* (solace) and the Greek word *algia* (pain), and it was invented by an Australian philosopher and researcher Glenn Albrecht (Matilainen 2010). This term was used for describing psychological symptoms that researchers observed, among others, in people who had lived in areas ravaged by open pits. When the familiar and safe scenery is destroyed, human psyche is afflicted. Distressing homesickness overwhelms your mind even if you were still at home. The former homeplace changes its form, and there is no returning to the past (Matilainen 2010).

Solastalgia is a world-wide phenomenon, and as long as the environment around us changes we should also change with it. How much pain these changes are going to inflict on people is a different story (Smith 2010).

Albrecht describes the combined effect of global warming and climate change as climate chaos. Nostalgia used to be a sickness comparable to melancholia and it described a state when patient was far away from home and wanted to return there. Native people who have been forced to leave their lands have traditionally suffered from various physical and mental illnesses. Alcoholism, unemployment, and crime have been problems in these groups. According to Albrecht, this is due to nostalgia that is caused by homelessness and homesickness. Nowadays, homesickness is no longer regarded as a disease or as a state that leads to problems. There are also people who feel homesick even if they are not refugees. Places have been lost, even if people have not moved out of their homes. A certain scenery may offer comfort that you cannot get elsewhere (Albrecht 2007). If a person is looking for comfort in a place that is being destroyed that person feels anxiety and pain.

Solastalgia is a term that describes a state of pain or sickness and it manifests itself when the home area is physically brutalized. Solastalgia is a lived experience, feeling of loss, homesickness when you are at home. Any situation that changes the spirit of the place may cause solastalgia. Changes in both the world and climate have speeded up and it is hard or even impossible for humans to adapt themselves to the speed of change. Some may experience the change as a wish to return to the past time and place, while others may want to maintain things that comfort them. Environmental disasters as well as changes caused by humans may cause solastalgia. Drought, fires, floods, war, terrorism, mining and clearings have a radical effect on environment. All forces that diminish the identity of a person or a community, the sense of belonging together and the possibility to be influential may cause solastalgia (Albrecht 2007).

Changes do not have to be this radical in order to cause personal tragedies; even a beloved garden that is destroyed may lead to solastalgia and feelings of depression. Whole communities may feel a common loss, for example, in mining areas where the beloved environment is covered with dust, noise and pollution. According to Albrecht, the bond between a place and a person may be so strong that when the person loses the place he or she may fall seriously ill. Recognizing this and helping the people are keys to solving this problem. Respecting life and environment in all areas of life would, according to Albrecht, be the key in conquering solastalgia (Albrecht 2007).

In our time, more and more people are exposed to solastalgia that is caused by changes in the environment. Cataclysms change the scenery radically all around the world. Perhaps it is humans that make the most radical changes in the environment. Familiar sceneries disappear as we change our environment in an ever-increasing speed. Mining industry, building industry and forestry utilize nature for their own needs. Old buildings are torn down and replaced with soulless boxes. Forests are utilized as paper raw material and trees are felled down to make way for a road network. Efficiency easily conquers aesthetics and the spiritual well-being. The peace of heart and soul is shaken, and instead an eternal, anxious longing remains. Rootlessness and homesickness can reach us even if we lived our whole lives in the same place.

We need to change this progress. As human animals we are part of nature, even if nowadays more and more detached from it. It is natural for us to feel a bond with the surrounding nature, because we have developed from it. It is no wonder that the soul rests and the brain relaxes in beautiful scenery, whereas in a brutalized environment our minds get anxious and we can no longer feel the connection to nature that we

miss. The values of market economy repress nature and our whole cultural environment, at least if we people let it take place.

If the concept of *solastalgia* describes pain and the illness-induced inability to be comforted by the home environment, then Albrecht's new concept *soliphilia* describes love and responsibility for a place and the whole planet (Albrecht 2009). *Soli* is derived from the word solidarity, and *philia* from concepts created by others, such as E.O. Wilson's *biophilia* and Tuan's *topophilia*, which indicates love for a place. Albrecht's concept *soliphilia* indicates love for life and place, and solidarity between people. *Solastalgia* indicates the loss of control and power, desolation, placelessness, melancholy and hopelessness. *Soliphilia* is passion for all living creatures, solidarity to the whole and everything, and helpfulness and caring for all. According to Albrecht, the content of the Occupy movement is closely connected to the concept of *soliphilia* (Albracht 2009).

Civil activism may be a way to stop *solastalgia* from spreading and help *soliphilia* to spread. Maybe we could take a step back and create again our relationships with the holy trees and spirits of nature. If vegetation and animals are our friends, hardly do we want to destroy them. If the surrounding nature became a favourite place for all of us, surely would we want to protect it.

Journey ends, quest not

It was summer again and I was having a cottage holiday in my precious place. In the old school building that I knew from my childhood they were having a jumble sale and I decided to go and have a look at what they had on offer. At the same time I wanted to observe what kind of emotions and memories going back to that school would awaken in me.

A gravelled road goes behind our cottage's spruce fence. After ten or twenty meters there is a crossing to a slightly wider road. Between the trees you can see a glimpse of an old rundown house. The yard used to be full of car spare parts and the house was small and stuffy. The house is still small but the spare parts have changed into grand transportation vehicles.

I continue and on the right opens out a field. After a while on the left you can see the school building, painted black and red in the Karelian style. It used to be light green. The door facing the road used to lead to the corridor, which on the right had the gymnasium halls. It was fun to climb in the climbing frame and hang from the thick ropes. Once my grandmother's plait got stuck in a hook on the wall, and I found it amusing. Behind the school we had a swing, and now there grows a crack willow.

I walk to the front yard and come to the open doors. The front-door is just like I remembered. It nearly frightens me to step inside, it is as if I stepped into the memories of the past. That door on the right led downstairs to the basement where the heating equipment and cellar were, the door on the left led to my aunt's apartment and upstairs to the teachers' lodgings.

I step into the corridor and feel the familiar smell of a wooden house. The floor is covered with the same vinyl flooring as before. The jumble sale is upstairs and I cannot go downstairs to have a look. I remember the teachers' lodgings differently, even if it probably has not changed at all. My memory has not compartmentalized this place carefully as I only visited it a couple of times. They are selling the movables: some old couches and old desks. I cannot remember having seen them before. My aunt's personal property is now by and large in the cottage and it contains memories also of the time I spent in the school. I remember how my aunt's husband sat in a green swing and told stories about the half-wild tomcat, Ville, who ended up in all kinds of adventures.

Now I have seen the jumble sale and I go downstairs and out to the yard. Bushes have invaded the former football field. I walk along the gravelled road back to the cottage. The clearing that was cut a couple of years ago is still a pile of sticks, unattended. I leave the school building behind and come to the cottage yard. The spruce fence has grown enormous, old birches are stubbornly alive. We have planted new berry shrubs and trees, cleared the bushes, and fixed flower beds. Old and new elements live in harmony in the old place. Everyone who has lived there has left their own mark. Human actions have formed the place for what it is now. Because of and thanks to these actions there are memories that remain and come to my mind always when I am in that place.

Visiting the school helped me to understand that it is not possible and not even desirable to preserve all places as they once were. Memories stay in my mind, live and maybe change, they bring emotions and thoughts into surface and form my identity. Memories of the place live in me and I also live in the

memories of the place. Times change but memories live in places and places in memories. Nostalgia does not necessarily mean preserving the old, but respecting the memories and creating something new while respecting the old.

Memories can live also in objects. People can take their properties with them as they move, but a whole house is rarely moved, let alone trees or whole scenery. They stay. They do change with time but slowly. My cottage place is just like that in the sparsely populated, remote area. There people shape the forest, because it is their livelihood, but no motorways or blocks of houses are built there. The landscape remains the same for a long time. There it is easy to return to the past and take distance from the present, the buzz and noise of the town. There it is easy to return to the roots, listen to the song of barn swallows or the cry of the swans over the lake, let the wind blowing in the trees fill the air. There it is easy for me to feel at home.

My journey is about to end. I have studied books, watched movies and remembered my own experiences of places. My knowledge about the effects of places on people has grown, and now I am confident that what I have experienced in places has been true. The place experiences of each and every one of us are experienced reality. It is not superstition or imagination. Each place really has its own atmosphere, its own spirit, which can be sensed. It affects all of our lives and experiences. It affects how well we can settle down and feel at home. You cannot escape from yourself, but you can always go to another place. You can also try to understand the place, and within limited possibilities, try to change it. You can make your own place in the world wider in your own mind and heart, in the place that is everybody's real homeplace.

I have not found unambiguous explanations for the feeling of placelessness. It is most likely caused by various factors: the built environment, sounds, smells, possibly also temperature, the social and cultural state of the society, as well as the person's own experiences in life. Neither have I found an unambiguous reason why I personally have not settled down to the place where I live. Can historical events affect the town's atmosphere so that I find it hard to settle down there? I could answer yes, but I do not have scientific proof to back up my statement. I just feel that I live in a town where the atmosphere is depressing and discouraging. There may be many reasons why I do not identify with this place; the built environment that does not please my aesthetic eye, my personal place experiences, difficulties to identify with the locals, my own characteristics and traits, and possibly other yet unexplained reasons. What is clear is that several factors affect the emergence of the feeling of settling down and being at home.

Those who can affect the built environment should, in my opinion, take into consideration the needs and expectations of many kinds of people. Plans that are made for an average person do not serve anybody. Plans that are made from functional perspective and disregard aesthetics, produce only an empty, uninspired shell. When one feels comfortable in a place, one gets attached to it, one feels that one belongs, and therefore one wants to work to make the place better. When one feels homeless and placeless, one wants to isolate and withdraw and does not care about the future of the place. Residential areas that promote people's wellbeing serve the common good.

However, experiencing a place is very personal. Everybody observes their environment based on their skills and experiences. I have learnt a lot on my journey; I may see and experience a place differently

than before. My own observations of the world are unique, because none other can see the world in quite the similar way. This does not mean, however, that we could not or should not share things. It is always possible to find somebody, near or far, who shares the same view. I have sometimes been forced to look for a homeplace from very far. My researching quest for homeplaces may go on forever and hopefully it does. Searching is wandering, but when you find, you would maybe need to stop.

I have become aware of the fact that a place is meaningful for the human well-being and settling down. It is possible that development has proceeded too far and that it is impossible to change direction. I think, however, that for the well-being of our environment and us all who inhabit this planet, it would be good to reverse the development and head to a direction that is a more ecological in spirit and that respects all living species. Future shows how the triumphal march of the selfish human will end. My own view of the future of humans and the whole planet is not very optimistic. I suspect that even more places will be destroyed because of human actions, and that both humans and animals will see how their homeplaces disappear. I hope I am wrong.

I still dream of a perfect homeplace. Because the place of my dreams does not exist, it cannot be found. It is possible to find some kind of functioning compromise. The perfect home of dreams can only be found inside yourself, if you can find peace. Peace to come to terms with oneself. Be contented with oneself. But there is still way to go.

VISUAL CONTENT

General

My thesis consists of two separate exhibitions and of a video installation. One exhibition, *Paikkoja Places*, was held at Rööperin Taidosalonki, Helsinki, between Feb 13th and March 3rd 2013, and the other exhibition, *Experienced places*, was held at Galleria 3H+K, Pori, between Aug 8th and Sept 19th 2013. The video installation *Solastalgia* was presented at Värjäämö in the University Consortium of Pori on Nov 18th 2011.

In the artistic part of my thesis, I want to, with visual means, make visible those feelings and conflicts that experiencing a place may cause. My starting point has been the places that I have experienced in my life; places where I have experienced something meaningful. Good and bad memories from these experienced places have remained in my mind, and in this connection they came out as visual objects.

For the works made of paper, the pulp material I have made out of recycled paper. With this choice of material I wanted to take a stand on the utilization of natural resources in art and study how minimalistic materials I could use to achieve interesting, painterly works of art. I wanted my works to burden nature as little as possible, so I made the pulp out of newspapers and other wastepaper. This way, the raw material of trees was recycled in my work. Paper is made of wood, and because my research contains a stand against the use of natural resources, I felt that in these works I could not use material that would burden the nature. With the fact that the sheets of paper are twisted and uneven on the edges I wanted to emphasize the imprint of handiwork.

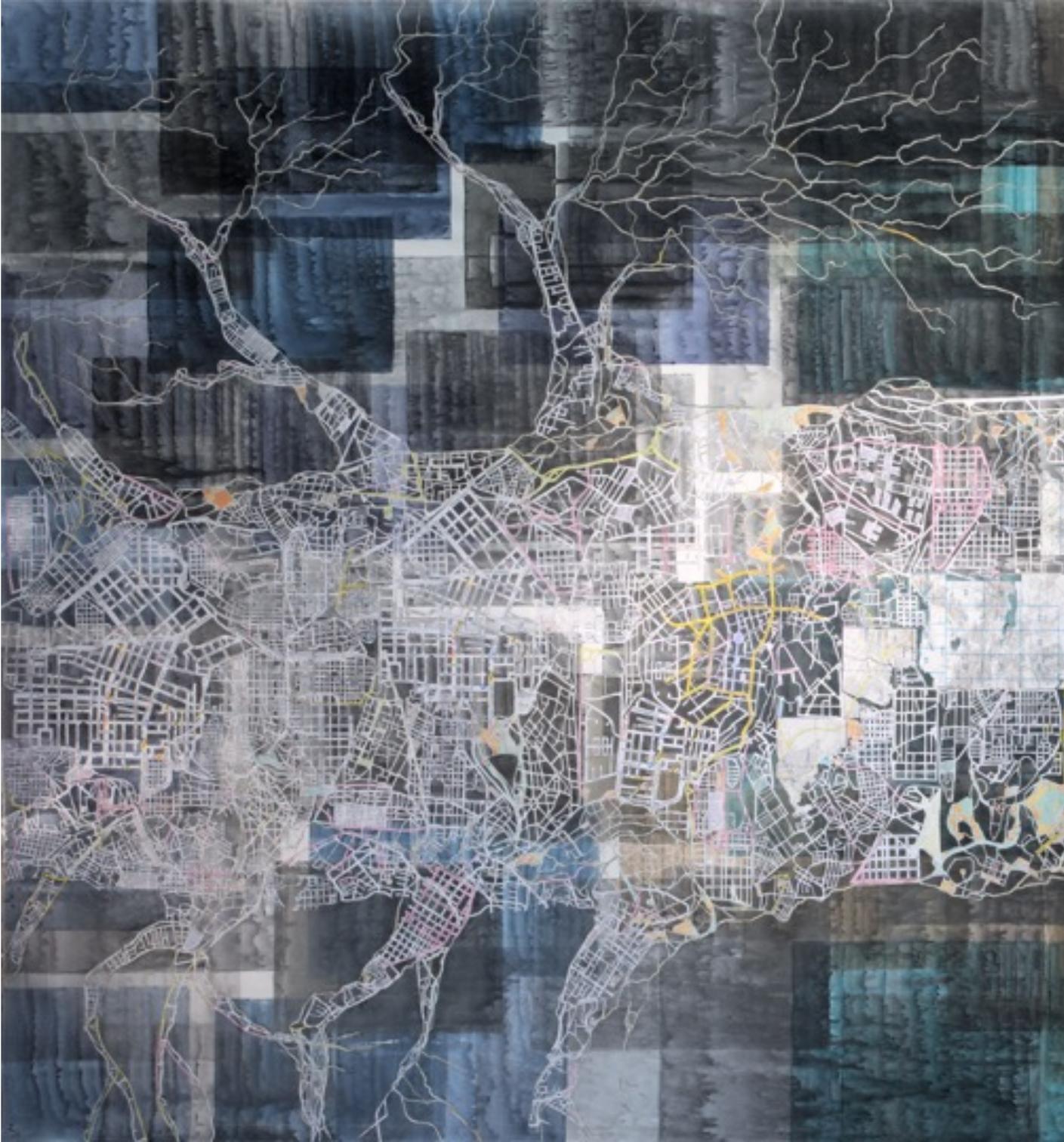
The small windows that show details of the place represent the actual painting part in the paper works. I have painted the road network of the place on the surface of the handmade paper sheet. By juxtaposing a visual picture and a roadmap I wanted to create a view that represented the place from many angles. When you look at a map, the place is distant and neutral, but a visual picture reveals a lived, experienced place.

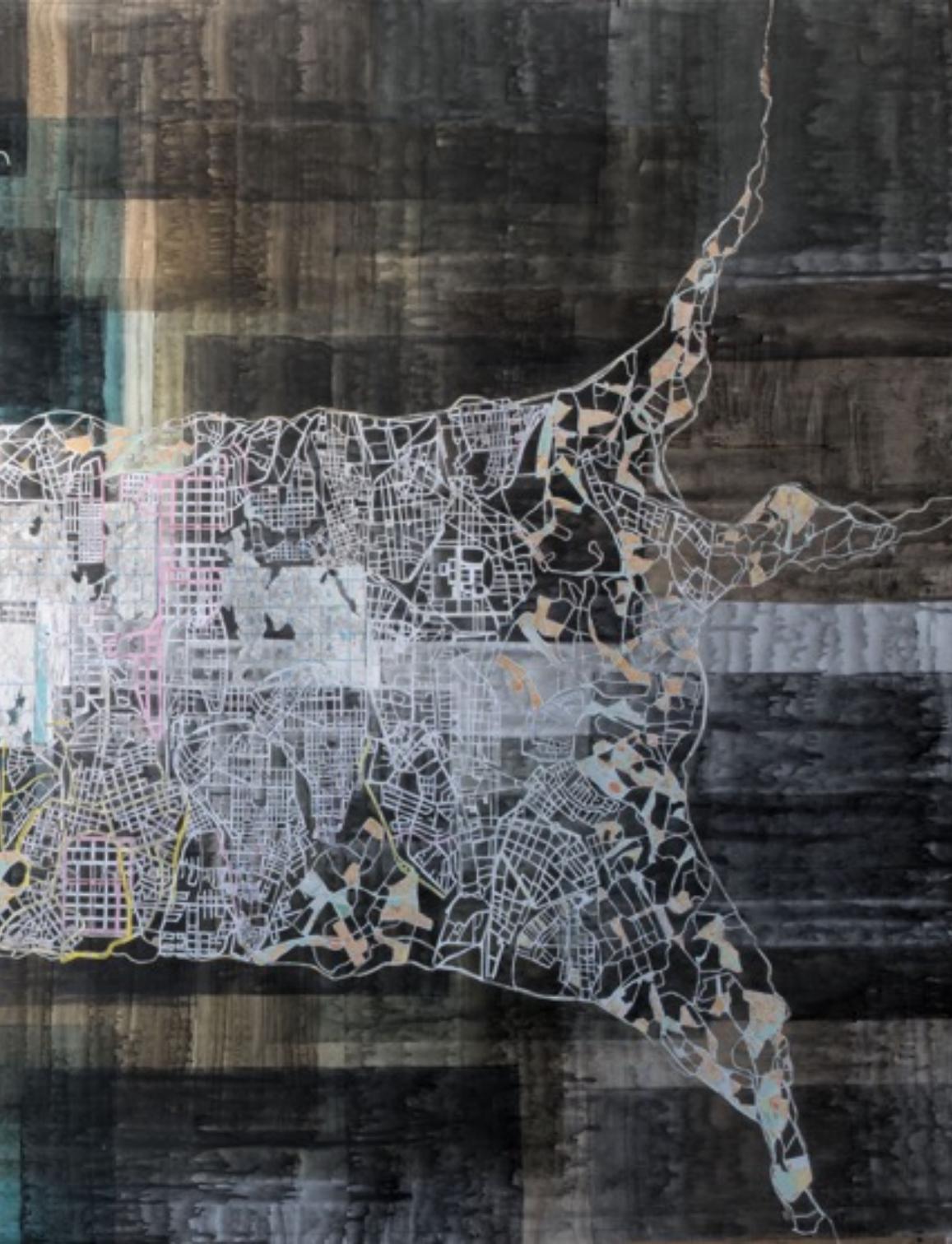
In *The Road of Growth*, my materials were paper, watercolours and a cut-out map. I painted squared figures on paper in tones of blue, green and brown. On top of them I glued parts of roadmaps, which I had cut out with scissors and paper knives, in the form of a silhouette of a great tree. Trees are material for paper and in my work paper became a tree. By combining straight and organic shapes as well as roadmaps and a tree shape I wanted to oppose on one hand, the interaction between humans and nature, and on the other hand, the continuous battle for space.

(on the following pages)

The Road of Growth, 2012-13

212x118 cm, watercolour and map on paper

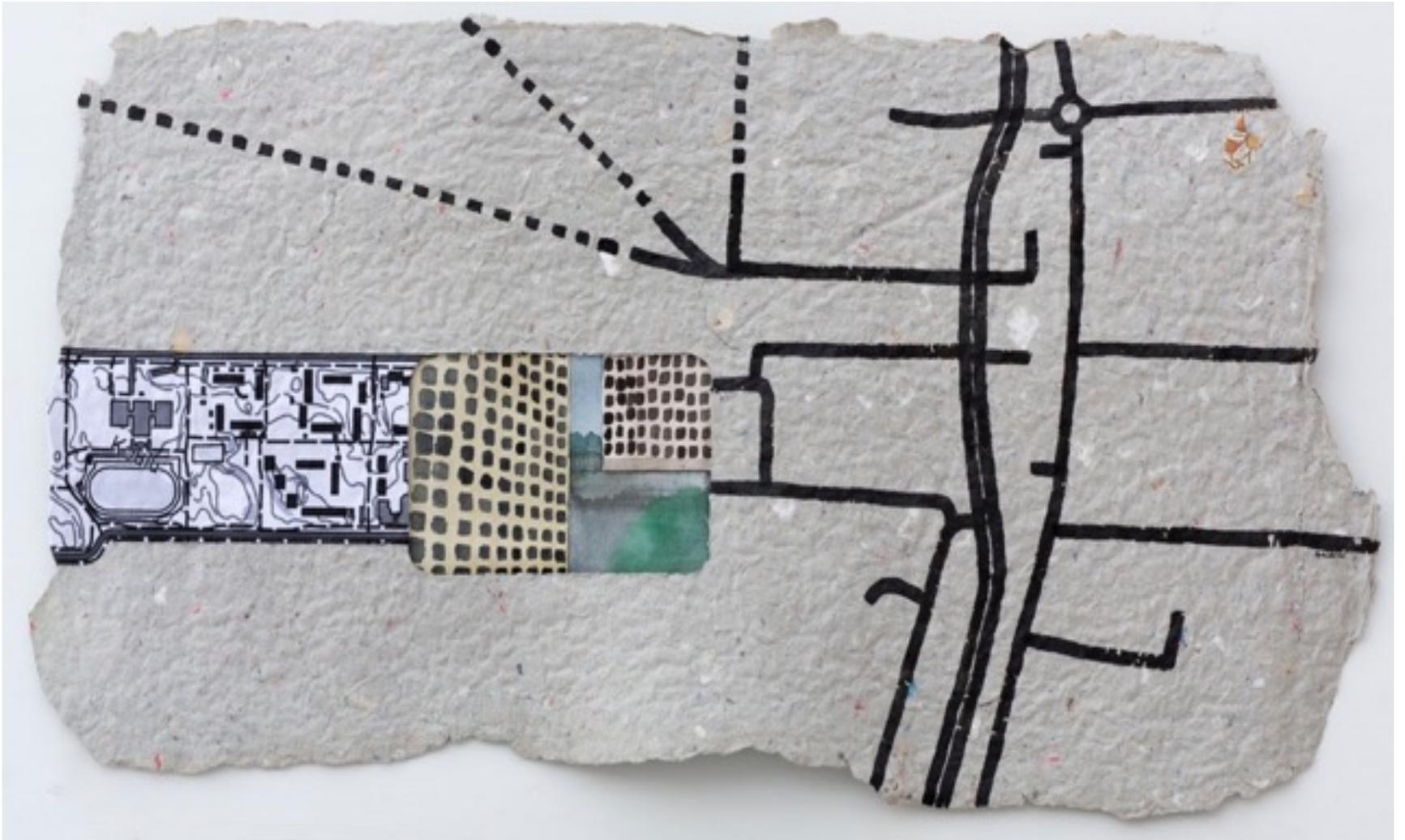






from the *Places* series, 2012-13

approximately 30x60 cm, paper, watercolour and ink



from the *Places* series, 2012-13

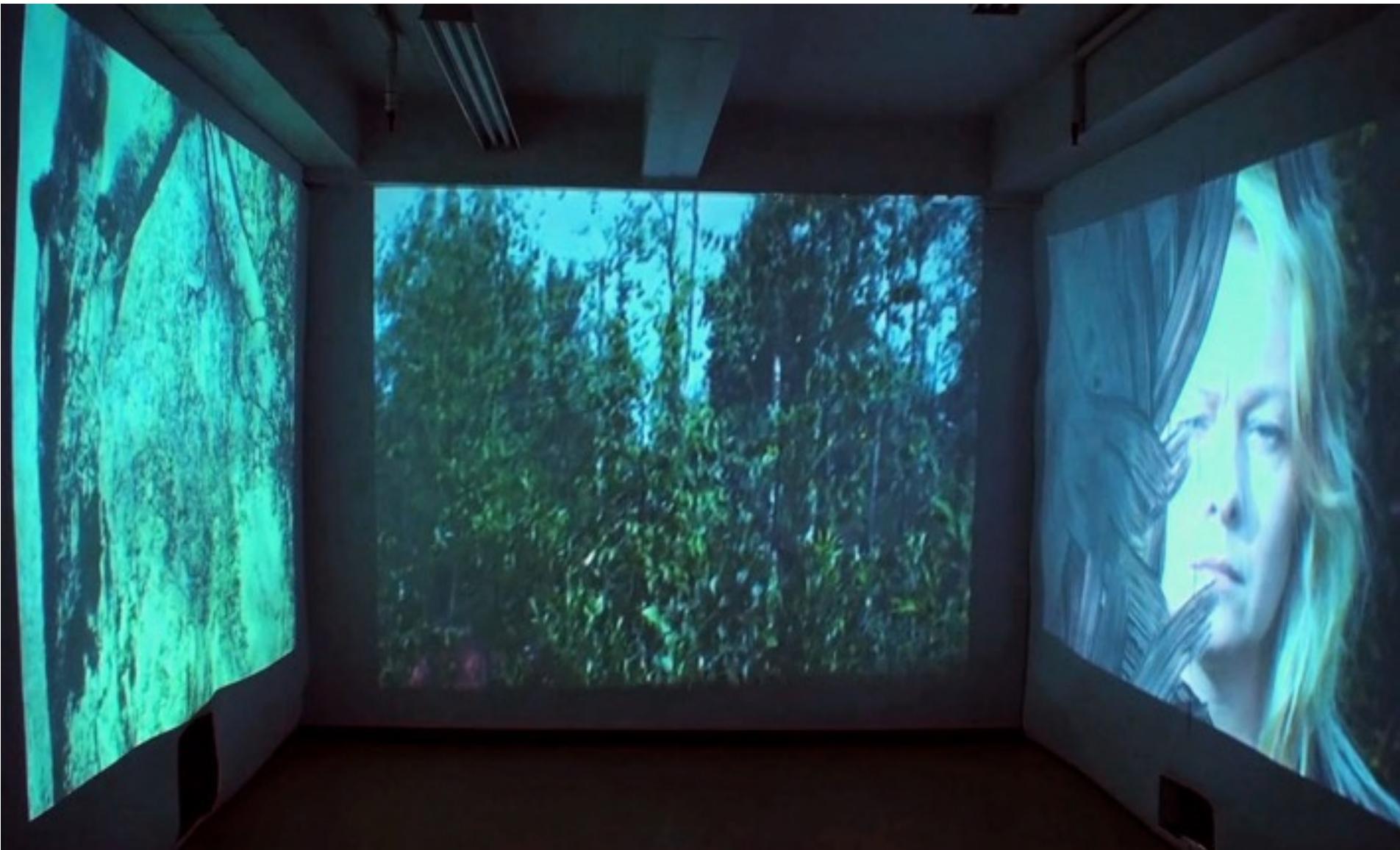
approximately 30x60 cm, paper, watercolour and ink

Solastalgia

At Värjäämö in the University Consortium of Pori on Nov 18th 2011.

In the video installation *Solastalgia* I want to present to the spectators a strong experience of the feeling that losing a beloved place may cause.

As I described in the textual part, *solastalgia* equals to the loss of control and power, desolation, placelessness, melancholy and hopelessness. As I mentioned before, it constitutes of the Latin word *solacium* (solace) and the Greek word *algia* (pain). *Solastalgia* describes pain and a state that reminds of illness, caused by the current state of home, and manifests itself when homeplace is physically brutalized. Solastalgia is a lived experience, feeling of loss, homesickness at home (Albrecht 2007).



Solastalgia, 2011

video installation with three projectors, 3.30 minutes (loop)

Paikkoja Places

13.2.-3.3.2013 Rööperin taidesalonki, Helsinki

The theme of the *Paikkoja Places* exhibition was a place and its effects on people's lives. My starting point was the idea that because people always live in some place, a place affects the people one way or the other. Some may call their place of residence a homeplace, others may feel rootless in every place. Experiences both in childhood and later in life affect the process of settling down and developing roots in a place. Each individual experiences places differently; for one a place can be precious and pleasant, while for the other the same place can be uncomfortable and unapproachable. All structures built by humans, roads, streets, parks, buildings, villages and towns affect the well-being and comfort of people. Likewise, many invisible things, such as, sounds or smells have an effect on us. Our observations on the character of the environment and place are comprised of many factors and they affect us, either consciously or unconsciously.

Places are important also in our memories. Memories are always linked with a certain place. There are no memories that would have happened without a place. Colours, light, textures, smells, sounds: all kinds of little fragments remind us of what has happened, and at the same time, of the place where it happened. In the works made of paper, I wanted to depict my own memories, fragments of places and happenings.





Places, 2012-13, at Rööperin Taidesalonki
approximately 30x60 cm / part, paper, watercolour and ink



Places, 2012-13, at Rööperin Taidesalonki
approximately 30x60 cm / part, paper, watercolour and ink



Beauty is a swearword, 2012, 73x63 cm, paper



Small piece of happiness 1-3, 2013, 30x60 cm / part, paper, watercolour and ink

Experienced places

30.8.-19.9.2013, Galleria 3H+K, Pori

The exhibition *Experienced place* continued the same theme of how places and their atmospheres affect us. Some of the paper works that were exhibited in the *Paikkoja Places* exhibition were there, too, but in addition there was a new, large artwork in paper and a couple of video installations.





Places, 2012-13, in Galleria 3H+K
approximately 30x60 cm / part, paper, watercolour and ink

The starting point for my piece *Greetings from here nowhere* was the question if a place can be experienced even if nobody has been there, and if an experience is real when it occurs in a place that is designed especially for it.

Tourists often go to a certain place, because that place is special. Sometimes these places have been built for tourists on purpose. There are also tourists that look for places where nobody has been before. All tourists, however, look for experiences. The experience of being a tourist can best be experienced in a place that is dissimilar to our everyday environment (Urry 2002).

If we assume that there is nothing there or that it is similar everywhere, it can be assumed that tourism does not satisfy people, it does not provide experiences or anything else that would make them curiously look for new experiences in new places. Place that contains nothing would be a place outside the reality or outside the realms of our experiential world.

Greetings from here nowhere depicts what tourists would look like if we lived in a vacuum without places, and the situation where places do not have a meaning in our experience.



Greetings from here nowhere, 2013

15 parts, 10x15 cm / part

As I have pointed out earlier, the word *nostalgia* is derived from the Greek words *nostos* (returning home) and *algos* (pain, agony), and as a direct translation it means homesickness. Earlier on, nostalgia was an illness comparable to melancholy, describing a state where the patient was far away from home and wanted to return there. Nowadays, homesickness is no longer regarded as an illness or as a state that leads to problems. The meaning of the term nostalgia has, therefore, changed completely from an illness that should be taken seriously into a longing and frivolous daydreaming. (Sallinen 2004; Albrecht 2007.)

We talk about feeling nostalgia for old places when we mean that we admire old times and have a kind of “memories grow sweeter with time” attitude. In the Nostalgia video, I portray an old tree, our family’s holy tree. That tree represents to me everything that I have seen and experienced in the yard that surrounds that tree; gladness, joy, sadness, longing, homesickness.



Nostalgia of a place, 2013

video, 7.05 min.

Soliphilia is a term invented by an Australian philosopher and researcher Glenn Albrecht, and it describes love for life and place as well as solidarity between people. Soliphilia is compassion towards all living creatures, solidarity to the whole, everything, and helpfulness and caring about everybody. *Soli* comes from the word solidarity, *philia* from the terms created by other thinkers, such as E.O. Wilson's concept *biophilia* and Tuan's concept *topophilia*, which means love for a place. (Albrecht 2009).

Where are you, Soliphilia? depicts the search for the above mentioned good and exemplary hope and strength that preserves life, from all corners of the world, without finding it.



Where are you, Soliphilia?, 2013

video, 2.05 min

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Nostalgia (Nostalgija)

Directed by Andrei Tarkovski

Screenplay: Andrei Tarkovski, Tonino Guerra

Manufacturers: Franco Casati, Daniel Toscan du Plantier

Cinematography: Giuseppe Lanci

Editor: Erminia Marani, Amedeo Salfa

Music: Gino Peguri

Cast: Oleg Yankovsky (Andrei Gortsakov), Domiziana Giordano (Eugenia), Erland Josephson (Domenico)

Made in: Italia

Production: RAI – Radiotelevisione Italiana, Opera Film Produzione, Sovinfilm

Year of completion: 1983

Duration: 125 minutes

Original language: Russia

Onnellisten aika (Days of Heaven)

Directed by Terrence Malic

Screenplay: Terrence Malic

Manufacturers: Bert Schneider, Harold Schneider

Composer: Ennio Morricone

Cinematography: Nèstor Almendros, Haskell Wexler

Editor: Billy Weber, Caroline, Ferriol, Marion Segal, Susan Martin

Cast: Richard Gere (Bill), Brooke Adams (Abbey), Sam Shepard (farmari), Linda Manz (Linda)

Country of Origin: The United States

The production company: Paramount Pictures

Premiere: 1978

Duration: 95 minutes

Toscanan auringon alla (Under of the Tuscan Sun)

Directed by Audrey Wells

Screenplay: Frances Meyers

Manufacturer: Tom Strenberg

Composer: Christophe Beck

Cinematography: Geoffrey Simpson

Editor: Arthur Coburn

Cast: Diana Lane (Frances Meyers), Sandra Oh (Patti), Lindsay Duncan (Katherine)

Country of Origin: The United States

The production company: Touchstone Pictures

Year of completion: 2003

Duration: 113 minutes

Villi Pohjola (Northern Exposure)

Authors: Joshua Brand, John Falsey

Producers: Joshua Brand, John Falsey

Starring: Rob Morrow (Joel Fleischman), Barry Corbin (Maurice J. Minnifield), Janine Turner (Maggie O'Connell), John Cullum (Holling Vincoeur), Darren E. Burrows (Ed Chigliak), John Corbet (Chris Stevens), Cynthia Geary (Shelly Marie Tambo), Elaine Miles (Marilyn Whirlwind), Peg Phillips (Ruth-Anne Miller)

Country of Origin: The United States

Production / Network: CBS

Aired: 1990-1995 six seasons, a total of 110 episodes

