

ART & /IN ECOLOGY

Human-Non Human Interconnections in Art, Visual Culture & Everyday Life.
Site specific theory in practice in Vuosaari two-period module Jan-April 2021

Wk 3: Some notes on things to do
when outperformed
...by snow!

Source: Google Maps

Wk 3: Extra thoughts: What to do when outperformed by snow!

Hello there, I've been having some thoughts about all this snow that at first seemed in the way but on second thoughts I feel that we need to think more about!

Last year we had no snow at all and so I was well prepared with texts on solastalgia and loss in a changing climate. This year I find myself gesticulating madly trying to describe to you things that lie underneath while everything is buried in these wondrous layers.

And being so suddenly, gloriously-outperformed, I feel we have to somehow shift focus and perhaps include thoughts and practices pertaining to snow and ice as on the geopolitical ecologies of, for example, sand, concrete, coffee, trash and other such matters that have been the building blocks of modern Vuosaari naturecultures.

I'm thinking less-directly in terms of the grander, more heroic, tragic or sublime arctic/antarctic or glacier-situated studies. I'm thinking more stories of cities and urban humans/ non humans that have historic and contemporary relationships with snow and ice and how these more everyday experiences connect us (or not) to the grander trajectories of climate change.

We can think about everything from snow's absorbance of led and other urban pollutants to the leftover "mountain piles" that children play in after a snow scraper has cleared the streets and that gradually become more grey-brown as the weather warms.. There is also perhaps a return of dualisms and the sacred and the profane with snow. The purity of freshly fallen snow. The disgust at sludge and sleet and dog shit reveals itself where it was artfully hidden underneath by a human without a poopscoop!



ART, SCIENCE, ECOLOGY course

You may want to check out Susan Schuppli's recent ice research via that very interesting online course running at UNIARTS/IHME Helsinki this spring. https://www.ihmehelsinki.fi/en/art-science-ecology-course/?fbclid=IwAR3xFk-3hiwn8NDHchI6PjzGanaGP-i-sf9p5pMlt1fSY0mQBlyL_vl8s3s#antti-majava-art-a-radical-transition-strategy

Susan's lecture is on

16 February 16.00-18.00 (next page)

She has a workshop the following day 17 Feb for KUVA and HELSUS students only but its worth looking at the frameworks



Lecturers of the course among others are (upper left) Artist Katie Paterson, Artist Samir Bhowmik, Artist, Researcher Susan Schuppli, (from down left) Artist Jana Winderen, Executive Director, Curator Paula Toppila and Artist, Researcher Antti Majava.

http://susanschuppli.com/research/learning_from_ice/

http://susanschuppli.com/research/learning_from_ice/

<https://www.ihmehelsinki.fi/en/art-science-ecology-course/>

Susan Schuppli: Ice Cores

Tues 16.2. 2021 at 16:00-18:00

Ice Cores – FILM AND ONLINE LECTURE (ENG), 2 h. *Open to all.*

(Film duration 1h 6 min, lecture 30 min, discussion 15 min.)

Artist, Researcher **Susan Schuppli**.

Documentary dir. Susan Schuppli. Screening venue will be announced later.

This presentation will introduce a body of artistic work and research exploring the many different knowledge practices that are mediated by “ice”, from scientific expertise to local knowledge and indigenous traditions. While the first phase of my work explored ice-core science and resulted in documentary films shot in the Canadian Ice Core Archive, a US geochemistry lab, and the Svalbard Arctic Archipelago, the next phase shifts the focus to conducting fieldwork and related activities in the Himalayan mountain regions. This is an area of the world where the changing material conditions of glacial ice are not only impacting directly upon local communities but also climate systems globally. In developing these sequenced projects my research aims to coalesce disparate – and oftentimes incommensurate – forms of knowledge across a wide range of spatial scales and contexts that, when taken together, create a more complex understanding of our current ecological condition.



Wed 17.2.2021 at 16:00-19:00

JUST ICE: Cold Rights within a Warming World – ONLINE WORKSHOP (ENG), 3 h. HELSUS and KUVA students.

Artist, Researcher **Susan Schuppli**.

This workshop aims to explore a series of “cold cases” in which we engage with the various ways in which the changing material condition of frozen water has become a subject of wide-ranging contestation, arising from human processes that have damaged cryospheric stability and even sought to operationalize cold. From ecological issues of glacial retreat and sea-level rise, renewed demands for indigenous sovereignty and environmental governance, territorial claims aimed at increasing access to oil and gas resources made possible because of Arctic melting and permafrost thawing, legal petitions arguing for the human right to be cold, conservation projects focused on glacial guardianship and the preservation of ice cores from endangered glaciers, to the weaponization of cold as a strategy of policing at the US/Mexico border, where migrants are held in freezer-like cells known as “Iceboxes”, to the use of cold-water cannons against protestors at Standing Rock in the dead of winter. Although ice is a familiar domesticated material, it is also intensely political – it is this complex thermostatic condition that we will explore together through a series of cold cases generated by participants in this workshop.

Objectives & Outcomes: Each participant is asked to present one case study at the workshop (please be as specific as possible) outlining the context and contestations that are at stake. Ideally this mini-presentation will include audio-visuals, maps, reports, and any other related supporting documents. Together we will aim to build an online archive of cold-case files.

Further information: <https://susanschuppli.com/>

I sent a message out to my online blizzard energies of social media asking for good projects and ideas to share with you. Here are some of them:

Bioartist Kira O Reilly advises

Snow/ice/water is going to be a fabulous vehicle and indicator of what is happening above and below in terms of biological matter and industrial particulates. In respect to natureculture snow is a wealth of complexities.

Students might like to tap into that with some sampling in various areas and then figure out ways of making those visible, and there are endless ways to consider what processes might allow for that.

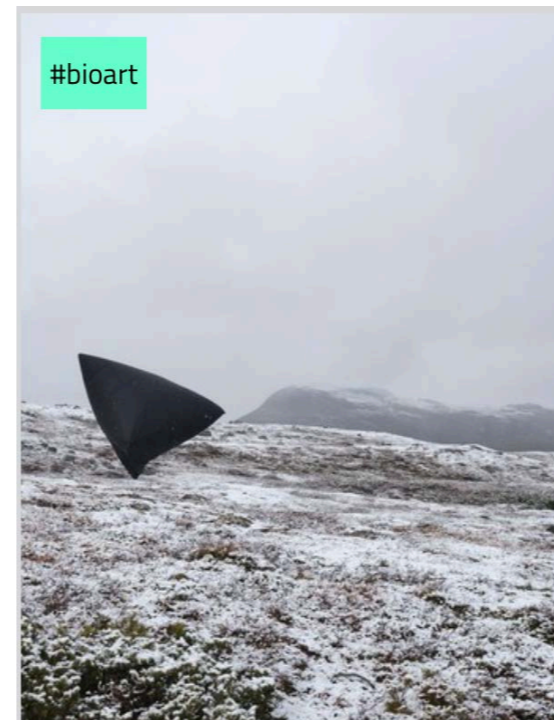
I would also encourage students to think about working with snow directly, and different kinds of snow - including the oily, black, sludgy snow that is created by traffic. During my first month of living here, I made series of images of dog piss actions on the snow which all of a sudden reveals human/canine pathways and communiques. They might like to make some human piss actions - Helen Chadwick Piss Flowers with all its morphological suggestions of gender.

One of the big areas to look at here in Helsinki is snow and light - albedo. Look at [Mari Keski-Korsu](#)'s work on this. And light with all of its implications and sources or urban/natural could be a very exciting route for some students.



Albedo Dreams is about creating do-it-yourself climate manipulation with whitening actions in forests and urban areas. The actions are aimed to increase the solar energy reflectivity of a surface, its' albedo value. This could be a way to cool the climate and mitigate the climate change.

<http://albedodreams.info>



Take a look at HAB - see Field Notes The Heavens 2018. Not snow specifically but high altitude bioprospecting - so considering what is alive and lively above.

<https://bioartsociety.fi/projects/field-notes-the-heavens/pages/hab-group>

Kira O Reilly advises

Take a look at [Antti Tenetz](#) collaboration with ice and microorganisms.

Antti Tenetz Cyrolab https://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/abs/10.1162/LEON_a_00045?journalCode=leon

I wonder what snow-measuring mechanisms might be in the area, and also what students might create themselves?

And there is so much wind, I imagine Vuosaari reveals how the air and snow are deeply implicated.

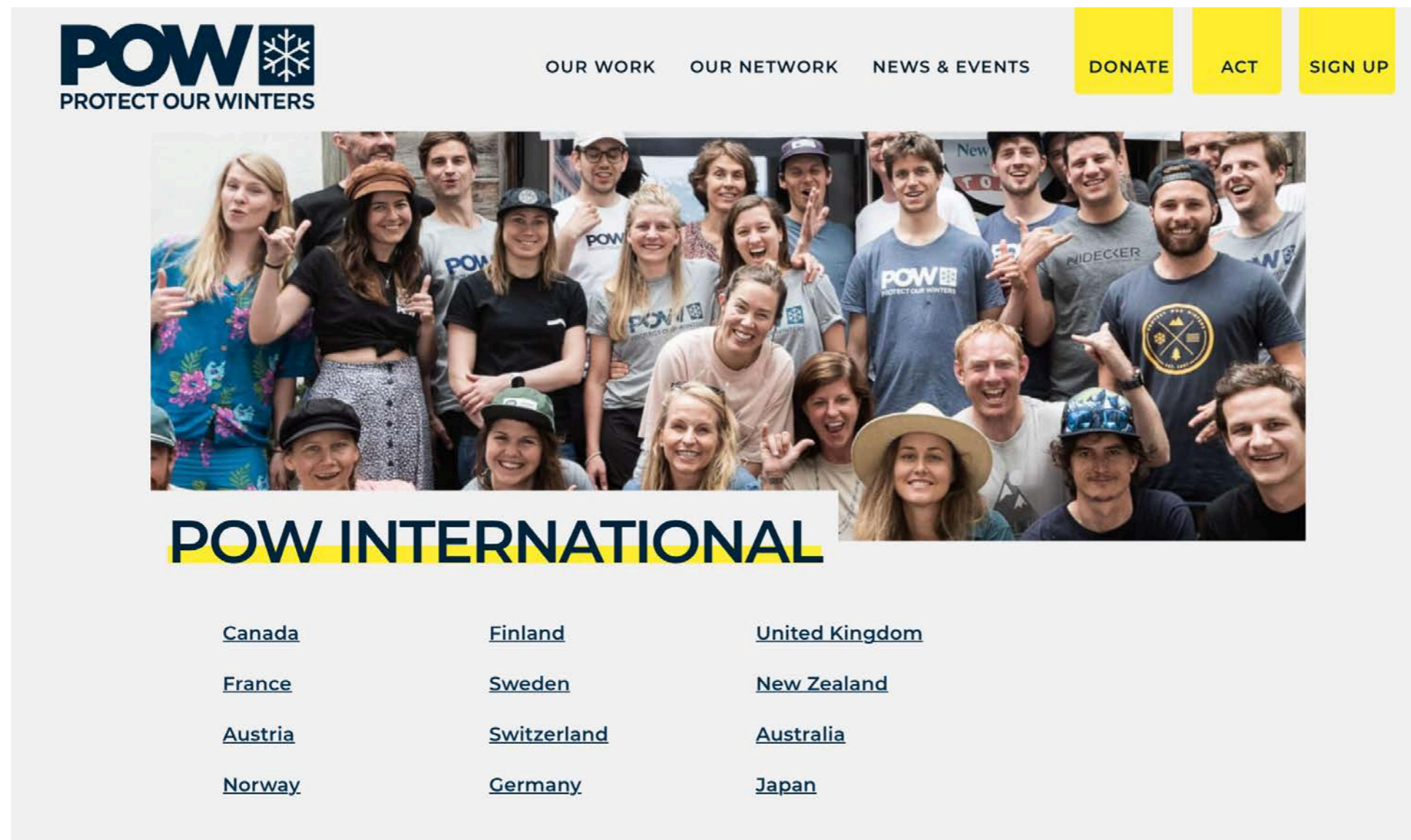
Something I was interested in when teaching in the snow was access, particularly in relation to mobility and disability. It came out of this idea of contested places, introducing spectrum of approaches to access. So we looked at different species and access in relation to human management and conservation, and also human access or the lack of. Who does snow and ice immobilise? Who does it mobilise and what means might be used to change those equations?

I think these kinds of daily returns of physical enquiry are very revealing in how to think about a place. Also you are possibly noticing all manner of tracks, human ones, nonhuman animal ones, snow allows these passing presences to make an impression.

We have to really take on board the physicality of snow and both stabilities and instabilities in consideration of human shelter. Urban snow architectures sounds amazing. What might shelter mean right now? And for whom?

Paula Toppila Director IHME Helsinki suggests you have a look at this:

- https://protectourwinters.org/pow-international/?fbclid=IwAR1FyasBQlckWkmUeBZ5BxmKgbVBCXKJIBC0zdwFYkFZGuG6_V-QcFR_2AM



The image shows a screenshot of the POW International website. At the top left is the logo "POW PROTECT OUR WINTERS" with a snowflake icon. To the right of the logo are navigation links: "OUR WORK", "OUR NETWORK", "NEWS & EVENTS", "DONATE", "ACT", and "SIGN UP". Below the navigation is a large group photo of diverse people, many wearing POW t-shirts. Underneath the photo is the text "POW INTERNATIONAL" in a bold, yellow and black font. At the bottom of the page, there is a list of international chapters arranged in three columns:

Canada	Finland	United Kingdom
France	Sweden	New Zealand
Austria	Switzerland	Australia
Norway	Germany	Japan

Ursula Le Guin's 1968
The Left Hand of Darkness
(PDF's available online)



Taina Rajanti argues:

Le Guin manages to describe precisely this combination of an overwhelming natural force and how a culture, also urban, adapts to this

Rebecca Solnit tweets 16 Jan

Not only is this a LeGuin stamp (!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!) but it seems to feature a scene from her 1968 *The Left Hand of Darkness* with its revolutionary portrayal of people with fluctuant gender. So I'm calling this a stamp in praise of gender fluidity and post-binary visions.

Ray Langenbach performance artist and theorist:

Go rodential? Watch the hares. They have dwellings and tunnels. While their predators - foxes and wolves- have disappeared, the hares and squirrels have proliferated.

Other suggestion is camouflage-wear, from the times of the winter-war. Lots of historical documentation... more about visibility than some more chemical exploration of absorption etc. But issues of how to survive, and living off the frozen water. Finally, I wonder if Lea might have info on indigenous practices such as how to survive without shelter and about ice fishing.

Then there is [Annette Arlander](#)'s simple video observations at the same time every day. [Annette writes:](#) Here is a link to works in Kilpisjärvi 2014 with melting ice...



A Day with Malla (text) 2014 HD video 4 min 25 sec.

<http://www.av-arkki.fi/en/works/a-day-with-malla-text/>

Wrapped in a dark blue scarf I am standing on the ice on Lake Kilpis looking at Malla
Fell for a day with two-hour intervals between 7 am and 9 pm on 7 April 2014. In the
voice over I wonder how to be there with Malla.

Annette Arlander <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/266988/266989>

[Ray Langenbach](#) For me **the sonic environment** was the most memorable the cracking of ice on the ocean or the absolute silence at times. Not what is there, but what is missing