

Preliminary Masters thesis plan

Synopsis of *The Bird That Flew Through a Ring* and *KANIJANIKANI*:

A young mother, Irina, fleeing from a poisonous relationship, seeks safety from her grandmother's, Eukkos, house. Instead of protection she is greeted by her grandma's hostility towards her needs. In the midst of a raging summer storm the two women of different generations have to face the trauma of losing oneself for the sake of others.

Jani, a worker in communications and consultation firm Fiskconsultive, is in his twenties but already tired, stressed and in need of a change. After getting laid off by his co-worker and personnel manager Ritva, he tries to solve his problems by retreating to his summer cottage and jumping into a rabbit hole. The end result is a humorous tale of friendship, a missing angora rabbit and a log cottage.

Title:

Witch in the making

– Reimagining the witch character for stage and film

Extent of the thesis:

30 ECTS, divided to 50% written thesis and 50% artistic work. Extent of the written part is approximately 50 pages.

Language of the thesis:

Finnish

Thesis supervisor:

Sofia Pantouvaki and Susanna Suurla (because of the chosen language of the thesis)

Thesis advisor:

Suggestions for advisor (artistic work): Anna Sinkkonen, Roosa Marttiini

Topic of the thesis:

The research focuses on the representation of witch characters in stage and film and in designing new representations for the character trope in both film and stage projects. Both the MA Film *The Bird That Flew Through a Ring* and the theater play *KANIJANIKANI* provide excellent case studies for artistic research on these kinds of characters.

Background of research

The character of a witch is very easily recognized and common in both theater and film. In the autumn of 2023 I was, by coincidence, offered to take part in two projects which both have a witchlike character. This offers a great opportunity to dive further into this iconic character trope, often female, represented as something nasty, vicious and evil.

As I've started studying and working as a costume designer the representation of female characters have intrigued me immensely. The stories and characters of women, in both film and theater are, disappointingly often, narrow. I view it as my personal and professional responsibility to explore the ways on how to alter the way women are shown in the works of art I'm part of creating. I aim to view and represent the witch as something out of the ordinary, powerful, rather than something ugly, too beautiful, bad or, in the wrong way, devilish. I believe that costume design has the power to give space for the underrepresented and misunderstood to be viewed as something different than before.

There is an abundance of written and visual material regarding witches. Written references regarding the appearance and clothing of witches is more narrow and in-depth research on the subject of costume design of witch characters is rare. In my masters thesis I will broaden the research on representation of witches that I started on *Costume & Research* course. My research will touch on representations in both film and stage. This will provide an interesting dialogue and notions on the different ways of designing costumes.

Methodology

The method used in my written thesis is artistic research and the research material consists of two parts. Through two case studies, short film *The Bird That Flew Through a Ring* and theater play *KANIJANIKANI*, I

will explore the representation of witchlike characters in film and stage productions through my own design process. In addition to the design process of the two characters, my artistic research will be supported by analysis of historical material on witches, written and visual, and an analysis of existing representations of witch characters in both theater and film. My research on written and visual material on witches, focuses on the appearance and characteristics of witches. I will analyze the documentation and results of my artistic process in relation to the literary review, image analysis and analysis of existing witch characters.

I'm utilizing a research journal to document my process. The journal will consist of: recordings of conversations had around the witchlike characters with the directors, actors and working groups, my precise notes on the scripts and the process of designing the costumes, my written reflections on the subject and visual documentation such as process photos, sketches, moodboards and images of the final costumes.

Timetable:

2024

January–June	Artistic work on <i>The Bird That Flew Through a Ring</i> and <i>KANIJANIKANI</i> Gathering research material with research journal: exact notes, reflection on the subject, recordings of conversations, visual material
July–August	Summer holiday, reflecting on the (on my behalf) finished projects
September–December	Majority of the writing: Analysis of existing representations of witches Analysis of written and visual material on witches Analysis of own artistic work

2025

January-March:	Finishing the writing Oral presentation
April:	Returning the thesis Applying for acceptance of the study plan
May:	Applying for graduation Graduation on May 27th 2025