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North AiR: Expanding Entanglements | Artists announced for pilot programme



Image of Lake Saana in Kilpisjärvi, Lapland/Sápmi Finland by Björn Kröger

Two artists have been selected through an open call to undertake a new and innovative residency programme set up by North AiR, a research network of six organisations spanning Scotland and Finland, supported by the Finnish Institute in London. The artists will participate in the network's pilot residency, **North AiR: Expanding Entanglements**, which aims to reconsider conventional artist exchange models and question the role of artists' residency in this time of climate breakdown.

Scotland-based artist **George Ridgway** and Finland-based artist **Maija Annikki Savolainen** will travel by land and sea to the partner organisations in the respective countries - **Scottish Sculpture Workshop** (SSW), **Taigh Chearsabhagh** and **Timespan** in Scotland; **Mustarinda**, **Bioart Society** and **KulttuuriKauppila Art Centre** in Finland. The artists will research within local ecosystems and landscapes for one month at each location, for a sustained period of three months in 2019.

On being selected **George Ridgway** said "I'm extremely honoured and excited to be invited into this programme. My practice is deeply intertwined with how we relate to expanded notions of place and their ecological webs. This international opportunity will encourage intimate conversation and the exchange of knowledges and ways of understanding across many different fields."

On being selected **Maija Annikki Savolainen** said "The system of artists working in residencies can create economical and psychological precarity in which long-term planning becomes impossible. This residency supports artists' work economically and spiritually; it's a unique opportunity and I am very much looking forward to working in the Scottish landscape"

This significant residency pilot does not seek final outcomes or artworks, rather applied and expansive research by the artists. Utilising innovative, embodied methodologies and situated research/process-based enquiries, as demonstrated in Maija and George's practices to date, the programme is unprecedented in its direct response and action around urgent issues within an international context.

The partners are located within distinctive ecosystems in Scotland and Finland. In Scotland, **Scottish Sculpture Workshop** (SSW) in the foothills of the Grampian Mountains and close to the Cairngorms National Park, **Taigh Chearsabhagh** with the University of the Highlands and Islands on the Isle of North Uist in the Outer Hebrides and **Timespan** in Helmsdale, a coastal village in East Sutherland at the mouth of River Helmsdale and the North Sea. In Finland, Ars Bioartica organised by the **Bioart Society** Helsinki in subarctic Lapland/Sápmi, **KulttuuriKauppila Art Centre** at the confluence of the River Ii and the Gulf of Bothnia, and **Mustarinda**, surrounded by old-growth forest extending from the borders of the Paljakka Strict Nature Reserve.

All partners foster long term enquiries into their role and response-ability within the ecological crisis and together this network and pilot residency programme looks towards a post-fossil future with a trans disciplinary approach.

North AiR: Expanding Entanglements is supported by the network partners and the **Finnish Institute in London**. Following the residency period, George Ridgway and Maija Savolainen will present their research and experiences alongside network partners as part of a public event in November 2019 at the Finnish Institute in London.

**Piritta Puhto, Curator/ Senior Producer, Bioart Society said:**

"The Bioart Society's Ars Bioartica residency programme has worked for 10 years with artists who have a keen interest in the environment and the changes in it. This has led us to feel an urgency in considering how residencies in these times of ecological crisis can find new ways to collaborate and create new models of working. North AiR is the perfect opportunity for us to collaborate with a group of highly professional organisations and artists across borders".

**Sam Trotman, Director, Scottish Sculpture Workshop said:**

"We are glad to be building on the strong foundations we have with our Finnish friends and partners. We wholeheartedly believe in the urgency of this enquiry in our uncertain times and are looking forward to working in partnership with the North AiR network and selected artists George Ridgway and Maija Annikki Savolainen to collaboratively learn through this programme".

**Jaakko Nousiainen, Head of Arts and Culture at the Finnish Institute in London said:**

"This timely, critically important and questioning project paves the way for more sustainable models of artist exchange in the future. We look forward to working with all the partner organisations and artists. This project is a perfect example of Finnish-Scottish collaboration and we are very happy to support it."

**ENDS**

Further details on the North AiR: Expanding Entanglements programme can be found here: [www.ssw.org.uk/north-air-expanding-entanglements/](http://www.ssw.org.uk/north-air-expanding-entanglements/) | <https://bioartsociety.fi/projects/ars-bioarctica/calls/north-air-expanding-entanglements>

## Media contacts:

Jenny Salmean, Scottish Sculpture Workshop (Scotland) | E: [jenny@ssw.org.uk](mailto:jenny@ssw.org.uk) | T: +44 (0)1464 861372

Piritta Puhto, Bioart Society (Finland) | E: [piritta.puhto@bioartsociety.fi](mailto:piritta.puhto@bioartsociety.fi) | T: +358 (0)40 140 7003

## Notes to editors:

1. **North AiR** is a new partnership between Scottish organisations: Scottish Sculpture Workshop, Taigh Chearsabhagh with the University of the Highlands and Islands and Timespan and Finnish organisations: Ars Bioartica organised by the Bioart Society together with the Kilpisjärvi Biological Station of the University of Helsinki, KulttuuriKauppila Art Centre and Mustarinda. North AiR is supported by network partners and the Finnish Institute in London.
2. **George Ridgway** (b. 1992) lives and works between Glasgow, Scotland and Shaftesbury, England. Recent exhibitions and projects include: *For this, have this*, Hatch Farm, Wiltshire, 2019, *Togæther*, Lumsden Weekender, Scottish Sculpture Workshop, 2018; *Say What I am Called*, part of Glasgow International Festival, Glasgow, 2018; *WITHKIN*, Melbury Abbas, Dorset, September 2017, *ThreeWorks*, Weymouth, September 2017, *Fort Bravo*, Bloomberg New Contemporaries, 2016/17; *MONO*, UR3GL, Madrid, 2016.
3. **Maija Annikki Savolainen** (b. 1980) gained a Master of Arts in Photography from Aalto University in 2014. With a background in biology, her work combines natural science and art. She has exhibited widely in Finland and abroad, including: *Solarophytes*, ISSP Gallery, Riga, 2017, *Preesens / Presenceness*, Titanik-gallery, Turku, 2017, and *Basic photography*, SIC, Helsinki, 2016. Her photobook, *When the Sense of Belonging is Bound to a System of Movement*, won the Nordic Dummy Award 2013 and was published by Kehrer Verlag in 2014. In 2014 Savolainen was a nominee of Fotofinlandia prize. She is one of the founders of Maanantai-collective, and is part of *Futures*, 2019 with the European Photography Platform.
4. **The Bioart Society** is an association based in Helsinki with more than 80 members from Finland and other countries. It was established in May 2008 at the Kilpisjärvi Biological Station in Lapland. The Bioart Society develops, produces and facilitates activities around art and natural sciences, with an emphasis on biology, ecology and life sciences. Together with the Kilpisjärvi Biological Station of the University of Helsinki it runs Ars Bioartica, an art & science programme with focus on the sub-arctic environment.
5. **KulttuuriKauppila Art Centre** works to improve the position of visual artists in Northern Finland and creates international connections in the field of art. KulttuuriKauppila runs an international artist residency, produces the Art li Biennale and Valto Pernu Photo Marathon and provides studios for local artists. The centre aims to improve artists' skills, belongs to international art networks and produces an international art–education programme for schools of li. KulttuuriKauppila participates in cultural policy on a practical level and believes that creativity is a key to wellbeing on both the individual and collective levels.

6. The **Mustarinda** Association is a group of artists and researchers whose goal is to promote the ecological rebuilding of society, the diversity of culture and nature, and the connection between art and science. At the centre of their activity lies contemporary art, boundary-crossing research, practical experimentation, communication, teaching and events. The Mustarinda Association reaches towards a post-fossil culture by combining scientific knowledge and experiential artistic activity.
7. **Scottish Sculpture Workshop** is a making facility set up in 1979 to support artists' learning, exchange and production, based within the rural village of Lumsden, North East Scotland. Our facilities, residencies, artist-led projects and international partnerships support artistic ambition on multiple levels and celebrate making in its plurality. 2019 marks SSW's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
8. **Timespan** is a cultural institution in Helmsdale, a village in the very north east of the Scottish Highlands, with local, global and planetary ambitions to weaponise culture for social change. Timespan is a place for art, research, heritage, local history, future propositions and action. We believe that cultural institutions are a political and public space which belong to society, and as such, have a responsibility to shape a brighter new world based on principles of equality, emancipation and inclusion.
9. **Taigh Chearsabhagh** Museum & Arts Centre is *the* arts and heritage centre for the Uists. Throughout the year we have visual art exhibitions, poetry and literary events, traditional music events and small festivals. We host world class contemporary art exhibitions, we have an award-winning museum, we work with local and international artists, academics and writers.
10. **The Finnish Institute in London** is a private, non-profit trust bringing together individuals, communities and organisations. We encourage cross-disciplinary and cross-border collaboration by creating networks and building new partnerships. We want to take thinking of social challenges and cultural practices in new, positive directions. To do this, we open up spaces for novel ideas, discussions and trends by bringing passionate people together. We believe that a pinch of risk-taking accompanied by the hard work of imaginative people can transform cultures and spaces. We embrace the unexpected while nurturing and maintaining excellence in contemporary social and cultural practice.

