

Transcriptie ondertiteling documentaire EMMA - Espoo Museum of Modern Art).

This work *Falling Shawls* was inspired by people in Sami dress gathering together. We feel that it is an empowering event.

I am really a painter and I feel that while I make installations, they are a little like three dimensional paintings to me.

I see them through the eyes of a painter. They are like colored space. When I paint, I feel that the two-dimensional painting should be three-dimensional, to add an experience of something tangible to it. Many of my paintings have been inspired by the nature of the Sami region and while you cannot directly see that this piece is about a certain place or landscape, I hope that people experience a sense of being in nature. That when you enter this, it would feel like you're in a place that is dear to you.

This work was made together with 12 people skilled in Sami handicraft. It was a wonderful experience to work as a community. That's what's so great about Sami handicraft that the sense of community is so strong. You participate in the same tradition of handicraft and uphold it and transfer it to younger generations and renew it together. After all, all artists draw on their personal circumstances and handicraft has always been a part of my family's life on both my father's and my mother's side. It is a normal way of being a part of the world. That's why it is natural to make it part of your artistic practice.

I also feel that since contemporary art usually has higher status than handicraft, I want to bring handicraft into the tradition of contemporary art.

The horn hat was used in the northern parts of the Sami region in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but it began to wane in the 1850s. Many major historical changes took place in the Sami region at the same time. In 1852, the border between Russia, Norway and Finland was closed, which was a serious crisis for the migrating nomadic Sami and forced them to assume a new way of life. The only armed uprising of the Sami the Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) rebellion, also took place in 1852. It had to do with Scandinavian colonialism. As an artist, I am interested in how a visual change of a shape, such as the horn of the horn hat can reflect the history of colonialism.

The history of Sami culture is not very visible in the Nordic countries but to exist, all peoples need their own written history. Through the recounting of history, things and events continue to exist and be alive. The history of especially Sami women is entirely unwritten. That's why the horn hat is so interesting. It raises questions of quality, about the effect of colonialism when there has been a transition to a more patriarchal culture and the position of women has been intentionally weakened to make a more equal community less so. In cultures that live in harsh natural conditions, every individual is very important, and people work as a team. No-one questions equality, everyone has an important role and position in daily life.

That is why I'm so interested in Sami handicraft because it includes all of our ancestors' knowledge, both practical knowhow and their worldview on many levels. It is a little like an encyclopedia for us. There is a lot of emotion involved in handicraft in cultures that are highly assimilated and where it has been impossible to transfer cultural heritage to younger people. This has been evident in the horn hat project and it helps us to process the difficult events of assimilation.

There are two pieces in this exhibition that I've made with the artist-activist Jenni Laiti and the musician-poet Niillas Holmberg. *Kiss from the Border* is one of them, a series of environmental art works that demarcate parts of the Teno River region. The Teno River forms the modern border between Finland and Norway, which is in complete conflict with the region's natural boundaries. We placed the verses in the border zone along the Teno River to raise awareness about the justification for Sami self-determination, which is based on an equal co-existence with nature and respecting and protecting it. We wanted poems in Sami because they are meant for us who live in the region so that we could reinforce our sense of community and take confidence in our ability to govern. We should be the ones to do it.

I feel that art has a role to play in the world. We need many kinds of roles. Art is not bound by everyday reality, it is free to vision and reveal and pose questions that may help others to put forth realistic alternatives. There is really no official body that could represent the Sami and have power to influence matters that concern us, but there are very many activists. Since there is no other way to make change happen, the grass roots is very active. I believe that even on a more general level, activism will increase in the future.

In some of these new paintings I'm interested in how a river or mountain has been given human rights under the law, as in Aotearoa New Zealand. People feel that a river is their ancestor, and the Sami people have the same experience and way of thinking. I would like to discuss this in our communities and how this could help in environmental protection.

There are many treats in the Sami region: mining, the planned Arctic sea railway, logging and others. It is a good thing that issues concerning indigenous people have become global that everyone and not just some small communities should protect their rights. People have begun to see how they are directly relevant to issues of environmental protection and climate change. The land rights of indigenous peoples could help to improve many things on a more general level. You could say that indigenous cultures are much more aware about how to live in harmony with nature than Westerners on average. Decolonialism does not just concern indigenous people. In fact Western countries should decolonize themselves, too.