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ABSTRACT

This research revisits individual and collaborative artistic processes to articulate the combination of creative skills to produce and document research outcomes. Various creative processes, such as costume-making, performance-making, artistic video, photo documentation and editing, came about under particular circumstances and with different objectives. These processes, all with their unique and embedded stories, were brought together in a collaborative research outcome to create an original visual story with layered meanings – the video titled 'Merelle (To the see)' (Miettinen 2021). This video illustrates the connections between the different creative processes, and the memories, bodies, places and environments attached to them. However, some of the places and environments in which the costumes, performance and video came about were also implicit, only to be revealed in the research dissemination. The selected methodology entailed narrative accounts, reflexive research and collaborative visual analysis. The data were collected through storytelling and note taking of the events that enabled was re-narration of the three artistic processes described in this article. The reflexive

KEYWORDS

re-storying
video
performance
costume-making
collaborative visual analysis
identities

research methodology and analysis drew on visual data from photography and the video to explore the outcomes of the collaborative work.

INTRODUCTION

'Merelle' (Miettinen 2021) was inspired by a month-long artist residency in 2020 at Vänö, an island in Finland, that coincided with the Baltic Sea Day, funded by the Finnish Association for Rural Education and the John Nurminen Foundation. Artist-researcher Miettinen, and visual and media artist Taina Kontio, focused their artistic explorations on the Finnish waterways leading to the Baltic Sea. The video 'Merelle' collates three artistic processes of video, performance and costume-making. It illustrates the various actors involved from different generations and backgrounds – those who created the costumes, performed, photographed, filmed, edited, in 2020 and 2021, and those actors from the past who went about their daily lives, who were unknown to the artist-researcher Miettinen. These actors were captured by Miettinen in photographs that were retaken of the undated historical photographs found in the Vänö island community hall.

The project was conceptualized by Kontio and was further developed through collaborative discussions between the two artists before and during the residency. The conceptualization of the video, partly documented at Vänö, continued to develop as Miettinen collected old images of the communities who lived in the place and were connected through the local community hall. These old photographs inspired a new storyline. Additional documentation, which was creatively incorporated in the 'Merelle' storyline, was thereafter created in northern Finland on the banks of Kemijoki (Kemi River). This documentation was of the performance discussed hereafter. Miettinen skilfully recreated, reinterpreted and visually re-narrated a contemporary storyline of her artistic research findings in the form of a video (Miettinen 2021).

After the artist residency, Miettinen continued to engage with performative, photographic and video art (see Miettinen 2020) that explored the role of water in shaping intergenerational relationships and stories at several river and seascape sites across Finland. The context of rivers and the Archipelago of the Baltic Sea created a reference to water as an important and fragile resource in a global ecosystem. Running waters connect the different geographies of Finland from the arctic Kemijoki to the Baltic Sea. Miettinen and Kontio explored the personal meanings connected to water by their own families from different Finnish generations and backgrounds, in addition to the sustainable use of water and environmentally sustainable practices of today.

Miettinen was also inspired by costumes created by Sarantou that were exhibited in a group exhibition, one of two costume displays by the costume designer held at the Kemi Art Museum in Finland from January until March 2020. 'Water Wasted' is a collection of four costumes displayed as part of the *Poetic Peripheries* exhibition[1] at the museum in northern Finland. The costumes were produced from waste materials from spring water bladders and waste industrial felt collected from a rubble yard in Australia. Traces of waste, and questions about the waste, were embedded in the materiality of the costumes. The costumes were independently conceptualized and created by Sarantou as a critical reflection on her own practices of domestic water usage in her homes in both Australia and Finland where she lives.

1. Curated by Mari Mäkiranta, Melanie Sarantou, Taina Kontio and Satu Miettinen Rajamailla (Poetic Peripheries) (2020).

The video story work by Miettinen and the costume design by Sarantou eventually crossed paths in a collaborative and performative work in Rovaniemi with two women, Caoimhe Beaulé and Mariluz Soto. The performers are of Canadian-Irish and Chilean background, both immigrants at the time in Finland. The performance was partly inspired by Miettinen's experiences at Vänö. The embodied interplay between the performers and with the environment in and around the Kemi River was a respectful encounter. They were acting without words or speaking, improvising and reacting to each other's actions. These performers created an imagined narrative of two young women who shared in a ritual with the river to remember and acknowledge the past lives and experiences of their ancestors. A notion of play was evident in the encounter as they sent their wishes, or perhaps secrets, downstream. Both performers Beaulé and Soto wore costumes designed by Sarantou, which served as points of connection, or bridges, between them and the water of the Kemi. The performers enacted the imagined narratives of young women preparing for their wedding at the river. The memory of one of the performers' past wedding, shared during the preparations for the performance while fitting on the costumes, had an impact on this narrative. Through their performative actions with the water, Beaulé and Soto engaged with their own emotions, ancestral memories and bodies to connect with the flowing water of the Kemi. Miettinen initiated and documented the performance and reinterpreted the media to embed her own intergenerational memories and connectedness to water within the video.

The chronological order of events commenced with the costume-making in October of 2019, followed by the exhibition *Rajamailla* at the Kemi Museum from January to March 2020. The video footage was captured between June and September 2020, with the performance documented in August 2020.

This article is organized by first explaining the video work in narrative form, followed by a discussion of the costumes. Then the methodology is described, followed by the findings and conclusion of the work.

THE VIDEO

Two young brides are standing on the bank of Kemijoki, acknowledging the spirits of their ancestors that continue to live through the flow of water. The brides are preparing themselves for their wedding day. Dressed in self-selected white costumes, the performers symbolize healing by sending downstream birch leaves in memory of the ancestors (Figure 1).

Ancestors appear within the water. Dressed in black, the ancestors resemble the dark waters of the Kemi, in stark contrast with the young women on the bank of Kemijoki (Figure 1). The immersion of historical photographs of Vänö villagers leaving for church with a boat (Figure 1) creates the old narrative of using the waterways as passage. The gestures of the brides in the water may mean giving blessings to a safe journey.

The two brides enter the water, placing a large white cloth in the river. They engage in a cleansing ritual washing a white sheet. They resemble the domestic chores of womanhood. The performance symbolizes the washing of laundry or rinsing carpets, as is the custom in Finland. The performance in white dresses also symbolizes cleansing (Figure 2).

Washing is a collective embodied performance of opening, rinsing and floating of the fabric in the river. This happened in silence during the live

Figure 1: Twigs and leaves are sent downstream in Kemijoki and the ancestors appear in the water. Two women, most likely brides, wear white costumes from the 'Water Wasted' collection (Sarantou 2020). 'Merelle' (2021), collage of video stills.

Figure 2: A white cloth is washed in Kemijoki, emphasizing cleansing. 'Merelle' (2021), collage of video stills.

performance. The brides communicate by understanding gestures. They use the flow of the river when playing with the fabric and sticks and other organic matter passing in the water. The performers also send leaves and small twigs from nearby trees floating downstream.

The ancestors appear from the water for a second time (Figure 3), this time they are swimming. Are they at home in the water, engaging in a cleansing and refreshing activity, or are they drowning due to the weight of their clothes dragging them down?

A historical image of the villagers of Vänö appears. The image may be of baptism that spread from Sweden to Finland, with the first Baptist parish being established in Ahvenanmaa island in the same archipelago. The embodied action of the baptized people and struggle for life in the water with heavy clothes leaves one to wonder whether the people were baptized and therefore 'born again', or rather drowning.

The washing performance is then followed by a burial ritual (Figure 4). From the water appears a body dressed in white that was carefully placed in a black coffin.

The image of the body in coffin is followed by a death ritual performance by a woman who is dressed in a simple black blouse and pants, lying on a rock cliff next to the ocean. She covers parts of her body, for example, her hips, chest and eyes with wooden branches.

One of the historical images seems to be from a wake. There is an old narrative heard in the archipelago that families needed to bury their loved ones themselves on the island. The preparations for the burial are also embodied actions from washing, shovelling the ground and then carrying the body into the burial position.

Water can serve as a burial ground or a burial medium. The flow of the water resembles eternity and the ephemeral nature of time, and its cyclical nature connects generation to generation. We carry our ancestral memories of death and burial through the water, although the land holds ours.

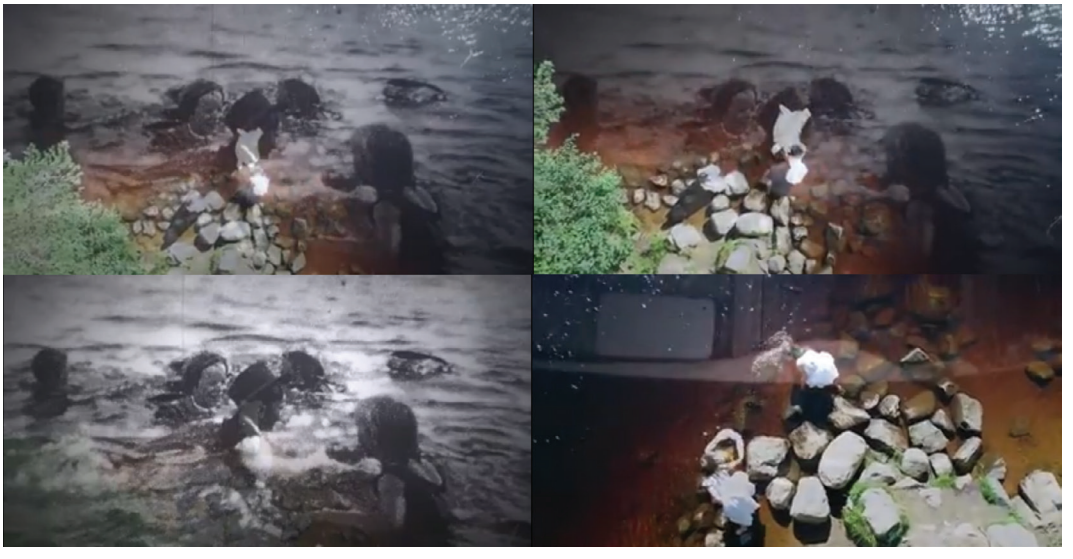

Figure 3: Ancestors appearing from the water after the white cloth was immersed into the dark water of the river. The interpretation of the layered imagery is left to the viewers whether the people are engaged in swimming, bathing or a ritual such as baptism. Or are they perhaps drowning? 'Merelle' (2021), collage of video stills.

Figure 4: Water, wood, rock and burial rituals. 'Merelle' (2021), collage of video stills.

THE COSTUMES

Costume maker and artist-researcher, Sarantou, observed her household drinking water consumption in Australia over three months. A large amount of waste was produced in her home in South Australia, including plastic, foil and carton. The costumes were created by reusing waste collected from pre-packaged, or boxed, spring water, such as foil water bladders and plastic nozzles. From parts of this waste she created costumes in which she reused other found materials from dump sites in South Australia, including industrial felt. Several other found materials were combined to produce a materials mixture of industrial felt, tulle, fake fur, foil and plastic.

The inspiration of the costumes was derived from old photographs of the artist-researcher's ancestors from the Prussian region of Germany who settled as missionaries in various southern African regions. Their settlement in places, such as Middelburg in South Africa and Grootfontein in Namibia, was documented over many years by the researcher's mother, in addition to being documented by Zöllner and Heese (1984). The author has also traced her family history at the time of making the costumes. Since the middle-nineteenth century, some ancestors were documented to have settled in South Africa and later moved to more arid conditions, areas that are now northern Namibia and the south of Angola, where they faced many droughts. From historic photographs collected by her mother, Sarantou found inspiration from the costume silhouettes her ancestor wore. Her 'Water Wasted' collection mirrors similar fitted bodices and voluminous, gathered skirts.

The silhouettes of the costume and the dress patterns created by the artist-researcher were inspired by late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century costumes worn widely by settler women folk in southern Africa. The key influence of the costumes was of the Victorian and Second Empire dress era (1848–70), and the Victorian and Edwardian, or Art Nouveau, dress era

(1890–1911), with cinched waists and gathered at the waist with wide skirts (Russell 1983). During the Art Nouveau era, skirt hems and sleeve volume reduced slightly, details were simplified and more practical skirts and blouses (Russell 1983), also cinched at the waist, became popular during the 1890s until the early twentieth century, which in America was referred to as the Gibson Girl look (The Grace Museum 2021). Similar reductions in volume were seen in the costumes captured in Sarantou's family photographs, but this similarity may also be a result of the limited fabric resources settlers may have had.

Similar cut costumes were worn in Finland at the time, but in dark blue or black colours, simplified and removed of adornment, for example, the Christian *körtti* dress (Almila 2019). These dresses were created from home woven linen or wool, and worn by peasants from the early nineteenth century onwards, according to Protestant custom. The wide skirts of dresses, pleated at the waist, were worn with jackets, sporting pleats in the back and bonnets or hair scarves that covered the shoulders like a shawl (Almila 2019). Some authors believed that wide skirts were worn in Europe due to practical considerations, for example for warmth and modesty, and even to hide repeated childbearing (Phillips and Phillips 1978).

Sarantou's costumes were made with the white industrial felt and foil was used as lining, offsetting patterns cut into the felt. However, the foil was also cut into strips and sewn as loops into waistbands and collars to represent shoulder shawls and aprons. The plastic nozzles and rings that were collected from the water bladders were used to create intricate details in bodices and between the layers of hand-cut patterned felt and tulle. Influenced by Victorian and Edwardian dress, the fitted bodices were corset-like laced in the back (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Documentation of the costume-making process reusing found materials and waste from pre-packaged water containers. Photograph by Satu Miettinen and Mari Mäkiranta (2020).

METHODOLOGY

The methods used were reflective practice and narrative enquiry. Webster and Mertova (2007: 1) maintain that narrative inquiry is embedded in the stories humans tell about their lives. The Ricoeurian ([1990] 1992) perspective on narrative as method refers to the organization of action and life. Narratives assist in the arrangement of human life, and it can reveal 'the connectedness of life' as it entails histories, memories and stories (Ricoeur [1990] 1992: 157). Narratives may draw from recounts of vague units of life, yet their outcomes are cohesiveness rendered through the ability of narratives to create unity of life (Ricoeur [1990] 1992: 158).

There may be attempts to 'deliberately story, but also to re-story' (Clandinin and Connelly 1989: 21) personal and group experiences. The Ricoeurian 'narrative unity of life' can enable sense making, the storying and re-storying of life in complex situations, while it also requires the emotional involvement of a narrator, drawn from memories and visions of the future to enable storytelling that is the 'recounting of care' (Ricoeur [1990] 1992: 163). Bochner and Ellis (2003) explain that narrative recollection and the arts serve as media that can shape personal and collective realities through narratives of diverse cultural settings, such as events, places or the natural environment. The narrative approaches to this research were inspired by the mentioned theories, using artistic and creative approaches as media to re-story new identities through the performance, video and costumes.

Reflective practice was applied as a method by the authors and artist-researchers to make sense of narratives that were embedded in the artistic outcomes. Reflective practice was based on tacit knowledge, contemplative self-examination and learning from experience (Leitch and Day 2000: 180). Reflexive researchers go beyond attempts to understand underlying assumptions and perspectives of their research by trying to grasp their pluralities and interrelatedness (Weber 2003: vi). Attia and Edge (2017: 33) maintain that reflexive researchers should develop procedures integral to the environments in which they work through conceptualization, awareness of context and practice in which the researcher can be distanced, at least sometimes, from action to further their theories and ideas. The distancing from the creative processes enabled the artist-researchers to reflect on the creative processes, which, themselves re-storied and distinct from one another, came about to create the re-storied video.

The objectives of the artistic research were to use the costumes, performance and video to explore connections between memories, bodies and the environment through re-storying. The research questions that guided the study are: How can video, performance and costume contribute to honouring ancestral connections through the environment? How can the agency of the body connect people to their ancestors through nature, and can we control such actions? How does re-storying impact the construction of identities through visual means? This article discusses the methodological approaches, the costumes and the findings of the studies, which are based on reflexivity and collaborative visual analysis (CVA) of the video materials. The reflections by the authors (artist-researcher and costume designer-researcher) are presented hereafter in first person narrative accounts.

The two artist-researchers engaged in a collaborative process based on a multi-vocal sharing and reflecting upon their personal experiences, followed by interpretation of the visual data. The analytical approach followed was

CVA that aimed to shift from personal to group agency. CVA is simultaneously based on individual and collaborative interpretations and is based on a subjective approach that draws on insider knowledge and personal experience and is supported by narrative recollection and accounts. By drawing on semiotic approaches, CVA enables the reading and analysis of visual texts through personal stories (Fraser 2004), as well as collective theorization. Due to the collective and reflective practice approach of the chosen methodology the collective findings and the subjective analysis of the two artist-researchers and authors had due to be negotiated. The element of negotiation results in the research being non-exploitative and accessible, while retaining self-interrogation. The CVA was documented through note taking and excerpts from notes are presented in the findings.

The research process was also pragmatic and iterative. The methodology in practice meant that three interrogative processes – the creation of costumes, performance, photography and videos documentation – commenced independently, but were re-storied through narrative recollection, not only visually through video editing, but also through CVA. The creative phases were followed by CVA and narrative recollection. Interpretations on the video were shared, reflected upon and theorized. The author-researchers' objectives, to be able to identify and combine fractured artistic elements through storying into a re-storied outcome, justified the use of the chosen methodology of narrative recollection of accounts, reflexivity and CVA. The three artistic processes, although created through the unique and distinct objectives, were somewhat thematically connected through common research themes that were identified through the analysis and will be discussed hereafter.

FINDINGS

The research themes connecting the three creative research processes of video, performance and costume-making underpinning the research were strong expressions, perhaps even questions about environmental sustainability. The complexity of the different roles and meanings that have been connected to water, memory and female embodiment is represented in the three key themes that constitute the findings, namely, (1) sustainability and relationships with the environment, (2) re-storying and the role of cultural heritage, memory and identity and (3) ethical considerations.

Sustainability and relationships with the environment

'Colonialism pre-empted modernity in Africa' maintains Taiwo (2010 c.f. Manai 2010: 162). In addition, the introduction of Christianity by the missionaries resembled strong colonial practices such as systematic accounting, the exertion of control and the 'authoritative imprint of Western capitalist culture' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1986: 1). The personal history of the costume maker and artist-designer Sarantou is connected to the colonization history in Africa.

> My mother's family migrated as missionaries from Germany in the late nineteenth century from Helle-Saale Sachsen Anhalt to settle in Middelburg in South Africa. Their offspring then migrated to Grootfontein in Namibia during the early twentieth century. Their most

> valuable resource was always water, my mother said, especially in the more arid parts of Namibia and southwestern Africa where my ancestors settled.
>
> (Sarantou 2021: n.pag., age 50)

Water is one of our most precious resources. It nurtures us physically, but also carries and holds its consistency and flow through the stories and memories of our ancestral cultures, as it has through many generations. Namibia is a country that contains several deserts, such as the Namibia, Kalahari and Omaheke; hence, water is regarded a precious resource. The dark colonial history of Namibia is entangled with the Omaheke desert where the first gruesome genocide of the twentieth century played out when the German *Schutztruppe,* or 'protective forces', under General von Trotha, drove 80,000 Herero people into the waterless Omaheke desert where most succumbed to thirst and hunger (Gewald 2005; Kössler 2007; Sarantou 2014: 33).

In stark contrast to Namibia, in the country known to have 2000 lakes, Finland, water and lakes have strong connotations to national imagery and identity construction (Anttila 2007). Folklore and natural mythologies related to fish and fishing as important historical livelihoods are also well-narrated in Finland (Råman 2006). Finland is often represented as the country of a thousand lakes. In Finland only a tap needs opening to source high-quality water in many areas. It may seem even conspicuous in its water consumption by utilizing overwhelming amounts of pure drinkable household water straight from the tap for everyday needs, from cooking to washing cars. In Australia, for example, strong narratives about water scarcity in the Murray Darling Basin occur (Davies 2019; New South Wales Government 2006), politicizing this important resource in some states. Pre-packaged water is widely used in Australia, an unsustainable practice that Sarantou reflects on critically, a habit in her own household. The projects of modernity, its persistent dominant narratives of development and perhaps unsustainable marketing ploys such as the need for using packaged water in Australia, and colonization continue to pre-empt the current environmental crisis (Erikson 2020; Murphy 2009).

> The problematic relationship between bodies, waste, and our environment were built into and represented by my costumes. The waste is appalling, absurd, just to have drinking water. My ancestors were also deprived of quality drinking water, but the realities of life drove them onwards. A critical position is needed here as they moved into unchartered territory and into the ancestral lands of indigenous people. We now have to have agency, persevere and question the future of our environment as it affects our living circumstances. And the relationships between us and generations to come. Not that we can undo or go back to a state as it was before.
>
> (Sarantou 2021: n.pag., age 50)

Water, or the lack thereof, is questioned in the costume and performance. These embodied processes – collecting, deconstructing, ideation, remaking memories of ancestors, reflecting on water for life, culture and survival – have shaped the narratives in need of expression of how bodies are part of and connected to water and environment. Seeking connections to ancestral rituals related to water and costume brought to life the created costumes and narratives embedded into the video. In the video, the costumes worn by the

performers seem to extend their bodies across temporal and spatial boundaries by bringing these elements into a shared space and time. The costumes also bear the marks of water wasted and environments stressed, and the costumes enable a connection and awareness to the problems of human consumption and waste that deeply impact our global water systems.

The observed and noted discussions of the performers while preparing for the performance at the Kemi River, their bodily gestures, for example how they carried and displayed the costumes during the performances, were also significant in terms of how they extended the costumes into the environment. Thus, layering negative meanings of waste with more positive meanings of personal meaning-making and eco-activism, which means wanting to make positive contributions through personal political action to prevent harm to the environment. The layered processes that resulted in 'Merelle' (2020) were perhaps more implicit actions of personal political action that the involved actors engaged in, but the video nevertheless exemplifies how the arts can be a vehicle for such action.

Re-storying and the role of cultural heritage, memory and identity

Re-storying is an important aspect of the work. The improvised moments that occurred in the performance are exemplary of deliberate re-storying, through improvisation and imagination, for example, that enable the re-arrangement of human life in attempts to rewrite histories exemplified by the video. Miettinen wanted to remember, relive and re-story the lives of the Finnish people from Vänö Island, who are in closer relation to her heritage, while Sarantou used inspiration from family photographs collected by her mother to re-story her sense of place and inherited identity as an African settler.

> The narratives are sometimes reimagined; for example, the female Viking burial was an important historical reimagining. It resembled the historical event. Only later Taina and I realized from reading literature that some of the Viking soldiers were female.
>
> (Miettinen 2021: n.pag., age 49)

Re-storying draws from memories, and it enables new memories. The dyadic relationship between memories and heritage is well documented (Veijo-Rose 2015). Steeped in complexity due to this relationship, they remain intricately connected, heritage referring to shared backgrounds of groups, while memory can entail both individual and collective memory. The dark side of memory as part of certain groups' memory has been widely researched, for instance, the complex relationship between memory and forgetting has been theorized by Ricoeur ([1990] 1992). Veijo-Rose aptly attempts to clarify the dyad by stating that cultural heritage is the 'ruinous remains of past creations', while memories are 'the imperfect remains of past experiences' (2015: 2). Due to the gaps in memory work, the function of re-storying events is paramount to understanding personal and group histories.

> memories of sounds of nature and cleansing. These are moments for social sharing of narratives and listening to one another.
>
> (Miettinen 2021: n.pag., age 49)

The reshaping function of re-storying, drawing from heritage and memory, supports the construction of personal identities in addition to re-negotiating of connectedness and relationships, which come about through performance (Veijo-Rose 2015; Haldrup and Bœrenholdt 2015).

> The performative and narrative practice was based on collaborative discussions around different life memories, conflicting situations in history or in politics, such as the realities lived by some Indigenous peoples. In my opinion, the discussion best contributes to performative and visual work when it is ongoing and supporting new insights, opinions, and reflections.
>
> (Miettinen 2021: n.pag., age 49)

Miettinen believes that her video work should elicit dialogues about often gruesome and hidden histories of displacement or colonialism. Indigenous peoples in both Finland, Namibia and Australia are engaged in dialogues that can support the mutual reflections and opinions she refers to.

The video and costumes re-story the embedded histories of the designer-researcher's families and cultural heritage as they want to remember, relive and re-story. Undoubtedly, dynamics are at work in the overlaps between memory, heritage and identity (Veijo-Rose 2015: 2). Heritage is 'approached as an assemblage of material and immaterial forms […] representations, aspirations, emotions, values, symbols, narratives', says Veijo-Rose (2015: 2). In this research, water is an example of shared heritage present in many ancient and modern religious rituals, as well as in the two researchers' background. In Finnish mythology, Ahti is the god of water. Specific cleansing rituals, such as the washing of carpets in rivers, are still firmly imprinted in Finnish heritage.

> When planning and discussing the performance with the costume designer-researcher, the Finnish tradition of washing carpets was discussed. It's a custom to wash yourself and collaborative discussion had an important meaning during our Vänö and Kemijoki performances.
>
> (Miettinen 2021: n.pag., age 49)

After Ricoeurian narrative theory, identity is supported by stories processes. Narratives support the coming about of identities in complex psychological processes that are well described by Ricoeur ([1990] 1992: 121, 157) as narrative identity. Therefore, narratives are the vehicles of identity work, but they also guide artist expression that strengthens and continue to evolve identity work (Sarantou 2014).

> I drew inspiration from family photographs collected by my mother when she was a young woman. She experienced many breaks and disconnections between her and her family while she was a young girl, so it is not surprising that she was searching for her connections to her ancestors through collecting photos of them. Her interests have become mine; it is my inheritance.
>
> (Sarantou 2021: n.pag., age 50)

> Sometimes the aim is in the processing of a shared thematic through visual, material, embodied, or narrative means rather than only the outcomes. These processes contribute to identity work related to our

> bodies, families and memories. They sometimes give space to relive or rewrite stories and histories.
>
> (Miettinen 2021: n.pag., age 49)

The narrative and performative actions, from making the costumes to creating and editing the video, carry strong resemblances of identity processes of the designer-researchers. Memories, whether they were lived or re-enacted from photographs of people, rituals and costumes worn in Middelburg, Grootfontein or Vänö Island, played a role in the identity work of both artist-researchers. Visual storytelling, using costume, performance, photography and the re-storying using video gave specific form to these identity processes, particularly in terms of the reflections on family relationships and cultural rituals, which were expressed in their narrative recollections.

The discussions and narrative recollections in this report illustrate the complexity of identities in the layered meanings that were embedded in the video. These meanings derive from many continents and cultures, for example Finnish peasants and southern African settler cultures, and religious and personal cleansing rituals, from weddings, funerals, personal and household cleansing. In this way, the video, performance and costumes contribute to honouring their ancestral connections through interactions with the environment.

Ethical considerations in costume-making

Ethical questions in the project spanned from the making of the costumes, video and the performance. Concerns in relation to the documentation of, and the performance itself, were explained by one of the artist-researchers upon reflection:

> As a photographer or videographer, I as an artist-researcher was trying to come up with a visual outline that would honour the performers' embodied actions with sensitivity. This performance was created through embodied improvisation in silence.
>
> (Miettinen 2021: n.pag., age 49)

Debates are growing about the ethical concerns related to the interaction between performers, costumes, documentary artists and also audiences. The purpose, use and agency of costume are growing debate (Pantouvaki et al. 2020, 2021). These authors maintain that ethical considerations in relation to the creation of, and performance with and through costume, can better inform how makers of costume more ethically engage with performers to assist them in expressing especially emotionally or psychologically difficult roles (Pantouvaki et al. 2020). Makers can then also engage performers in more inclusive decision-making material and style selection to consider what the performers deem as appropriate for their roles. Another ethical consideration is to go beyond the obvious artefact-focused material and style choices of costume-making to engage with it as a catalyst for more critical approaches to social, environmental or political questions (Pantouvaki et al. 2020).

In the creative processes under discussion, ethical questions about the objectives of making, wearing and performing in the costumes arise. Firstly,

the costumes were not created explicitly for the purpose of the performance but for an exhibition, which poses questions of ethical practice from the onset. The idea to integrate the costumes in the re-storying process of the video came about three months after the exhibition.

> The problematic relationship between bodies, waste, and our environment were built into and represented by my costumes. The display in the Kemi Museum required further elements, maybe a performance, real bodies that could express and act on revealing these problematics. Bodies and performance needed to bring the costumes in contact with challenges we face regarding our environment. The mannequins in a museum were not going to enact this crossing, connection, this change.
>
> (Sarantou 2021: n.pag., age 50)

However, the choice of costumes and accessories, the storyline and choreography of the performance, and the selection of place was left to the performers.

> We discussed the project together, listened to the costume designer-researchers and the performers' thoughts on the dresses. They proposed possible performance ideas to serve as narratives when I videographed the performance. There was this sense of respect present, for the performers' work, when shooting the video.
>
> (Miettinen 2021: n.pag., age 49)

The performers' personal memories and associations with place that came about through wearing the costumes were narrated in the following re-storying of the dress rehearsal:

> One of the performers who chose to wear the long white dress said, with appreciation during the preparations: 'I haven't worn something like this since my wedding'. I observed that the relationship between the two performers was constructed through the shared experience of wearing the costumes. The long dress was associated with weddings and holy ceremonies. She held the long dress standing tall, with dignity and grace, but then she also engaged with play and enactments of ritual. The second performer chose the shorter dress and was able to move more freely, entering the deeper water in the Arctic's cold and black river.
>
> (Sarantou 2021: n.pag., age 50)

'Merelle' was later disseminated at a service design conference (Soto Hormazábal et al. 2021). This service design-focused workshop explored the role of emotions when perceiving videos to understand how service designers deal with the emotional responses of users. During this workshop session, some participants commented on the calm and uplifting emotions they experienced by viewing the white costumes next to the water of the Kemi River. For some participants, however, the costumes were representations of dressed-up female bodies, and perhaps worse, resembled colonial whiteness. Miettinen expressed strong associations with the images from the re-storied video and Edvard Isto's (1899) painting, *The Attack,* that addresses questions of colonial power between Finland, Sweden and Russia. In the painting, a blonde maiden wearing a white dress and a long blue ribbon around her waist is attacked by a giant two-headed eagle that targets a book in her arms, seemingly seeking to

rob her of knowledge (Narrativepainting 2020). The imagery in the video may be considered a more modern interpretation also signifying almost embarrassing references to Finnish national imagery with blue waters and skies, yet neither of the performers represent typical Finnish stereotypes with blonde hair. The example emphasizes the importance of ethical considerations in costume-making and the co-creation that resulted in 'Merelle' (2020). The performers were able to choose which costumes they wanted to wear from at least eight options and two collections. They could choose how and what they wanted to signify with the costumes they wore. They had the choice to resemble colonial whiteness if they wanted to raise such critical views. This open approach to having the performers choose their costumes led to more ethical approaches to performance as decisions could be made based on their comfort when having to perform (Pantouvaki et al. 2020: 148), in addition to the narratives they wished to express through their choices of costume. Such narratives can be, for example, to counter dominant narratives and stereotypes such as Miettinen's associations with *The Attack*.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings addressed all three research questions. Video, performance and costume contribute to honouring ancestral connections, which can be re-storied through the environment, for example. Moreover, physical materials also play an important role in re-storying and visualizing narratives as they can impute content and meaning to it. The costumes, for example, created intensive meanings related both to ancestral histories, as well as the everyday hardship of scarcity of water. These stories were sewn into the materials, and they spoke to the performers that reacted to these narrative layers with their embodied actions. The white dress associated with the wedding, and the black blouse and trousers of the burial performance, carry significance even if these meanings change over time and are re-storied by younger generations to express and pay tribute to temporal and intergenerational dimensions that connect their pasts to their present lives and identities.

Through performances, the agency of the body can connect people with memories of their ancestors. Through natural environments, and the re-storying of events through memories, material and immaterial heritage, such connections with ancestors may be enabled. The agency of the artist-researchers to advocate environmental sustainability through the arts was rewarded by discovering the interconnections between their creative research processes in the global South and North. The connection to place is often directly linked to personal and collective histories and memories of people. Re-storying can impact the construction of identities through heritage and memory that come about through visual means in this research. The CVA method, based on narrative accounts of the documented artistic outcomes, connected the artist-researchers with their memories and heritage, while enabling their identity work. The costumes and the video produced were controlled through personal and political re-storying that sought to express the fragility, but also the importance of, the environment to sustain cultural meanings throughout generations.

The intergenerational connections refer to a temporal dimension, especially evident in the video. Strong temporal dimensions were embedded in the costumes and the video due to the references from the past, present

and what ought to be in the future, particularly regarding the political statements by the artistic and research outcomes about the intergenerational connections that come about through place and environment. Such connections remind us that non-human forces may well be at play in shaping who we are.

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