



Personal and Collected Material in Narrative Artworks

Video Installation As the Evening Falls as a Case Study

Janna Lindfors

BACHELOR'S THESIS
May 2022

Degree Programme in Media and Arts
Fine Art

ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
Tampere University of Applied Sciences
Degree Programme in Media and Arts
Fine Art

LINDFORS, JANNA:
Personal and Collected Material in Narrative Artworks:
Video Installation As the Evening Falls as a Case Study

Bachelor's thesis 56 pages, of which appendices 1 page
May 2022

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the use of personal and collected material in a narrative artwork in the field of contemporary art. The main objective was to define how telling a story with different source material varies in a narrative artwork and compare how this affects the spectator. The aim was to define whether the use of artist's own experiences in a narrative artwork can reach a more intimate and relatable experience for the spectator.

This thesis discusses the works of five contemporary artists: Laurie Anderson and Outi Heiskanen using intimate and personal subjects and Johanna Lecklin and artist duo Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen using art to transmit others' stories.

The artistic project of the thesis – a two-channel video installation *Illan tullen – As the Evening Falls* – was used as a case study to further examine the difference between the artistic process of using a personal story with strong emotional bond, in comparison with strangers' thoughts collected through the internet. The video installation *As the Evening Falls* was exhibited in the degree show *Embers* of the Fine Art study path at Gallery Himmelblau in March 2022. The themes explored in the artwork were fear, loss and death from the perspective of a story from family history, childhood memories and collected stories of adults.

Keywords: collected material, narrative artwork, contemporary art, source material, personal story

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
2	ABOUT NARRATIVE ART	6
2.1	Definition	6
2.2	Different Narrators.....	6
2.3	Examining Narrative.....	8
2.3.1	Narratology	8
2.3.2	Narrative and Film	10
2.3.3	Narrative and Image.....	11
2.3.4	Emotional Response to a Narrative.....	13
3	A SELECTION OF NARRATIVE ARTWORKS	16
3.1	Laurie Anderson: Heart of a Dog.....	16
3.2	Outi Heiskanen: The Dream.....	19
3.3	Johanna Lecklin: Story Café	21
3.4	Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen: People in White	26
4	VIDEO INSTALLATION AS THE EVENING FALLS	30
4.1	Background and Themes	30
4.2	Work Methods	31
4.2.1	Personal Narrative.....	31
4.2.2	Family History as a Source Material.....	33
4.2.3	Collected Thoughts as a Source Material.....	36
4.3	Visual Aesthetics.....	39
4.4	Role of Sound in the Storytelling	44
4.5	Installation	45
5	DISCUSSION	48
	REFERENCES	51
	APPENDICES.....	56
	Appendix 1. Embers Exhibition 2022 website	56

1 INTRODUCTION

As humans we share stories every day – something that happened to us or something we heard happening to someone else. Qualities of a good storyteller could be, for example, the engagingness and relatability of a story, making the listener experience a character's feelings. When hearing a story, the emotional bond between the narrator and the narrative can also affect the experience of the listener – perhaps one becomes emotional while telling a family story or something tragic from their own nation's history. Additionally, evoking the feeling of empathy could be dependent on the abilities of the storyteller, as well as the receiver of the story.

As a method for an artist, telling stories can work in multiple layers, for instance as self-exploration, studying family history or exploring more universal topics through memories of others and collective memory. Working with different source material can create different approaches for an artist to narrate a story. This thesis examines the effects of an artist's emotional bond to the making of a narrative artwork by comparing artworks about personal experiences and artworks telling stories of others in the field of contemporary art.

The narration of selected works of Laurie Anderson, Outi Heiskanen, Johanna Lecklin, Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen are analyzed by reflecting on the writings of Patrick Colm Hogan, Seymour Chatman, Mieke Bal, Suzanne Keen, Marie-Laure Ryan and Werner Wolf, who have widely studied narratology. The research about narrative focuses mainly on still image and film, due to the mediums used by the examined contemporary artists. Along with the works of contemporary artists the practical part of this thesis – a two-channel video installation – *As the Evening Falls* is used as a case study to examine the working process of narrating stories with different source materials. The work begins by reflecting personal memories from family history and childhood, continuing with material collected from other people online. The artwork aims to explore the theme of death and fear from a comforting perspective, creating a safe experience for the viewer inside the installation. The artwork was exhibited

at Gallery Himmelblau in March 2022 in the degree show *Embers* of the Fine Art study path.

2 ABOUT NARRATIVE ART

2.1 Definition

Art can be used to create a narrative and tell a story based on fact, fiction or a combination of these two. According to the definition of Tate, narrative art as an art term is used to describe storytelling art. Having a long history particularly in Western art, the traditional use of narrative art is not seen as popular today. Portraying “stories from religion, myth and legend, history and literature” have shifted to topics from the artist’s everyday life and use of “references to political or social issues.” (Tate.) Journalist Patina Lee states that today the objective of narrative art is “to criticize and to protest”, creating relatable works portraying “intimate stories and personal experiences” (Lee 2016).

Agreeing with Aristotle, Philosopher Martha O. Nussbaum writes in *Poetic justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*: “Literature focuses on the possible, inviting its readers to wonder about themselves” and usually “to put themselves in the place of people of many different kinds and to take on to their experiences” (1995, 5). In his book *Towards a Theory of Narrative*, Film and Literature Critic Seymour Chatman states the same story can be transmitted regardless of the medium, as the “story elements” – “events, situations and behaviors signified by the words, images, and gestures” transmit the story (1975, 296). Thus, even though literary art is understood as a narrative in form of a text, it could be argued that the ideas of Aristotle could be applied to all forms of storytelling, and one could have a possibility to relive another’s experiences through narrative art.

2.2 Different Narrators

According to Copywriter Stephanie Orges, generally, seven different types of narrators can be used to tell a story. First-person narrator is written from the point of view of the protagonist or a secondary character close to the protagonist, narrating as they would speak. Third-person narrator can be either omnis-

cient – who knows everything about all characters – or limited – who can only tell about the protagonist in detail. The detached observer and commentator are two types of third-person narrators and can be either omniscient or limited. The detached observer's way to tell a story is often unnoticeable as the commentator usually adds their comments to the happenings. Third-person narrator is not usually physically part of the story. However, the narrator can also be written in the third-person but part of the story, as the interviewer, secret character or unreliable narrator. The interviewer often tells the happenings afterwards as if they collected the information in the form of an interview. The secret character is a narrator who first seems like a typical third-person narrator but is revealed to be one of the characters. The unreliable narrator has an incorrect point of view to transmit a story as they might be for instance one-sided or misled. (Orgers 2011.)

In *Narrative Discourse: Author and Narrator in Literature, Film and Art*, Patrick Colm Hogan, professor of cognitive psychology and literature, notifies that rarely just one type of a narrator is being used. He states that using multiple types of narration can be divided into three forms: “embedded, collective and parallel.” (2013, 184.) In *Stories Within Stories: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative*, Author William Nelles juxtaposes embedded narrative as “story within the story” and “frame” (1992, 79), while Cultural Theorist and Video Artist Mieke Bal aims to define it as a system where “a narrative text – – is determined by a narrative situation – – linked to a history” (in *Notes on Narrative Embedding*) (1981, 45). Collective narrative can exist when the characters narrating the story are not framing each other, and in parallel narration “two or more narrators are telling versions of the same story or treating the same storyworld” (Hogan 2013, 184).

The nature of a narrator can be examined from this point of view, mostly recognized in literature, and applied to different mediums telling a story. However, in terms of contemporary art other features of a narrative are also significant to examine. Chatman divides qualities of narrators to “visual” and “auditory”, which can exist either separately or simultaneously. Visual narration includes “all non-verbal narratives” such as “painting, sculpture” and “all written texts.” Chatman

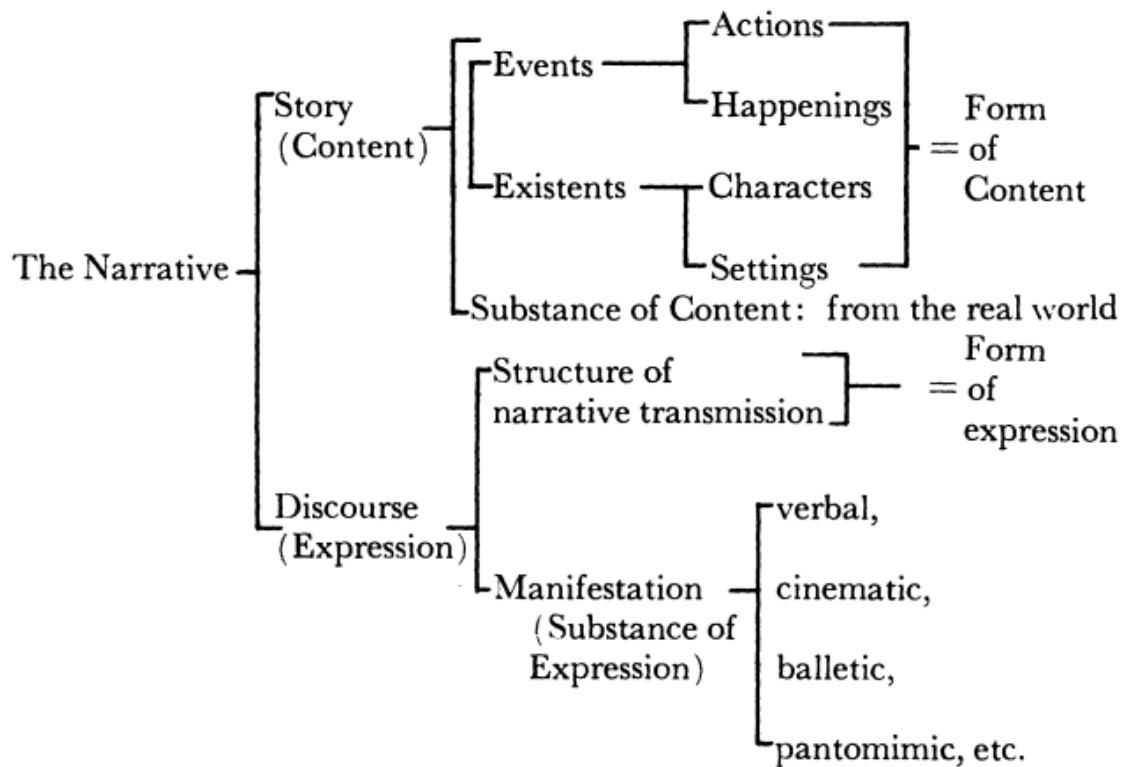
explains auditory narration as “all musical narratives” (1975, 304) – for instance music and films – being all “orally performed” texts (1975, 304).

2.3 Examining Narrative

2.3.1 Narratology

In the book *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Bal defines narratology as the entirety “of theories of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events; cultural artifacts that ‘tell a story.’” stating narratology “helps to understand, analyze, and evaluate narratives” (Bal 2009, 3). Not everyone studying narrative can recognize it existing outside of literary art but Bal defines narrative as a content telling a story, as there can be various different mediums “such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof” (Bal 2009, 5–6). Thus, the notions of Bal can be applied to examine narrative works in contemporary art in the following chapters.

As a certain content is recognized to have a narrative, the “narrative system” – the structure of the story can be defined (Bal 2009, 3). Chatman claims every narrative consists of two parts: “story” – what is being told – and “discourse” – how it is being told. The content of the story is formed by multiple factors, such as the characters, and “the chain of events”, as the discourse is the mean narrative is transmitted (Picture 1). When examining the manifestation of a narrative, the medium of the story is also in a vital role in the “substance of expression.” (Chatman 1975, 295, 300.) Like Chatman, Bal recognises “story” – the content – and “narrative text” – how the story is expressed with a certain medium, as the main factors of a narrative but adds also a third element “fabula” – “a series of logically and chronologically related events” (Bal 2009, 5–6).



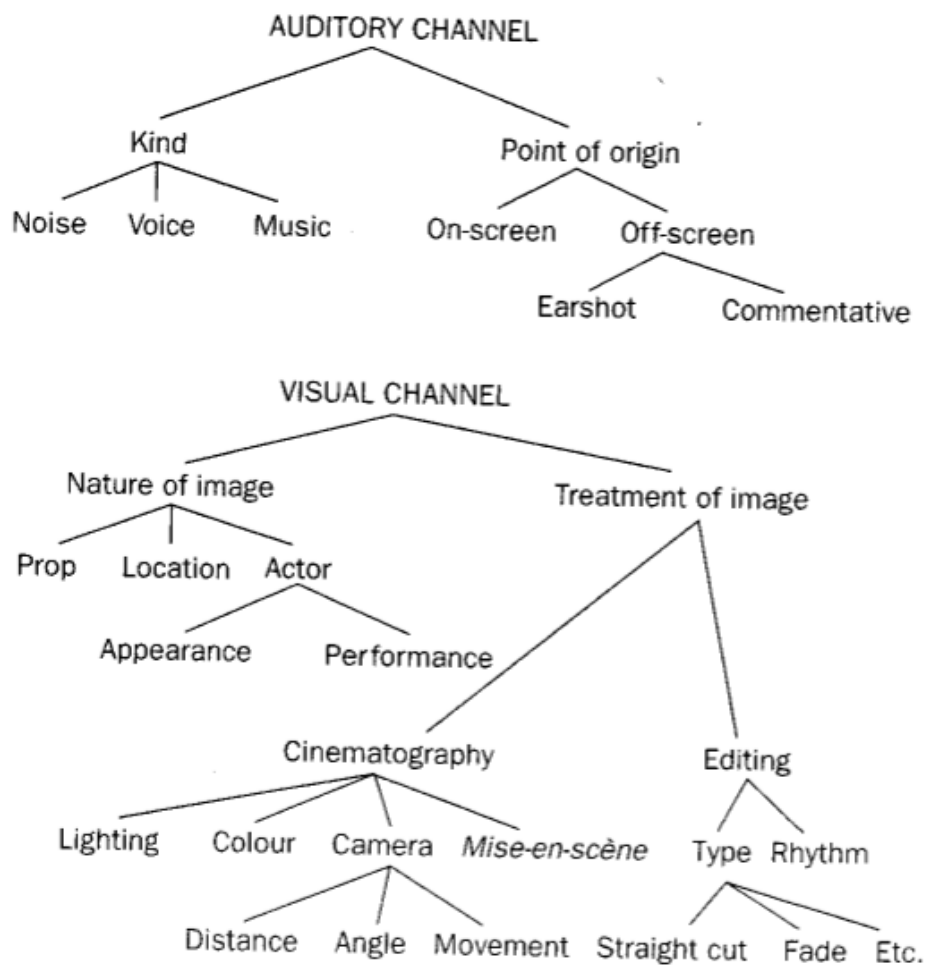
PICTURE 1. Seymour Chatman: The factors of story and discourse in the narrative, 1975

The different factors defined by Chatman can be used to analyze how all the elements constructing a story are transmitting a meaning. However, one can also address different questions to the discourse and form of the narrative. Studying narrative expression, Hogan states tellability is “a function of just how the story is told” and partly “a function of the story itself” originating from the emotion of the narrative. According to the writings of Hogan, examining the storytelling raises questions such as: “Who speaks? Why does he or she do so? Who listens? Why do they listen?” One can also ask: “what information is given, – – how much [information] is given, when it is given, – – how it is phrased”, how thoroughly or vaguely information is given and what makes the storytelling consistent? When the structure of a narrative is being studied, the coherence of the material raises questions such as: what forms the story, when does it begin and end, and what can be seen as the genre? (Hogan 2013, 3–4.)

2.3.2 Narrative and Film

In *Narrative in Fiction and Film*, Literature Professor Jakob Lothe states film should be seen as a “narrative communication” as it is in literary works, simply transmitting the story through a different manner: “filmically” (Lothe 2000, 11). Chatman defines the difference between the visual and auditory narrators – which can exist simultaneously in a film – by the use of sound, because the visual narration can also contain written text (1975, 304). Hogan however, perceives the narrators in film differently. He states film can utilize both a “verbal” narrator – telling the story through spoken or written text – and a “perceptual” narrator – transmitting the story visually (Hogan 2013, 75). As Bal, Chatman and Hogan recognize film as a medium in which narrative can be studied, their methods of examining a narrative’s story and discourse can be applied to films.

In *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*, Chatman states films are not narrated “necessarily by a human voice” but by means of “cinematic narrator”, who however is not the maker of the film. Nevertheless, in some situations a human voice can also function as the narrator of the film as a voice used “on or off screen.” (Chatman 1990, 130, 133–134.) The cinematic narrator is constructed by “communicating devices”, divided by Chatman to the “auditory channel” and the “visual channel” (Picture 2). The auditory channel of a film consists of the types and sources of sounds, the visual channel contains how the image is constructed in terms of the physical and technical choices in set and post-production. Chatman notifies the division he has created does not include all possible factors which can build a film narration. (Chatman 1990, 134–135.) When examining the narration of a film, one can address questions in each of the factors defined by Chatman: how they are used to tell a story, create a certain atmosphere or transmit hidden meanings? However, the factors of the auditory and visual channels do not create the narration alone, as Chatman states the viewer has a significant role in the reconstruction of the story (Chatman 1990, 127). Thus, there exists no absolute answer to the narrative a film transmits, as it is dependent on the individual – the receiver of the narrative.



PICTURE 2. Seymour Chatman: The factors of the cinematic narrator, 1990.

2.3.3 Narrative and Image

An image – “a visual representation of something” (Merriam-Webster) – can be produced with several mediums such as drawing, painting, photography or graphics. Examining different mediums and narratology, Linguist Werner Wolf separates a picture presenting one happening as “monoscenic” and a picture portraying “more than one temporally distinct scene” as a “polyscenic” image. Wolf argues that presenting several moments with polyscenic pictures or series of images are a more powerful way to portray “a temporal dimension and trigger narrativity” in his essay *Narratology and Media(lity): The Transmedial Expansion of a Literature Discipline and Possible Consequences*. (2011, 505.)

As the portrayal of happenings can vary, an image also has different ways to utilize textual and symbolic elements. When writing about the narrative aspect of paintings, Hogan defines the two narrators: “perceptual” and “verbal” (Hogan 2013, 75). Although an image clearly uses a perceptual narrator, Hogan notifies the use of verbal narration for example in the title of an image being a clear part of the narration. However, according to Hogan, the presence of verbal narration in a visual artwork can have a more complex role than simply distinguishing image and text, as an image can be “designed in relation to speech” for instance by utilizing symbols. (Hogan 2013, 75.)

Bal argues all statements about narrative can be applied to visual imagery (Bal 2009, 165). Thus, using Bal’s division of the three elements of the narrative – story, text and fabula – following aspects can also be analyzed in visual image: the content of the story, the way the story is told, the happenings occurring in the image, the relation between time and happenings and the setting. In the article *Narration in Various Media*, Marie-Laure Ryan, independent literature scholar, would also address questions about the characters’ identities, “interpersonal relations”, actions, motives and the results and reactions to the actions in an image (Ryan 2014).

Similar to Chatman, Hogan also recognizes the role of the viewer in the existence of a narrative. Hogan states viewers “construe it [“represented world” – implicated by both “verbal and visual” representational works of art] by processing the information given on the canvas” (Hogan 2013, 65–66). Although Hogan refers to paintings in this statement, according to Bal’s argument about the suitability of all notions about narrative to visual images, it could be stated that the idea of Hogan can be applied to all imagery. The viewer also affects the narrative that they interpret through their devotion to examine its subject. As Chatman points out, with paintings and sculptures (Chatman 1975, 313–314), when comparing an image to a film, the viewer’s use of time is harder to define. A film is edited to a certain rhythm having a specific length, as the viewer of an image decides in which order they view a series of works and how long they examine certain details and the overall image, which, according to Chatman, the artist is unable to control. He defines this notion by stating that there exists two “time scales” when examining a narrative: “inner time” – time as represent-

ed *in* the story – and “outer or discourse time” – determined by the observance of the spectator. (Chatman 1975, 313–314.)

2.3.4 Emotional Response to a Narrative

Hogan suggests “emotional process” being present everywhere in the structure of the story and use of discourse (2013, 12). He states “response analysis” – together with what is explained and understood – result technically to the interpretation of a narrative. Hogan defines response as “the experience of emotions in relation to story or discourse” which response analysis examines. (2013, 17–18.) The emotional experience can be seen to be important in the viewer’s reconstruction of a story. Thus, the reason behind needs to be examined to understand whether a specific source material can gain a certain reaction in the viewer.

Multiple factors influence the viewer’s experience of a story and Hogan states it can be difficult to predict exactly how a narrative emotionally impacts an individual (in *Affective Narratology: The Emotional Structure of Stories*) (2011, 240). In *A Theory of Narrative Empathy*, Suzanne Keen, professor of literature and creative writing, states the emotional reactions of the receiver are never identical, highlighting empathy, sympathy and “personal distress” as important terms when examining the emotional experience of a story. Keen defines the difference between the terms by explaining empathy as feeling “what we believe to be the emotions of others” also existing in a positive context. In sympathy – “also called empathetic concern” – “feelings for another occur.” Personal distress however, can be seen as having a more negative impact, leading to an avoidant reaction. (Keen 2006, 208–209, 214.)

Keen leaves the effect of different uses of language in the expression of a narrative open in terms of “consonance (relative closeness to the related events) and dissonance (greater distance between happening and telling)” meaning for example the narrator addressing their words directly to the viewer to create feelings of intimacy (Keen 2006, 224). Keen states no specific technique in narrative can be argued to have a single effect to the receiver of the narrative, high-

lighting the importance of “careful empirical testing before any aspect of a narrative earns the label of “empathetic”” by examining “the full range of techniques that may be contributing to empathetic effects” (Keen 2006, 225).

However, according to Keen “character identification” and “narrative situation” are important factors possibly leading to the experience of empathy. Character identification is the result of “particular techniques of characterization” happening in the receiver of the narrative. Aspects affecting the experience of empathy towards a character could be for instance their name, portrayal, part in the story line, implied features, activities and “mode of representation of consciousness.” (Keen 2006, 216.) Keen states that there is necessarily no similarity needed between the character and the receiver of the narrative for reaching empathy through character identification. Also “complex or realistic characterization” is not required, as “only minimal elements of identity, situation and feeling” can be adequate to evoke empathetic feelings towards a fictional character. (Keen 2006, 214.) In terms of storytelling and “plot structure” for instance the use of “timing”, “order”, several levels of stories inside one another, “serial narrative, strong and weak closure”, complementary happenings in the storyline, “repetition and gaps” can have an impact to empathizing, although the certainty of the effective use for character identification remains undefined (Keen 2006, 217). The narrative situation however, includes elements such as “the nature of the mediation between author and reader, – –, the implicit location of the narrator, the relation of the narrator to the characters, and the internal or external perspective on characters” (Keen 2006, 216).

When considering the narrative situation of the viewer, preliminary knowledge of the narrative can have an effect on the emotional experience. Keen argues the receiver’s awareness of the fictionality of a narrative text would enhance the feeling of empathy, as the receiver is released from the continuous suspicion of considering if the work is fiction or fact (Keen 2006, 220). It could be expected that Keen’s argument would apply to other mediums telling a story as well, but to function also vice versa: announcing to the viewer if the narrative is a true story could enhance empathizing. Keen states “timing and the context of the reading experience” also has a significant role when examining the effect of a narrative, as “historical, economic, cultural or social circumstances” might lead

different generations to have variability in their experience of empathy (Keen 2006, 214).

Chatman states all narratives include “communicative acts”, meaning there is always “a sender” and “a receiver” of the story, being in the case of “the real audience – – listener, reader viewer or whatever” (1975, 304). So perhaps examining an individual – the receiver of the narrative – instead of the narrative itself can give more reasons for the different emotional experiences a narrative can cause. Hogan states one aspect leading to an emotion is the activation of “emotional memories”, which are forming “throughout life”, being sometimes the result of propaganda (Hogan 2011, 240). Hogan explains emotional memory by comparing it to skills we have once learnt and most likely will never forget – like riding a bicycle. Thus, when the emotional memory is activated, it simply happens – like performing automatically the skill we have learnt to master. The activation of an emotional memory then leads to experiencing an emotion, without one necessarily connecting the incident to the emotion it causes. As narratives create emotional reactions, they can also build emotional memories. (Hogan 2011, 5, 240.) However, existing emotional memories and forming new ones in relation to a narrative can be difficult to determine, due to the subconscious and highly personal factors. According to Hogan ideologies – “unself-conscious” manners one perceives “information of the world” and reacts emotionally to it (2011, 25) – is an undeniable part of examining emotion. Hogan emphasizes one’s ideologies – containing “a set of ideas or beliefs” but also “a set of feelings or motivations” – can deepen the emotional response, for example while reacting to a narrative (Hogan 2011, 7, 23).

When looking at the identity of an individual from a broader perspective also the society one is part of, is a crucial factor. According to Hogan “categorical identification” means the way one defines themselves for example by “race, nation or religion.” By this definition individual is part of a group of people to whom they more likely have empathetic feelings for, comparing to people from other groups. (Hogan 2011, 248.) Categorical identification can be seen suited in real situations and in the process of receiving a narrative, as Hogan states one’s emotional reaction to a person could share similarities when comparing real people and fictional characters (2011, 243).

3 A SELECTION OF NARRATIVE ARTWORKS

3.1 Laurie Anderson: Heart of a Dog

The documentary film *Heart of a Dog* by Avant-garde Artist Laurie Anderson (born 1947, USA) is a “meditation of loss and love” (Dargis 2015) telling a story with several levels, characters and happenings, in which memory and death can also be seen as pivotal themes. The process of making *Heart of a Dog* began as a commission from the French TV channel Arte who proposed to Anderson that she would make a video essay about the “philosophy of life” (2015b). As a result, Anderson started to build the story around her dog Lolabelle (2015b) – a rat terrier who plays the piano and makes art. According to Anderson *Heart of a Dog* is “about stories, how we forget stories”, “who we are”, “how to figure out what we are doing here” (2015a), “how do you see the world through words” and “how language sits on top of experience” (2015b). Anderson explains how telling stories used in the artwork triggered her to remember parts she had already forgotten (2015b), thus exploration of memory can also be seen as an important part of the film.

The structure of *Heart of a Dog* is built on short stories about love and death (Anderson 2015b): several intimate fragments for instance about Lolabelle, Anderson’s thoughts and childhood memories, philosophy, happenings in society and Anderson’s personal life, different theories, scientific facts and afterlife, reminding the flow of thoughts as the narration shifts from one memory to another. However, when examining the artwork more closely the narration has a clear structure as stories of specific characters and topics alternate, having connections with similar themes or small elements between each other. Anderson herself sees it as an interesting method to change the order of the beginning, middle and end of a story (2015b) which can also be seen used in *Heart of a Dog* as for instance death is not the end, but a memory of childhood is.

Heart of a Dog utilizes language at several different levels (Anderson 2015b) and approaches the viewer in different methods. The general feeling of the movie can be seen as Anderson reading life-defining memories which are inter-

rupted with facts, questions, commands and fragments of conversations. Anderson states hearing being a crucial part of the work (2015b) and the narration is heard almost through the entire film. Anderson uses first-person narrator, but also addresses her words directly to the viewer by breaking the fourth wall. However, the narrator does not only address her words to the viewer, but also for instance to her mother, to Lolabelle, herself and the dead. Questions are a crucial part of the narration and the film asks “constantly what story is and why you are using it, and consequently what – – your identity is” (Anderson 2015b).

In her works Anderson plays with small elements – which can also be identified in *Heart of a Dog* – to add confusion or to leave something perhaps only for the subconsciousness of the viewer to understand. Anderson calls excluding, for example, indefinite articles “a mystery taking away the expectation” (2016), resulting that the viewer might not be fully aware of the situation or the narrator. She also uses fast written words that occasionally can feel even impossible to read. Anderson describes the use of “fast, telegraphic text” as a way to talk to the part of a human which can be quite critical but never speaks. (2016.)

The narration of Anderson is only interrupted by a few words with someone else’s voice to enliven the storytelling, for example when words of a grandmother are referred to, the voice of an older woman is being heard. Along with the narration and strong atmospheric music, the film also uses on-screen and off-screen sounds. As for instance a train, a helicopter or sounds of nature are being heard, they can be clearly connected to the image. The off-screen sound effects are more atmospheric, for instance possibly the sound of an old film camera or a whistle, of which source is harder to define. The same sound heard in the film can also be off-screen, which later seems on-screen, as the sounds of animals in the vet.

The narrator could be stated to have an intimate relation to the receiver of the story as the thoughts and memories seem to be highly personal. Other significant characters in addition to the narrator – Anderson herself – could be stated to be Lolabelle, Anderson’s mother and Gordon Matta-Clark. Descriptions of all character’s deaths during the film can be seen as a connecting element, although Anderson’s relationship seems different with each of these characters.

The film begins with Anderson giving birth to Lolabelle in a dream, stating: "I'll love you forever" (Anderson 2015). Through the whole film Lolabelle appears as a human-like character – reflecting emotions and experiences also people can have – genuinely loved by Anderson. The story continues with a fraction of the moment of her mother's death, continuing at the end of the film as Anderson ponders that she never loved her mother. Thus, it can be interpreted that the relationship between the mother and daughter is complex. However, there seems to be no negative feelings connected to the mother, simply no emotions of love. The mother's death results in Anderson's desire to trace a moment when her mother loved her. Thus, the film ends with a childhood memory of Anderson saving her two younger brothers from drowning and being praised by her mother, continued by a few lines connected to the moment of the mother's death. The third character – artist Matta-Clark – is stated to be a close friend of Anderson's, facing his death as Anderson and other friends were present. After his death, the ghost of Matta-Clark appears to Anderson. There can be seen admiration, understanding and tenderness in the way the narrator describes Matta-Clark, perhaps also reflecting their relationship.

Besides these characters, other repeating elements reflecting the presence of danger and death were security, surveillance, data collection and USA's Global War on Terrorism, indicated being a result of the WTC attacks. The repetition of the topic is also reflected through Lolabelle, as she experiences similar feelings of threat as people in New York after 9/11, being almost attacked by hawks. Thus, the film reflects the theme of death on several levels – through personal and collective experiences.

The visual storytelling of *Heart of a Dog* consists of the vivid use of paintings, animation, video and photographs. The visuals strongly support the narration and sometimes supplement it, as the visuals indicate to whom the narrator is talking to. The visual material is partly painted and filmed personally by Anderson but also footage from public spaces and surveillance cameras are seen, supporting the exploration of collective memory – for example through the WTC attacks – as the happenings were experienced not only by the narrator. At times the image works as a transition preceding and thus presenting the next topic. "Pausing" or "playing" a video is also one of the methods used as a connection

between still image and video. The visual image also defines strongly – along with the music – the pace of the film: alternating between rapid editing and peaceful long shots.



PICTURE 3. Laurie Anderson: *Heart of a Dog*, 2015, screenshot

3.2 Outi Heiskanen: The Dream

The Dream (1974) is a monoscopic graphics work made with the technique of etching and aquatint, reflecting a personal memory of Academic Outi Heiskanen (born 1937, Finland). The work portrays the trauma Heiskanen experienced as a young student:

I was brutally raped before I had slept with any man. The event left me in a state of permanent virginity, so that although I later became a mother and an adulterer, I had become incapable of losing my innocence, and I made the transition from childhood to grandmotherhood directly, without ever experiencing adulthood. (Ateneum.)

This experience led Heiskanen to express themes of womanhood and its fragility, virginity, eroticism, sexuality, loneliness and moments of happiness in her artworks (Karjalainen 2021, 30)¹.

¹ "Parantumaton haava haastoi hänet [Heiskasen] taiteessaankin tutkimaan naiseutta, sen haurautta, neitsyyttä, äitiyttä, erotiikkaa, seksuaalisuutta ja yksinäisyyttä sekä onnen hetkiä." (Karjalainen 2021, 30).

The two characters of the work are a white girl and a black animal figure with human hands and a human-resembling body. The use of animal figures is very characteristic of Heiskanen and she states animal is “the most humanistic thing we have” which she uses as a connection in her artworks: “the animal as mythological figure, the metamorphosed hybrid animal, the close relations between humans and animals” (Ateneum).

Both characters wear similar type of clothing – the girl’s is thin and white, and the almost transparent fabric reveals her legs, as the animal character wears a long gown, covering the whole body. The silhouette of the girl’s face is seen and she has closed her eyes, having a relatively neutral look on her face. However, the animal character is left anonymous and expressionless, only the end of the snout and the hands are not completely black. The animal figure is notably bigger than the girl. The background of the image is almost abstract, giving a horizon to the image. The characters are surrounded by a lighter area, as the girl would be glowing. The colours of the work are black, white and different hues of grey.

The animal figure is the active one touching the girl, as the girl has seized under the influence of the other character. The animal figure stands behind the girl, touching her back with only the tip or their fingers. The situation could also be read as the animal character holding the girl in the air, she being almost weightless as only a light touch is enough to hold her. The animal creature creates a black shadow to the ground – possibly as a result of the glow of the girl, as she hovers in the air with no shadow. This would also explain the reason for the missing shadow of the girl, and the revealed snout and hands of the other character. The place and time – perhaps the break of dawn – seem hard to define.

The work can be seen as dream-like as the girl has closed her eyes, the location looks misty, the other character has inhuman features, the situation looks unrealistic and as the title suggests so. The atmosphere of the work could be interpreted as calm, due to the stillness, but also frightening because of the appearances of the characters, possibly referring to an unequal power relation.

The two characters can be seen as strong symbols to Heiskanen and the man who raped her. If the shadow of the animal character would be casted by the girl, it could refer to the evil nature she has revealed. The interaction between the two could be stated to be violent, unexpected and one-sided due to the physical difference and the positions of the characters: the girl is facing her back to the larger character, who seems to control the situation. The difference between the characters' appearance could also indicate their different natures – the fragility and purity of the girl and the beastliness of the man. It could be stated that the meaning of the undefined extent of the happenings and the location in the work would be the eternal, emotional effect of the occurring happening.



PICTURE 4. Outi Heiskanen: *The Dream*, 1974, etching and aquatint

3.3 Johanna Lecklin: *Story Café*

Story Café is an art project where Artist Johanna Lecklin (born 1972, Finland) creates a temporary café inviting people to tell her a story for a cup of coffee, as

the moment is being documented on video. The project has taken place in several countries in Europe and Lecklin has collected altogether 400 stories from different people between 2004 and 2011. (Johanna Lecklin.) As the *Story Café* is set up also a selection of the previous stories of the project are displayed for the visitors in the same location (Lecklin 2018, 64). The stories seen in the art project are “personal stories, anecdotes, traditional stories, travelogues and stories overheard on the bus or read on the internet” (Johanna Lecklin). Already in the early stages of *Story Café* Lecklin’s motive to collect stories was to develop the ideas later into scripts and moving image pieces (Lecklin 2018, 63).

The anecdotes of *Story Café* are phrased by first-person narrators in various ways: some are told as the narrator would be talking to a friend, some are told like fairy tales, and some seem like practiced performances of poetry. All in all, the stories usually have a clear, chronological structure, usually only the most essential information is given to keep the story short but nonetheless, they can be rich in details. The emotions of the stories are also variable as some are funny, dramatic, informative, humorous, romantic or surprising.

During the recordings of *Story Café*, the participants act as the narrators telling their stories to Lecklin. As Lecklin herself did not perform to the camera, she states the power relation between her and the participant being unequal. However, she aimed to give the participant the dominant role in the situation of recording, determining their way of narrating their story. (Lecklin 2018, 124, 168.) As a part of Lecklin’s work process is also encountering participants when the camera is not recording, she can observe how some people develop a role in front of the camera. According to Lecklin, the participants are reflecting themselves to the viewer through the way of performing and the narrative, as the truthfulness of the story is insignificant. (Lecklin 2018, 118, 125, 126.) The participants have also shared different motives to take part in the project as for example some of the narratives have aimed to improve the position of certain groups of people in the society and some have talked about religion as a savior (Lecklin 2018, 127).



PICTURE 5. Johanna Lecklin: *Story Café*, 2004–2011, participatory video artwork, screenshot

According to Lecklin the role of the creator in a participatory artwork divides, as the roles of the artists and the participant can alternate or even merge (Lecklin 2018, 165). She states the artist strengthens the authenticity of the artwork with their authority, even though they would not be part of the physical making process (2018, 167)². The role of the artist can seem to be quite anonymous for the viewer, as Lecklin is not usually seen or heard on camera. Nevertheless, the role of Lecklin as an artist is creating the concept, the position for the participant, to coordinate, to produce and to post-process the material, aiming to keep them in the original form, editing only if necessary – thus controlling the form of the project. Lecklin also determines how the subject is being filmed, which narratives are chosen for the selection in *Story Café*, festivals or further post-production (Lecklin 2018, 70, 165, 168), and controls the order of the stories and the arrangements of the installations, deciding how the narratives work in relation to each other.

When making *Story Café* Lecklin created a social situation with the participants and needed to gain their trust to hear their stories, but also to be allowed to use them as a part of the artwork. Thus, Lecklin sees her presence crucial to *Story Café* as giving her time, listening and being present are important factors in

² "Taiteilija vahvistaa auktoriteetillaan teoksen autenttisuuden, vaikkei itse osallistuisi teoksen fyysiseen tekoprosessiin." (Lecklin 2018, 167).

creating the atmosphere where people feel comfortable to participate (Lecklin 2018, 113, 115).

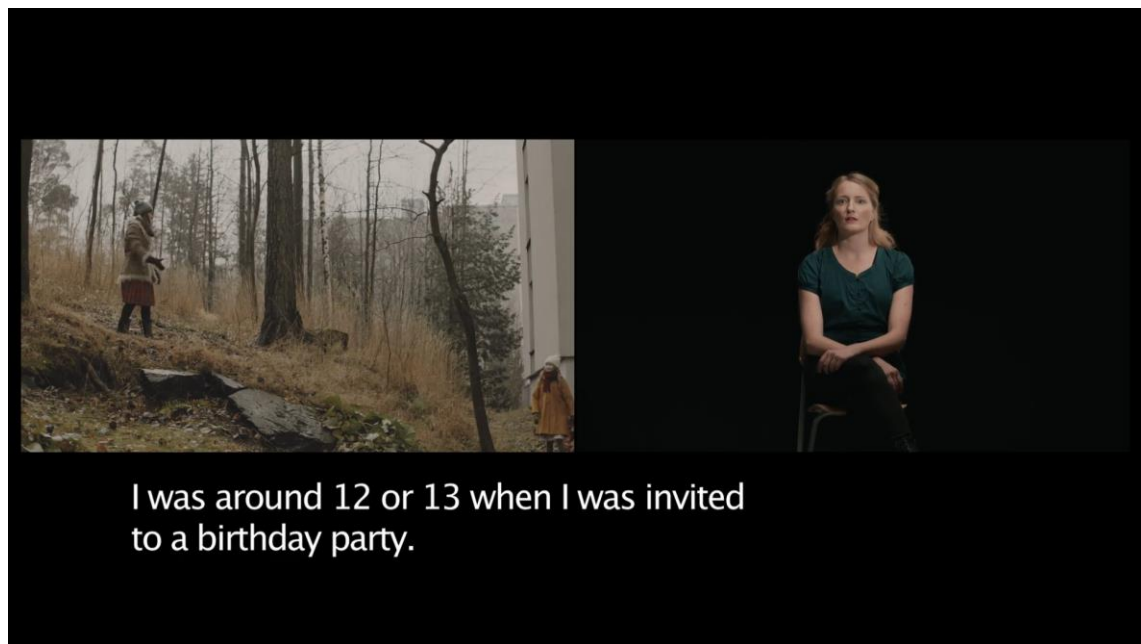
Lecklin develops material collected in *Story Café* to create dramatized moving image pieces, each with a main character who is a girl or a woman – reflecting different movie genres with the visual and narrative styles. When selecting the works Lecklin is drawn to the esthetics of the story: how well it is narrated and how it encounters her own values. Also, her ability to relate to the story is significant, as she is interested in anecdotes which could belong to anyone, as for instance memories from childhood. (Lecklin 2018, 70, 74, 177.)

As Lecklin creates a recreation of a story, she sees maintaining the main core of the narration significant but can bring her personal view to the work by altering small details, as for example the era of the happenings by adding visual esthetics of her own childhood through clothing and props. According to Lecklin, adding these visual elements are in a crucial role in creating (2018, 177–178) “the split” (2018a) – breaking the illusion in the story world (2018, 184) – between documentary and fiction, as the result becomes her own, imagined childhood story. The transparency of the working method is seen as the different phases of the *Story Café* are usually exhibited simultaneously. Thus, the difference between the original story and the script of Lecklin are clear to the viewer. (Lecklin 2018, 177–178.)

Lecklin utilizes the voice of the narrator in various ways to narrate her dramatized moving image pieces. (Lecklin 2018, 193). For example, *With A Summer Job* (2009) three amateur performers act the story on film. Lecklin exploits contradictions with the narrators, as none of them are logically the true narrator based on their age or gender and don’t clearly speak with their native language. During the credits of the work the original narrator of the story is displayed. *Terapiaeläinsatu (Therapy Animal Story)* (2010) is narrated as a fairy tale, occasionally visualized with animated scenes. (Lecklin 2018, 184–186.) *Skuld (Guilt)* (2019) is narrated in the form of a song – sung by a daughter – and continued with a few lines – spoken by the mother – as these two characters are dancing a tango.

Häkki (The Cage) (2013) is a two-channel moving image installation, telling a bullying story from childhood. The subjective narrator – telling only their point of view – is seen from the beginning. (Lecklin 2018, 195.) The first-person narrator begins by telling about a hostile encounter with someone in adulthood, as the same happening is portrayed on the other channel. The story continues with the silent narrator in one channel and a girl getting ready for a birthday party in the other. The narrator starts telling the story about going to a party that ends up being a plot of other children putting her in a cage in the forest, as the visualized moving image follows the narrative voice in the other channel. At times the visual story is seen on both channels, while the narrator is silent. The image can be the same or represent different points of view. The film also portrays more unrealistic looking image – reflecting the emotional experience of the narrator – as the forest changes to a black background and faces of the bullies appear floating in the air, making faces and shouting with an echoing voice to the bullied girl sitting in the cage (Lecklin 2018, 238). The film ends with the same encounter as in the beginning of the film – offering several different versions of the happening. The auditory channel of the work is the narrative voice, but also atmospheric sound effects, dialogue between the adults and child actors and echoing shouts of the bullies. The contradiction in the narration is also utilized in *Häkki* as the narrator and the image visualizing the story are not identical (Lecklin 2018, 195).

The relations between the characters in *Häkki* alternate from trust to fear, as the bullies dominate the situation, and the girl is forced to submit. When looking at the adult characters, the bully is conciliatory as the bullied woman is bitter, making their encounter hostile or sad, depending on the version. The relationship between the adult woman and the girl is more complex: the woman can possibly acknowledge the presence of the young girl as she once looks to the direction of the other channel with a tender yet serious look on her face. The girl, however, is not aware of the adult narrator.



PICTURE 6. Johanna Lecklin: *Häkki*, 2013, two-channel video artwork, screenshot

3.4 Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen: *People in White*

People in White (2011–2012) is a collaborative artwork of Artists Tellervo Kalleinen (born 1975, Finland) and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen (born 1971, Germany) telling stories of “Dutch people – – about their encounters with mental health-care professionals” in the form of a documentary film (AV-arkki). The work reflects “the complicated relationship between doctor and patient in mental health care” (Studio Kallinen) as ten participants share their experiences in a circle reminiscent of a group therapy session (Kalleinen 2011). The stories vary between traumatic experiences and “beautiful descriptions of healing moments” (Studio Kalleinen). Kochta-Kalleinen states that the professionals in mental health care have the power position and often their point of view is being heard. Thus, one of the motives of creating the film *People in White* was to give a completely subjective voice to the patients. (Kalleinen & Kochta-Kalleinen 2011.)

The dialogue of *People in White* uses three different methods to tell the story: the patients have a conversation with each other, break the fourth wall by talking to the camera or re-enact the memories. When the stories are shared in the

circle in first-person the conversations feel natural and believable but at the same time constructed and too perfect to be a moment from real life. In the re-enactments the patients often play themselves in their story but sometimes they advise another patient how the situation went and how they can play the part. The memory is portrayed like a short film, always taking place in a believable location. As the patients break the fourth wall by talking to the camera, they often explain extra details to the viewer during the re-enactments. The stories told by the participants are detailed descriptions of certain happenings reflecting their relationship to the mental care professional treating them, as for instance a humane encountering while sharing a breakfast or a traumatic moment of sexual abuse. As the participants can be seen as both narrators and listeners of the story, the relationship can be seen as trusting and understanding, as they have shared experiences relating to the same theme.

The structure of the narrative in *People in White* feels like a conversation between the patients, as they are commenting on each other's experiences. The flow of the stories feel quite organic since a certain character might continue their story later or take a break from telling their story. The transitions between the stories are often a simple cut to the next person, but the film also utilizes a certain participant as a connection to the next story: a person telling a memory in the circle might all of the sudden be an actor in someone else's memory, or an actor of a memory might continue their own story while sitting in the circle. The film begins with one patient describing a moment of paragliding as the memory is portrayed visually. The narrative continues in the mental hospital, telling the stories in the form of conversation or re-enactments. The film ends with a therapy session of a patient and mental care professional who have had a functioning relationship for years, followed by a short moment of a woman playing the drums determinedly, after discovering again her ability to play instruments, after the right treatments.

The visual way of narrating the story consists of various points of view and shot sizes. As a patient shares a memory, also expressions of others are shown. The setting varies from the group therapy circle and the outside of the building – an abandoned wing of a mental hospital – to locations of the re-enactments also outside of the hospital. The auditory channel consists of the human voices of

the narrators, few sound effects, music in the beginning and end of the film, sounds of the environment and the sounds resulting from the actor's interaction with the location.

For several of the participants, who were found through an open call, the motive to share their experiences was the possibility to affect societal public discourse and the status of mental patients (Kalleinen 2011). All parts in the story are played by the participants – each playing both a patient and a doctor (Kalleinen 2011) – apart from a small side role of Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen. For the artists, re-enacting is a significant method, as it emphasizes the idea of roles of the patient and the therapist: what is being expected from them (Kalleinen 2011).

People in White is constructed by the artists. They have created the concept, directed and edited the work (Kalleinen & Kochta Kalleinen 2011–2012). However, the artists want to leave the artificial feel of the situation open to the viewer, instead of pretending that the therapy session would occur naturally and being recorded without the artists getting involved – making the film more authentic. (Kochta-Kalleinen 2011.) In the end of the film, it is revealed that four of the ten patients were actors. However, Kalleinen states that these characters are also based on real people who were part of the process but didn't want to perform to the camera. (Vehmanen 2011.) As the genre of the film is documentary and in the beginning the statement “stories about mental care professionals – told by their clients” (Kalleinen & Kochta-Kalleinen 2011–2012) is made, it could be expected that the viewer would trust to the authenticity of stories without questioning it during the film, strengthening the immersiveness of the artwork. The revelation of the use of actors can also function as a strong method affecting the emotions of the viewer, demolishing the belief built during the film of real stories connected to the real people, possibly shocking the viewer.



PICTURE 7. Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen: *People in White*, 2012, screenshot

4 VIDEO INSTALLATION AS THE EVENING FALLS

4.1 Background and Themes

As the Evening Falls is a two-channel charcoal stop-motion animation (10 min 40 sec) narrating stories and thoughts from three perspectives, related to the theme of death and the fear of loss. The work exists as two possible versions: the animation itself and a video installation. In March 2022 *As the Evening Falls* was exhibited in the Fine Art Degree Show *Embers* at Gallery Himmelblau as the video installation (500 x 210 x 420 cm) – a tent where the viewer was able to enter to see the animation. The animation and the documentation of the installation are also visible in the Kunstmatrix online gallery until March 2023, found on the website of *Embers* (Appendix 1).

The artwork began as an exploration about the idea of afterlife by using a story from family history – a failed attempt to save a drowning dog on a hunting trip. The first aim was to turn a tragic story into something beautiful and comforting in the form of a series of drawings. The result is a stop-motion animation where the presence of the human is not seen, but is portrayed as the perspective of a dog who faces death and makes a dream-like journey to find a final resting place.

The next phase of the project was writing a narration based on childhood memories. The first-person narrative consists of moments of fear related to threat, loss or death, tracing to the moment of experiencing sickness and death for the first time. The use of stop-motion animation as a medium was continued. However, the visual expression gained more abstract and symbolic ways of telling the story, as also a voice over was utilized.

After exploring family history and personal memories, having a more universal perspective to the topic felt significant to develop the project further. Thus, ideas of other people about the moment of death were collected in different online platforms and visualized with stop-motion animation. The final form of the project is a combination of these three different approaches.

The theme reflected in the animation is the presence of death in our everyday lives – being a natural part of it, but is still hard to comprehend. The risk of losing is always present – although as humans we have different ways to deal with it, depending on our age and past experiences. Death and fear being very dominant parts of the work, it also reflects the themes of life and the peculiar way of the human mind to process difficult yet natural themes.

Exploring idioms – especially in the Finnish language – about expressing death, is also a significant level of the artwork. Different sayings are often related to sleep and night-time – as for example *'falling to eternal sleep'* (suom. nukkua pois) or someone *'being in the evening side of life'* (suom. olla elämän ehtoo puolella) as they are expected to face death soon. The reflection of these idioms can be seen in the name of the artwork, the installation and as symbols in the stop-motion animation.

4.2 Work Methods

4.2.1 Personal Narrative

The use of a personal narrative with a work about death and its fear felt significant and natural due to a complicated relationship I had to the theme as a child. Creating the narrative allowed me to process memories almost in an objective way and to connect certain emotions and happenings, resulting in deeper comprehension about myself. The aim of using a personal narrative was to generate a personal, honest and an intimate approach to the topic, which could work as a believable and relatable experience to the viewer.

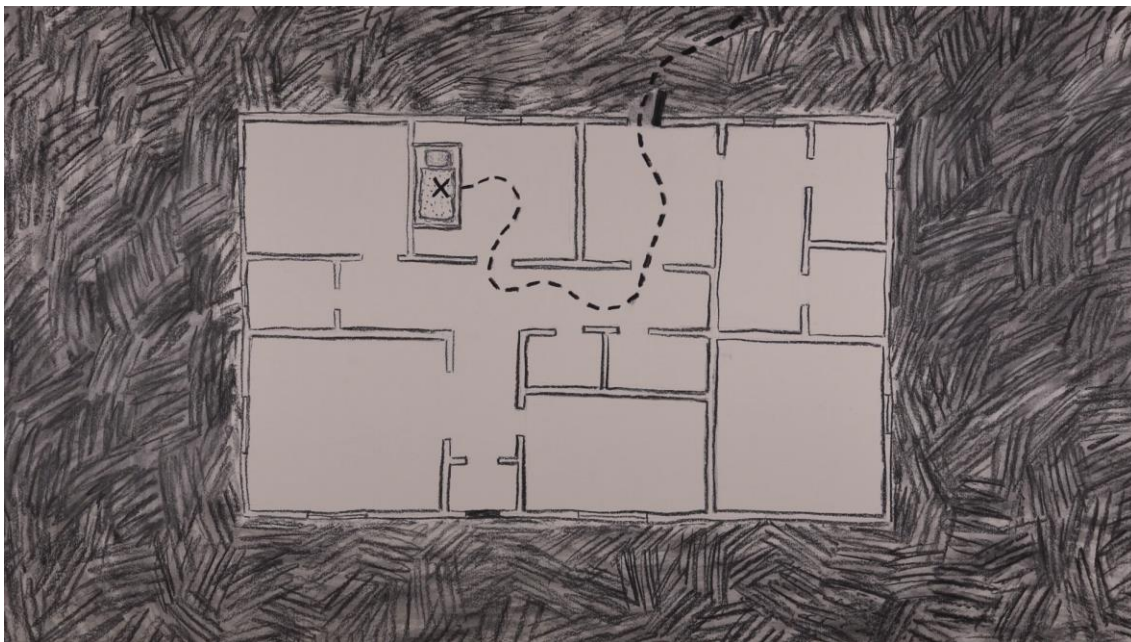
The process of creating the narrative was intimate and solitary, constructed naturally, as simply all memories related to the theme were written down. However, the process included several versions as different orders, forms of expression and grammatical tenses were explored. Different versions of the narration also examined how much needs to be revealed. The aim was to tell the sto-

ry in a simple and descriptive manner, without underlining unnecessary details or explaining certain thoughts of a child excessively.

The narrator is written in first-person, having a subjective point of view. The narrative begins with a detailed description of an early memory related to death, continues with different moments of fear and experiences of loss, ending with thoughts from late childhood continuing to present day – adulthood. In addition to the narrator, the other characters are a sister, a cousin, parents, strangers, a grandmother, a grandfather and a dog. The narrative is not chronological, and the story is told mostly in the past tense.

During the working process the issue arose similar to Laurie Anderson's in *Heart of a Dog* about the trustworthiness of our memories: how a certain story is being forgotten more, each time it is being repeated (2015). Writing the personal narrative for *As the Evening Falls* came naturally but as soon as the written narration was read aloud, the authenticity of a certain memory was questioned. This occurred especially with a sentence: "In the funeral mom said I was brave not to cry." However, the vagueness of certain memories in this narration had to be accepted, as sometimes confirming true happenings can be impossible.

The most demanding part of the process was to discover the correct visual form to the narrative. As a result, some of the memories were approached from an abstract point of view. Although, abstract expression was not adequate to visualize the entire story and as a result also figurative visuals – imagery related to childhood and directly descriptive way of portraying child-like thoughts – were used.



PICTURE 8. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel animation, screenshot



PICTURE 9. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel animation, screenshot

4.2.2 Family History as a Source Material

Using a story that is not one's own, but part of family history is in between of using a personal narrative and a collected story. The emotional bond to a family

member makes the anecdote feel personal but simultaneously there can be feelings of doubt if the story of someone else is told in the most respectful and honest way.

The narrative was written based on an upsetting memory of hearing about the story of my grandfather's hunting trip. He desperately attempted to save a dog, but ended up hurting himself, not being able to save the drowning dog in time. As the memory is not pleasant and the effort was unsuccessful, there was a need to tell the story in a different manner than it was heard originally. Thus, the presence of the human was left outside of the story, and instead the point of view of the dog was explored.

The story follows chronologically a dog's hunting trip on a lake as the ice breaks and the dog falls underwater where the journey in the afterlife begins. The narrator of the story can be seen as an omniscient detached observer, knowing all the happenings. The existence of the narrator is unnoticeable, as there is no human presence in the form of a voice or seen visually – except the house seen in the end of the story indicating a possible owner of the dog. Another character of the story is the rabbit – indicated with the footprints in the snow and appearing later in the dog's dream.

As creating the narrative began as a series of drawings, it was a simple approach to describe the happenings with few strong images. Around the series of six images the idea of continuing the story by imagining the phases of the afterlife was developed. The visuals of the story also use other symbols related to lineage, for example the home where the dog returns is based on a significant place in the family history.



PICTURE 10. A photograph of a place from family history used as a reference in the animation (Janna Lindfors 2020)

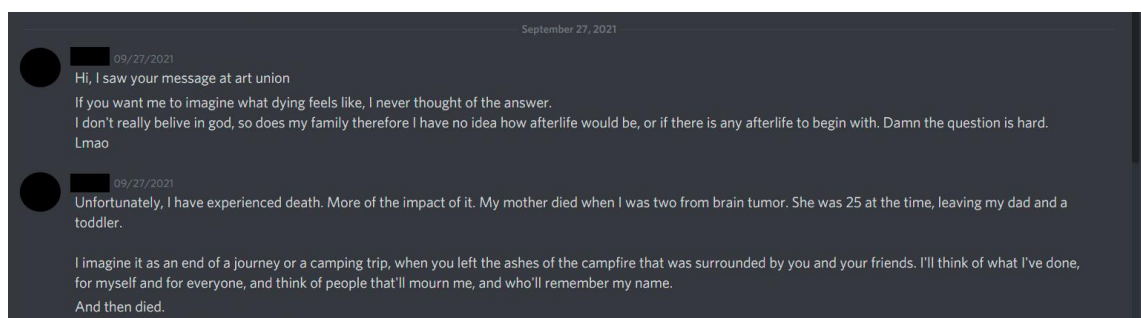


PICTURE 11. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel animation, screenshot of the animation where a house from family history is used as a symbol

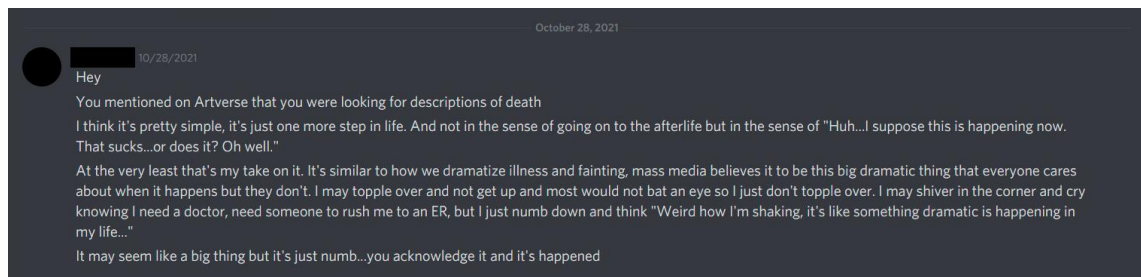
4.2.3 Collected Thoughts as a Source Material

As the project was discovering the theme from a personal and intimate perspective, a wider point of view was needed. Thus, the idea to collect stories or thoughts from other people developed. The first step in the process of creating this participatory part of the work was to define the question: how to make it simple but interesting and what type of stories or thoughts would serve the project in the best possible way? Many different approaches were considered, such as asking for the participant to tell a memory of childhood related to the theme or explaining different ways to approach the chosen question excessively. In the end the most effective message was to simply ask “how do you imagine the moment of dying would look like?” In addition, the purpose of the collected material was explained so that the participants would know how their answers will be used.

After the question was defined, the process of collecting the stories began by searching for the right platform to reach people. The different platforms were Reddit – leading to no results, Discord – resulting in 14 answers and Facebook with one contact. The communication with people was variable: some gave a short and clear answer to the question, some told more personal details about losing someone close to them and with one contact the theme was discussed for several hours in two video calls. Communicating with people required to be active – in terms of publishing the message in several platforms and channels, but also by having conversations with the people who replied. For the final version of *As the Evening Falls* nine answers were chosen.



PICTURE 12. Screenshot of an answer received in the Discord platform (Janna Lindfors 2022)



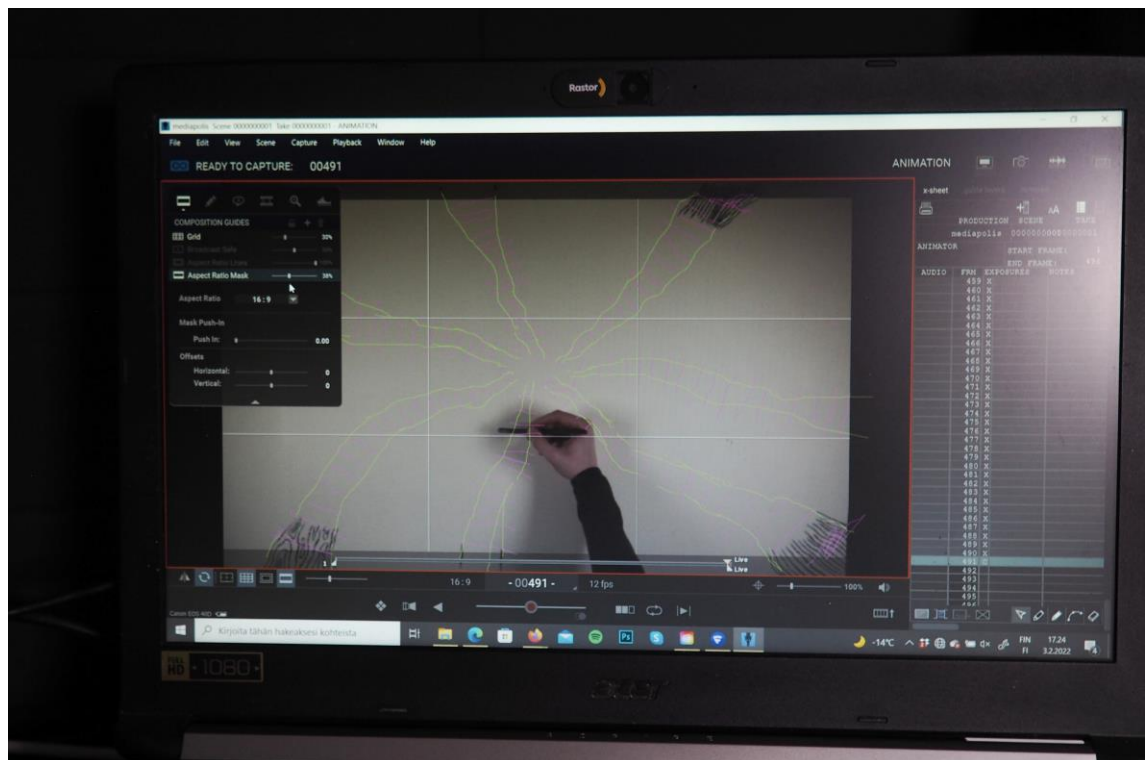
PICTURE 13. Screenshot of an answer received in the Discord platform (Janna Lindfors 2022)

The most significant contact, found from a Facebook group, was a woman, who wanted to share her own experiences related to her son's passing. She shared thoughts of her son, her own perspective to death, but also how her granddaughter reacted to her uncle's passing and her grandmother's grief as a three-year-old. The woman shared drawings her granddaughter had made of her uncle – who she never got to meet – and the peculiar happenings pointing to the strange bond between the child and her uncle. The thoughts – about life and death – of the man who passed away and the drawings of the girl were used in the animation.

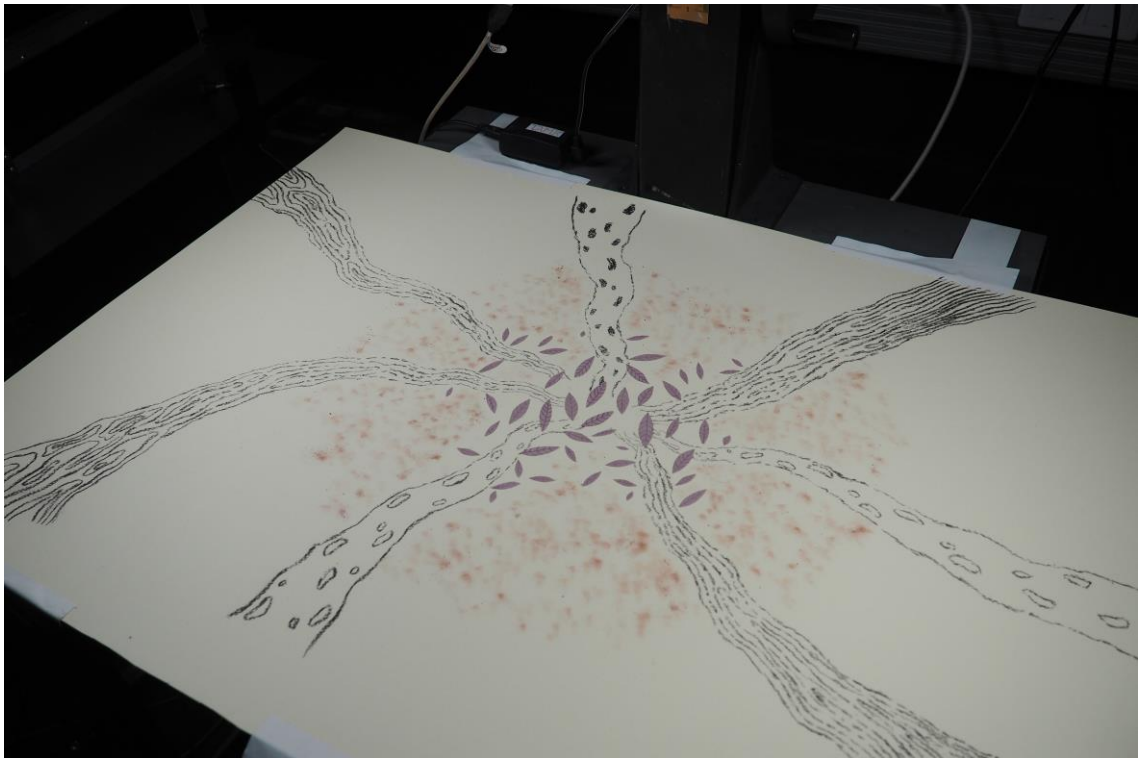
When writing the narration two ethical problems about using collected material arose: how to express that the thoughts used in the animation are someone else's and how much of the thoughts could be modified. However, from my point of view, the decision of using the collected thoughts as material, was knowing that the material will inevitably be affected by my own vision – especially visually. The method can be seen similar to Lecklin's, intentionally changing small details while developing the material further from Story Café.

As the material needed to be written in the form of one entirety and translated to Finnish, it naturally resulted in small modifications. However, the main idea was always kept, even though some forms of expression were changed, and small parts were left out due to difficulties of expressing very abstract parts of the material visually. The fact of using a participatory method in the project is being stated in the statement of the work, but also sometimes implied by the narrator by starting a new thought for example by stating "Someone said death must be like the end of a journey."

The received answers were diverse, as some were abstract feelings and some visually descriptive locations. The aim with creating the visuals based on the collected thoughts was to find clever, interesting and somehow positive ways to approach the idea. Especially with more abstract answers it was more demanding but at the same time more creative to find a solution. For example, “falling from the edge of life to an unwelcoming place” had many figurative and abstract versions in the storyboard – as for instance a rabbit falling to a city to the middle of the traffic – before becoming a message in a bottle falling to the ocean and blown away by a whale.



PICTURE 14. Creating the stop-motion animation based on the participatory part of the work with Dragonframe software (Janna Lindfors 2022)



PICTURE 15. Creating the stop-motion animation based on the participatory part of the work with charcoal, pastels and pieces of cardboard (Janna Lindfors 2022)

The narrator voice of the story is varying with third-person and first-person narrators. The storyteller has features of an interviewer – as sometimes it is addressed that the material is collected and told afterwards. As the participatory part is told parallel to the memories from childhood, the identity of the narrator can be connected to the same person. The other characters remain mysterious, apart from the woman who had shared details about her son and granddaughter. The reason to emphasize these participants more than others, is because of the more personal relationship to the woman, as she shared more intimate details besides answering to the original question. Thus, their identities are more clarified and the closer relation is expressed with the use of first-person narration.

4.3 Visual Aesthetics

The animation can be divided into three different chapters both visually and narratively. The first chapter of the narrative can be clearly separated, as the sec-

ond and third part of the story are alternating during the rest of the animation and create one entirety.

The introduction of the animation is an exploration of a dog's journey in the afterlife which familiarizes the viewer with the dominant theme of the work. In this chapter the story is told mostly visually, with few supporting sound effects. The animation is created with charcoal and ink, using both animation and still images. In the beginning of the animation the location and action are introduced, followed by the change in the environment – as the dog falls underwater – which is left for the viewer to interpret through the image and sound of the breaking ice. Thus, not everything in the animation is explained to the viewer in detail but in a more subtle way. Visual methods such as repetition of same compositions and actions from different points of view or scales are used. Also, symbols such as cow parsley are seen in the dreams of the dog which refer to a saying in the Finnish language about death 'to grow cow parsley' (suom. kasvaa koiranputkea).

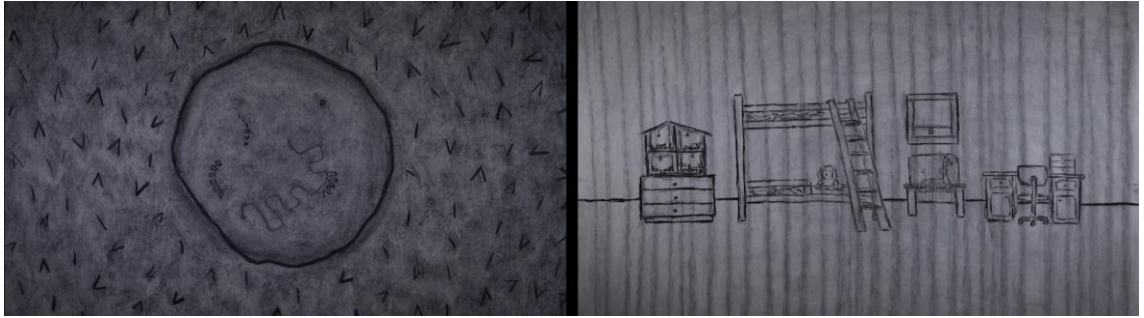


PICTURE 16. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel animation, screenshot

The narrative takes place in three different dimensions symbolized with three colours. The happenings in our reality are made on white paper – above the surface of the ice – and on black paper – happening underwater. The third dimension of the story – portrayed on green paper – is the afterlife, the dreams the main character sees while passing away. This division with colours is used to ease the viewer's ability to follow the narrative of the story.

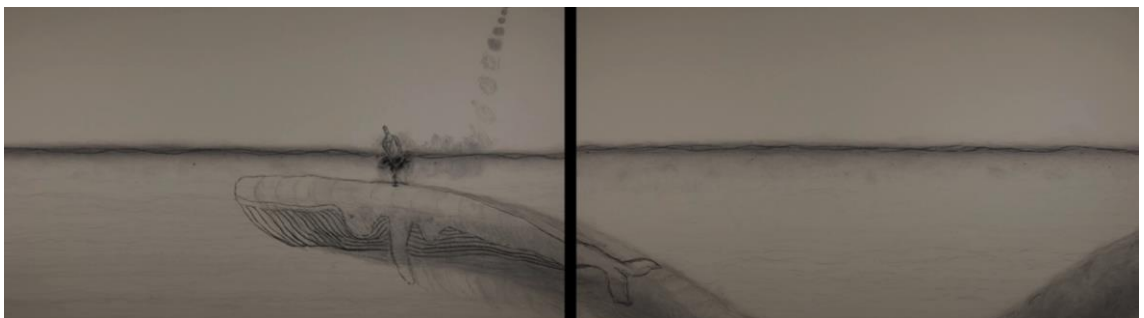
The second chapter of the narrative is about the childhood memories, portrayed with charcoal on paper with different hues of grey. The story is told using both

abstract and figurative visuals often next to each other, as the whole animation is two-channel. The abstract animation mostly describes the mind and ideas, as the figurative image portrays the environment. Direct and simple ways to portray the thoughts and the world of a child are being used to support the voice over by for instance floor plans, maps and imagery familiar from childhood – such as common toys.



PICTURE 17. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel animation, screenshot

The third chapter visualizes the participatory part of the animation, the thoughts collected from other people. The style of the animation pursues a child-like approach, using simple, playful, symbolic and sometimes humorous methods to portray the narration. This is the only part of the animation where clearly brighter colours are being used, as they are mentioned also in the narration when describing certain elements.



PICTURE 18. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel animation, screenshot

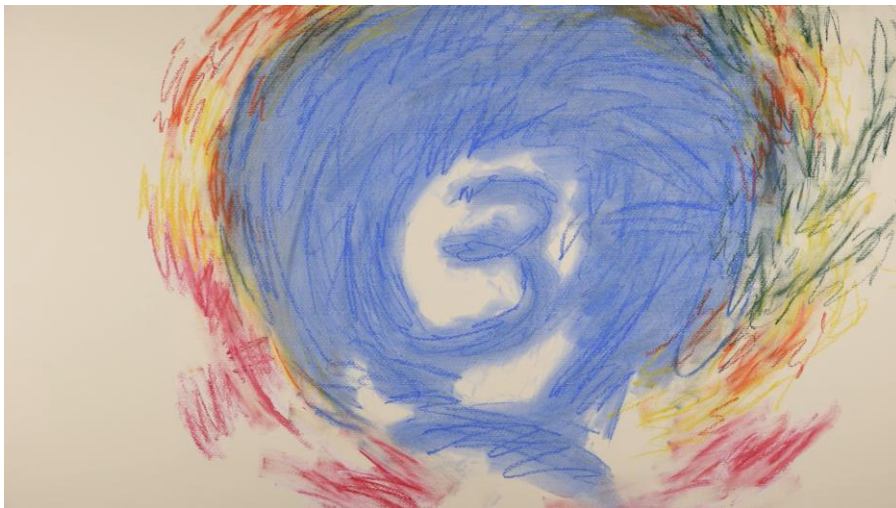
During the animation two channels work as individual images or as continuation to each other. The viewer is meant to choose which one they prefer to look at, but for instance the direction of movement or the placing of the subtitles function

as a possible director of the viewer's gaze. The two channels allow the animation to have more details, overlapping action, two points of view and repetition.



PICTURE 19. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel animation, screenshot

The visuals of the animation are created by using personal material, for example photographs, old drawings, family photos, real life locations and objects, memory, and imagination as reference. However, as an exception in the participatory chapter of the animation, in the part made as a result of the deeper collaboration with one woman – sharing about her son and granddaughter – the drawings of the granddaughter were used as a reference to the animation.



PICTURE 20. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel animation, screenshot



PICTURE 21. Photograph of a child's drawing about her dead uncle used as a reference for the stop-motion animation (Josie Peters 2021)



PICTURE 22. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel animation, screenshot



PICTURE 23. Photograph of a child's drawing about her dead uncle's ashes used as a reference for the stop-motion animation (Josie Peters 2021)

4.4 Role of Sound in the Storytelling

As the narrative of the artwork is built around the story read by the narrator, the sound design is in a crucial role in terms of understanding the story. The image follows the narration, visualizing it for instance in a direct, abstract or playful way. The sound design made by Vincent Masse consists of the recorded narration, composed music and sound effects. It was a deliberate choice to use my own voice, as the narrative contains personal memories.

The composed music plays a supporting role to the narration, it enhances the atmosphere of a certain scene or implies a change in the narration. The sound effects support the storytelling by describing audibly the environments, movements or an action seen in the animation. The settings of the childhood memories are being emphasized for instance with the sounds of birds singing or a clock ticking, and the sound of the breaking ice and water are important elements in terms of understanding the story of the dog's journey in the afterlife. Sound effects also work as transitions between two scenes, for example footsteps and winter ambience are combined by the sound of walking in snow.

4.5 Installation

Illan tullen – As the Evening Falls was exhibited at Gallery Himmelblau in March 2022 in the form of a two-channel video installation (500 x 210 x 420 cm). The installation is a tent, where the stop-motion animation is being projected on one side with two projectors. The viewer is meant to enter the tent and sit on a pillow to watch the animation. However, for better accessibility the viewer can also choose to sit on a chair inside the tent or stand outside of the tent. The sound of the installation comes from two speakers, which are situated inside the tent on each side. The materials used in the installation are bed sheets, projection fabric and yarn. Other items as a part of the installation are two chairs, two pillows and three table lamps outside of the installation. The videos were projected from outside of the tent with projectors on black stands. The main purpose of the installation is to emphasize the atmosphere of the work. The installation aims to create an intimate, safe and comforting moment for the viewer, enhancing the immersion of the work, as the space is more private and isolated from the other works of the exhibition.



PICTURE 24. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel video installation, installation view at Gallery Himmelblau (Janna Lindfors 2022)



PICTURE 25. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel video installation, installation view at Gallery Himmelblau (Janna Lindfors 2022)

The installation refers to certain memories from childhood, such as being under the blanket or creating dens, a tent-like spaces with furniture and quilts. Thus, the installation aims to evoke a certain nostalgia and feeling of childhood in the viewer. When comparing the scale of the installation to these spaces familiar from childhood, the size of the installation can be stated to be larger. Thus, the work also aims to emphasize the feeling of being small – referring to the idea of being a child.

The installation also refers strongly to the name of the work *Illan tullen – As the Evening Falls*. The use of bedsheets and table lamps in the dark gallery space reflect the setting of the childhood memories – which can be often connected to bed- and night-time. However, the work refers to the evening also in other levels, such as to the use of common idioms about death related to night-time and sleeping.



PICTURE 26. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel video installation, installation view at Gallery Himmelblau (Janna Lindfors 2022)



PICTURE 27. Janna Lindfors: *As the Evening Falls*, 2022, two-channel video installation, installation view at Gallery Himmelblau (Janna Lindfors 2022)

5 DISCUSSION

This thesis began by exploring narrative and the use of personal and collected material to construct narrative art by examining how these materials have been utilized by artists in the field of contemporary art. The purpose was to define what methods are needed to create an intimate experience for the viewer and whether an artist can gain stronger emotional reactions by using their personal story. However, during the research process it was noticed that the recipe for creating a narrative where the viewer can reflect themselves and their own memories, is far more complex than simply the artist's emotional bond to the content. As all viewers are individuals with their own cultural backgrounds, ideologies, experiences and emotional memories, it is impossible to predict what will be the emotional experience of a certain spectator. In the situation of exhibiting an artwork, the artist is also unable to control the choices viewer can make resulting in the reconstruction of the narrative, differing from the artist's intention.

Narrative art can be used for several purposes – including the use of artist's own experiences and collected stories of others – such as giving a voice to a certain group of people as Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen, or to explore oneself and memories like Outi Heiskanen, Laurie Anderson and myself in the case study of the thesis. Although immersiveness and believability can be seen as important aspects of narrative art, the artist can also intentionally alter the truthfulness of the storytelling, possibly disrupting the viewer's ability to reconstruct the story – like Lecklin with the contradictions in her narratives.

An artist brings their personal point of view to the collected material with their presence and choices, deciding the medium, the way of utilizing the content and the accuracy of following the material of the participants. When an artist uses their personal stories, defining the relation between artistic choices and truthfulness is more difficult. Nevertheless, similar artistic choices, as for instance the medium, but also the extent of the narrative are made during the artistic process. Both source materials in a narrative artwork can also have their difficulties. An artist narrating personal stories can face questions about the trustworthiness of their memories. When utilizing a story of someone else, an artist can encounter issues with the ways of using and modifying the content respectfully.

Nevertheless, an artist inevitably brings their own point of view to the story. For example, Johanna Lecklin intentionally alters the original story to create an imaginary memory for herself, still being respectful to the source of the story by showing the different phases of her work constructing the final pieces.

If an artist aims to create a relatable experience, methods such as presenting stories of people – for example from the same nation or minority – to a similar group of people, can possibly create a stronger emotional experience, compared to an audience without similar experiences. Reflecting themes which can be seen relevant today – for example narratives related to war – might possibly feel more significant to people in Europe today, as war is a current topic. Possibly stating the nature of the story – whether it is fact or fiction – could also result in the viewer having a more immersive experience with stronger feelings of empathy, as also Kalleinen and Kochta-Kalleinen express the constructed situation of their artwork to create a more compelling experience for the spectator. Perhaps emotional reaction can even be triggered by how skillfully the artist uses the different factors building a narrative taking into consideration both senses – vision and hearing with the visual and audible channels – like Anderson with her hypnotic audible narration combined with the versatile use of visuals.

However, an artist needs to consider what is the purpose of their work: to evoke feelings of empathy or perhaps aim to change the viewer's opinions. Narrative artwork – regardless of the source of the material – can be used to possibly change the ideologies of the spectator. Even though the emotional experience of the viewer is hard to predict, the impact of the story can be used to evoke new feelings and emotional memories. Thus, narrative artwork can function as a significant factor in society, possibly altering the emotional reaction and even the behavior of the viewer, while encountering similar content or situations that is experienced through the artwork. After exploring these themes, I see narrative both as the technical construction of a story but also as a very complex and subconscious impact an artist can have on the viewer, making narrative both a dangerous and effective tool for an artist.

In the future I will continue exploring the same methods in my own artistic work: the combination of personal and collected material and the narrative style of

using a human voice. I will utilize collected material from my own family, but I also aim to experiment collecting content from strangers while encountering them face to face, to create a deeper connection and stronger relationship with the participants. *As the Evening Falls* will be exhibited again as a video installation in the *Generation 2023* exhibition in Amos Rex, Helsinki in March 2023.

REFERENCES

Anderson, L. 2015. Heart of a Dog. Film. Production: Abramorama, Filmswelike, HBO Documentary Films. Production countries: Brazil, Italy, United States.

Anderson, L. 2015a. "Heart of a Dog" Director Laurie Anderson in studio q. YouTube video. Published on 25.9.2015. Referred on 21.12.2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLLK2qtDE_0

Anderson, L. 2015b. DP/30: Heart of a Dog, Laurie Anderson. YouTube video. Published on 21.12.2015. Referred on 13.12.2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zggApN8cOG0>

Anderson, L. 2016. Laurie Anderson Interview: A Life of Storytelling. Louisiana Channel. YouTube video. Published on 2.6.2016. Referred on 13.12.2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUo-dqMriY8>

Ateneum. Wall Texts – Outi Heiskanen. Website. Read on 5.4.2022. <https://ateneum.fi/en/visiting-the-exhibition/nayttelytekstit-outi-heiskanen/>

AV-arkki. People in White. Tellervo Kalleinen. Website. Read on 5.4.2022. <https://www.av-arkki.fi/works/people-in-white/>

Bal, M. 1981. Notes on narrative embedding. In *Narratology III: narration and perspective in fiction*, 41–59. *Poetics today*, 2 (2). Durham: Duke University Press. Referred on 23.4.2022.

Bal, M. 2009. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. 3rd edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division.

Chatman, S. 1975. Towards a Theory of Narrative. *New Literary History*, 6(2), 295–318. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/468421>

Chatman, S. 1990. *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca: Cornell University.

Dargis, M. 2015. Review: 'Heart of a Dog,' Laurie Anderson's Meditation on Loss. *The New York Times*. Oct. 21, 2015, Section C, Page 1. Read on 16.12.2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/21/movies/review-heart-of-a-dog-laurie-andersons-meditation-on-loss.html>

Hogan, P. C. 2011. *Affective Narratology: The Emotional Structure of Stories*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Hogan, P. C. 2013. *Narrative Discourse: Authors and Narrators in Literature, Film, and Art*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press.

Kalleinen, T & Kochta-Kalleinen, O. 2011. Interview: Tellervo Kalleinen & Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen. YouTube video. Published on 25.1.2011. Referred on 6.4.2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhCVaWjldEQ>

Kalleinen, T & Kochta-Kalleinen, O. 2011–2012. People in White. Film. Production: 3RD International Madness & Arts Festival Haarlem 2012 / MAF.

Karjalainen, T. 2021. Outi Heiskanen – taiteilija kuin shamaani. 2nd edition. Helsinki: Siltala.

Keen, S. 2006. A Theory of Narrative Empathy. *Narrative*, 14(3), 207–236. Columbus: Ohio State University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20107388>.

Lecklin, J. n.d. RUUKKU 10: Esitettyä aitoutta. Osallistavasta taiteesta ja sen etiikasta (Lectio Praecursoria). Website. Read on 28.3.2022. <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/541101/541102>

Lecklin, J. n.d. Story Café. Website. Read on 12.12.2021. <https://www.johannalecklin.com/old/participatory.html#storycafe>

Lecklin, J. 2018. Esitettyä aitoutta. Osallistavasta taiteesta ja sen etiikasta. Helsinki: Uniarts Helsinki Academy of Fine Arts. https://taju.uniarts.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/6710/Lecklin_Johanna_2018.pdf;jsessionid=E13B2DD48DAD2A904001AF79A?sequence=1

Lecklin, J. 2018a. PERFORMED REALNESS. On Participatory Art and its Ethics. Website. Read on 28.3.2022. <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/513224/513225>

Lee, P. 2016. What is Narrative Art? *Art History*. Widewalls. Published on October 31, 2016. Read on 16.12.2021. <https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/what-is-narrative-art>

Lothe, J. 2000. *Narrative in Fiction and Film*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Merriam-Webster. image. Website. Read on 15.4.2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/image>

Nelles, William. 1992. Stories Within Stories: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative. In *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 25 (1), 79–96. Read on 20.4.2022.

Nussbaum, M. C. 1995. *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Orgers, S. 2011. The 7 Narrator Types: and You Thought There Were Only Two! Be kind rewrite. Published on September 9, 2011. Read on 16.12.2021. <http://bekindrewrite.com/2011/09/09/the-7-narrator-types-and-you-thought-there-were-only-two/>

Ryan, M-L. Narration in Various Media. 2014. In Hühn, P. et al. (ed.). *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Hamburg: Hamburg University.

Studio Kalleinen. People in White. Website. Read on 5.4.2022. http://studiokalleinen.net/?portfolio_page=1419

Tate. Art Term: Narrative Art. Website. Read on 23.11.2021.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/n/narrative>

Vehmanen, M. 2011. People in White näyttää potilaan todellisuuden. Suomen Lääkärilehti. 10/2011 vol. 66. Read on 6.4.2022.

http://studiokalleinen.net/downloads/people_laakarilehti.pdf

Wolf, W. 2011. Narratology and Media(lity): The Transmedial Expansion of a Literature Discipline and Possible Consequences. In Bernhart, W. (ed.). Selected Essays on Intermediality by Werner Wolf (1992–2014): Theory and Typology, Literature-Music Relations, Transmedial Narratology, Miscellaneous Transmedial Phenomena (2017). Leiden & Boston: Brill | Rodopi.

https://books.google.fi/books?id=bSk_DwAAQBAJ&pg=PA505&lpg=PA505&dq=werner%20wolf%20monophase%20polyphase&source=bl&ots=N8dALrz_gq&sig=ACfU3U07Yf8vatlcnYrN8k2X1wj0ba9qEg&hl=fi&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi9wrGo6Kf3AhWSmlsKHf0vBgMQ6AF6BAgdEAM&fbclid=IwAR0vUWATJN3hCdFHUMuilonY05no85LmSVgRU1B1XPMdxRWy_6qbID-ilaU#v=onepage&q&f=false

PICTURES

1. Seymour Chatman. 1975. The narrative structure of story and discourse. Screenshot. Referred on 10.4.2022. <https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.tuni.fi/stable/468421?sid=primo&seq=1>
2. Seymour Chatman. 1990. The factors of the cinematic narrator. Screenshot. Referred on 10.4.2022. http://www.uwosh.edu/faculty_staff/cortes/Madison/Fall2009/224/Filmnarrative.pdf
3. Laurie Anderson. 2015. *Heart of a Dog*. Abramorama, Filmwelike, HBO Documentary Films. Referred on 4.12.2021. <https://www.screendaily.com/awards/laurie-anderson-reveals-the-inspirations-for-heart-of-a-dog/5098190.article>
4. Outi Heiskanen. 1974. *The Dream*. Referred on 4.4.2022. <https://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/art-2000008226911.html>
5. Johanna Lecklin. 2004–2011. *Story Café*. Screenshot. Referred on 28.3.2022. <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/541101/541102>
6. Johanna Lecklin. 2013. *Häkki*. Screenshot. Referred on 28.3.2022. <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/541101/541102>
7. Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta-Kalleinen. 2012. *People in White*. Screenshot. Referred on 6.4.2022. <https://vimeo.com/87134548>
8. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Screenshot of the two-channel animation.
9. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Screenshot of the two-channel animation.
10. Janna Lindfors. 2020. A photograph of a place from family history used as a reference in the animation.
11. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Two channel animation. Screenshot of the animation where a house from family history is used as a symbol.
12. Janna Lindfors. 2022. Screenshot of an answer received in the Discord platform.
13. Janna Lindfors. 2022. Screenshot of an answer received in the Discord platform.
14. Janna Lindfors. 2022. Creating the stop-motion animation based on the participatory part of the work with Dragonframe software.

15. Janna Lindfors. 2022. Creating the stop-motion animation based on the participatory part of the work with charcoal, pastels and pieces of cardboard.
16. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Screenshot of the two-channel animation.
17. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Screenshot of the two-channel animation.
18. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Screenshot of the two-channel animation.
19. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Screenshot of the two-channel animation.
20. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Screenshot of the two-channel animation.
21. Josie Peters. 2021. Photograph of a child's drawing about her dead uncle used as a reference for the stop-motion animation.
22. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Screenshot of the two-channel animation.
23. Josie Peters. 2021. Photograph of a child's drawing about her dead uncle's ashes used as a reference for the stop-motion animation.
24. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Two channel video installation. Installation view at Gallery Himmelblau.
25. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Two channel video installation. Installation view at Gallery Himmelblau.
26. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Two channel video installation. Installation view at Gallery Himmelblau.
27. Janna Lindfors. 2022. *As the Evening Falls*. Two-channel video installation, Installation view at Gallery Himmelblau.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Embers 2022 Exhibition Website.

<https://tamkfineart.wixsite.com/embers>

