

**NOTES**

## **Map 1 - Introduction**

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, the Decolonising Design group blog:  
<http://www.decolonisingdesign.com/>

<sup>2</sup> I believe it is necessary in practice-based research, in research *through* art instead of *about* art, to think *from* the practice. In comparison to many regular doctoral dissertations, my writing approach is more personal than formal. During this doctoral research I have often heard that obtaining one's doctorate is above all an individual process, meant to be meaningful for the doctoral candidate in the first place. Although it indeed means a lot to me, and the process taught me many things on many levels, I have always had a fictional 'other' in mind while writing my thesis. This 'other' can be anyone but myself, perhaps an artist too, or a researcher working with participatory practices, one of my supervisors, or just someone who is interested in one or more of the topics discussed. Although I feel a strong desire to have produced something that is meaningful to many 'others', this reflective writing is often introspective and focuses on my own experiences and view upon things. It would be far too strong to assert that this thesis is a *Bildung*, but this PhD has for sure shaped me.

<sup>3</sup> The flow of information can also differ when participants are paid for sharing their knowledge. Within my practice, I have never worked with payments. Instead, I aimed to give the participants appreciation, inspiration, and a good time in exchange for their engagement.

<sup>4</sup> Today: ArtEZ Institute of the Arts.

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<sup>5</sup> An overview of these projects can be found at:

[www.rosannevanklaveren.nl](http://www.rosannevanklaveren.nl).

<sup>6</sup> The *Braintec* project received the ISOC-Award for Internet and the Arts in 2002 and was nominated for ZKM's International Media art price in 2003. It is shown at many festivals, including FILE2003 Electronic Language International Festival (Sao Paulo), ISEA2004 (Baltic Sea), Ciber@rt2004 (Bilbao), and the Dutch Film Festival (Utrecht, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> In this section, I mention only a selection of influences. My inspiration is, however, not limited to these examples as many others affected my practice too. Where appropriate, other projects will be discussed in different sections of this thesis.

<sup>8</sup> Mouchette is a pseudonymous character by Martine Neddam. This online identity is loosely based on a fictional character by Bernanos (1937), known from Bresson's screen adaption *Mouchette* (1967), and provocatively handles taboos' subjects, like sex and suicide. See: <http://www.mouchette.org>

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Nat Muller and Deanna Herst (2000): Ctrl+shift Art – Ctrl+shift Gender, Axis Bureau voor de kunsten v/m.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, the artistic computer game modifications by Jodi: <http://text.jodi.org/> and <http://wwwwwwwwwwww.jodi.org>.

<sup>11</sup> See: [www.jeanetworks.net](http://www.jeanetworks.net)

<sup>12</sup> Social Spaces is a cross-disciplinary research group of LUCA School of Arts (MAD-faculty) operating within a context of art, design and reflection. The main focus of the research group is to amplify participation and critically reflect on the hybridity of the digital and physical. Social Spaces explores and experiments with the social character of art, (new) media and design. See: [www.socialspaces.be](http://www.socialspaces.be)

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<sup>13</sup> For example, a nice and useful overview of interesting methods for user centred design can be found on the website of Usewell:  
<http://www.usewell.be/#/methods/>

<sup>14</sup> We can note that participatory practices conducted by artists are often an essential part of the artistic outcome: in structure, in content and in experience. As these practices derive from the individual approach and idiosyncrasy of the artist, like the proverbial artist's handwriting, we can consider them as artistic as all other artistic discourse.

<sup>15</sup> This program of 60 ECTS is offered by multiple universities within the Arctic through distance learning. See: [www.unarctic.org](http://www.unarctic.org)

<sup>16</sup> For example, their project *Rethinking Nordic Colonialism*, combined exhibitions with workshops, conferences, hearings, and happenings in the locations of Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and the Sámi area of Finland. 56 internationally recognized artists, theorists, politicians, and grassroots activists from all over the world participated in the project from March 24 – November 25, 2006. See: [www.rethinking-nordic-colonialism.org](http://www.rethinking-nordic-colonialism.org)

<sup>17</sup> For a better understanding of Pia Arke's work and approach, I recommend the considerably printed book TUPILAKOSAURUS: An Incomplete(able) Survey of Pia Arke's Artistic Work and Research, published posthumously by Kuratorisk Aktion in 2012.

<sup>18</sup> This project was realized in 2007 and is rewarded with several design prizes. See: [www.thewhalehunt.org](http://www.thewhalehunt.org). For an overview of all his projects, see: [www.number27.org](http://www.number27.org).

<sup>19</sup> The terms 'participants', 'participatory' and 'participation' circulate throughout multiple fields, sometimes with confusing meanings. In the fields of art and design, the terms usually only refer to the inquired people who contribute to the art making or to the research. However, in the field of anthropology, the terms often refer to the researcher. For example, in participant observation, the researcher studies the life of a

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group by sharing in its activities. In this case, the researcher is the one who participates in the lives of these people, while the people (s)he observes are addressed to as the participants. Within this thesis, I follow the tradition in my own field: the arts. For more information on participant observation, see, for example, Guest et al. 2013, available at: [http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/48454\\_ch\\_3.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/48454_ch_3.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> The importance of allowing risks and uncertainty in participatory practices is extensively described in ‘Participation is Risky, Approaches to Joint Creative Processes’ (Huybrechts, Storni & Schoffelen 2014), in which participatory projects are characterized as ‘risky trade-offs’ that take place between makers and participants. Huybrechts et al. analyse how generative participatory projects involve risks and uncertainties that may lead to unexpected and unintended results (p. 268). These projects are defined as “socio-material assemblies where the partaking elements, being people and objects, mutually define and shape each other” (p. 275). As all the elements have a relational understanding of agency, they have a potential impact on the participatory process (p. 185) and thus create uncertainty. Within this receptivity, it is the uncertainty that enables both richness and risks.

<sup>21</sup> A confusing number of methodological frameworks focus on participatory practices, and can just as easily merge with ANT. For example, action research (AR), participatory research (PR), participatory design (PD) and participatory action research (PAR) all include participation in their core meanings. Hence it is difficult to see the wood for the trees when one searches for a framework that covers art projects. In general, however, these mentioned methodologies share a similar research paradigm. For example, they all focus on active participation and active learning, open-ended objectives, and high levels of commitment from the researcher and the participants to the research problem. Still, in order to position one’s practice in an academic context, it is clarifying to choose just one. Participatory action research seems to fit best for my artistic research, as it has a stronger holistic approach and specifically aims at creativity. With an additional ‘art-based’ as prefix, this chosen research approach is

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distanced from a too explicit focus on design goals or community work.

- For comparisons between PD and AR, see Foth & Axup 2006:

<http://ojs.ruc.dk/index.php/pdc/article/viewFile/380/372>

- For comparisons between PR and AR, see Bergold & Thomas 2012:

[www.qualitativresearch.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1801/3334](http://www.qualitativresearch.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1801/3334)

- For comparisons between AR, PR, and PAR, see Bell et al. 2004:

[www.arlecchino.org/ildottore/mwsd/group2final-comparison.pdf](http://www.arlecchino.org/ildottore/mwsd/group2final-comparison.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Contrary to the burden of being an outsider to the people you make art with, a certain degree of distance can be supportive. For example, it can support the preservation of an independent, unbiased attitude. For some artists, the need of an independent, unbiased attitude goes deeper than the entwinements with city boards, provinces or art institutes. For them, more distance can be necessary to produce their art, while entanglement would restrain their 'art flow'. In general, I believe, a good balance is needed between closeness and distance in participatory practices.

<sup>23</sup> This is probably not different for anthropologists, designers, or other researchers who work within communities.

<sup>24</sup> Although participatory practices can establish long-term connections between people, it is never the aim to become 'the same' because differences are valuable. The role and purpose of the artist-researcher is and stays different from those of the participants, and so to the other differences in identity and perspective. The feeling of togetherness that, ideally, occurs in this shared moment may diminish when people end the activity and go back to the 'us' that distances 'them'. People are allowed to be different and they better stay themselves, whatever 'us' or 'them' they choose to belong to. Therefore, I never aimed at becoming an insider or 'one of them' when I searched for possible ways to bypass the us-and-them dichotomy.

<sup>25</sup> This believe is strengthened by my disapproval of Renzo Martens' approach of the Congolese in his movie *Enjoy Poverty*. As Matthias De Groof (2010) strikingly remarks, Martens approached the Congolese with unequal weapons and portraits them as being naïve. In an

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interview for ArtReview, Martens explains that “the film is about watching Congo. It's about us. It's not about them” ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoU3IgrVMnk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoU3IgrVMnk)). Nevertheless, ‘they’ are displayed in yet another humiliating presentation of the poor for the spectacle of our self-questioning (De Groof 2010). But, because it doesn’t feel fair to blacken Martens completely, I also like to share the honesty in Martens’ approach. In an interview for rekto:verso, he said: *“It has released a lot of pain and discontent in me. I found it very difficult to be there and not come and tell lies. (...) After all, the movie is only controversial because we are not accustomed to seeing how the world works and what our role is in it. For example, at the end I tell to a poor plantation worker that it is unlikely that his life will improve in the nearby future, that there is a real chance that he will forever work for a very low salary. That's simply how it is. If anyone thinks that is not appropriate, I suggest that he'll do something about it. (...) But as long as we want chocolate to stay so cheap that these children will starve, I'm not going to pretend that they are happy and cheerful because I came along. As if that makes it enjoyable, if I give them five, ten or one hundred dollars. That's simply not the way it goes”* (Van Goethem 2009, my translation).



<sup>26</sup> Later on, Stoller questions anthropological knowledge production: *“Geertz’s ‘being-there’ is usually a sensuous, fully human experience filled with personal drama and life-changing events. ‘Being-here’ usually compels us to adhere to a set of institutional rules that tend to separate ‘being there’ from ‘being here’.* The result is that, more often than not, we excise much of the passion of ‘being there’ from what we write. This

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*absence, in turn, usually hides how doing and knowing ultimately shape being in anthropology. How can we understand the human condition if we place our own being in the margins of our professional discourse?"* (2009, p. 41).

<sup>27</sup> The way artists shape their expressive spaces can differ as greatly as the artists themselves. These spaces can merge with physical places or can exist in virtual environments alone, or do both. In my own art practice I often create online story spaces. In the *Braintec* project (2002-2006), for example, people were invited to engage in a science fiction story by writing diaries about their virtual experiences as test subjects for a medical research company. Not only the company's website, but also a second site with virtual diaries was created as the expressive space of this project. To infiltrate physical reality, the story space was expanded with company ballpoints, leaflets, flags and other promotional material used during presentations and exhibitions.

Another story space was created for *De Grote Treinreis* (The Great Train Journey - 2005-2006), where people could make self-portraits in front of a life-sized picture of the Trans-Siberian Express in the museum, and write travel logs about their virtual journey online. Both examples are autonomous projects, for which communities of participants originated during the process. And in both projects it was the carefully and conscientiously shaped story space that brought people together and motivated them to keep contributing.





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<sup>28</sup> For example, in environmental research there is a growing interest in traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), which is considered a valuable resource to increase our understanding of current environmental changes and their impacts. See, for example, Hunnington et al. 2004.

<sup>29</sup> Biologist-explorer Arita Baaijens (2016) poetically describes how science limits itself through these tendencies: *“Science comes with fantastic discoveries and at the same time behaves like a narrow-minded and jealous lover, who smothers every other way of looking at the world. But no one benefits from a monoculture. The staggering range of mindsets gives our society the necessary resilience and it illustrates the genius and versatility of the human spirit. (...) Why redeem such a versatile patchwork for a monochrome sheet?”* (p. 309).

<sup>30</sup> Nature and aspects of nature can have more agency in indigenous knowledge systems. Canadian anthropologist H.A. Feit explained at the 1986 Symposium of the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists, how the Waswanipi (Cree of northern-Ontario) have a personal connection with nature and nature aspects for thousands of years already: *“In the culturally constructed world of the Waswanipi, the animals, the winds and many other phenomena are thought of as being ‘like persons’, in that they act intelligently and have wills and idiosyncrasies, and understand and are understood by people. Causality in the Waswanipi world is not mechanical or biological, it is personal. (...) Waswanipi hunters say that they only catch an animal when the animal is given to them.”* (Mander 1992, pp. 59-60). Reciprocity, which is discussed in *Map 3*, occurs among the Waswanipi and animals.

<sup>31</sup> In his widely referred ‘Relational Aesthetics’, Nicolas Bourriaud describes the binding force of the creative act. He refers to the notion of relational arts as a linking element and a principle of dynamic agglutination, “...a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space” (Bourriaud 2002).

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<sup>32</sup> “The real problem with science is its power”, says Paul Devereux (1996), “it has overcome the limits of locality and now acts on the world as no other knowledge system has managed to do” (p. 27). Modern science uses its power to exclude, for example, shamanic knowledge from its domain. It does not fit within the scientific belief system and is thus ‘false’.

<sup>33</sup> Finley (2005) advocated arts-based inquiry as a means of community inclusion in social investigation and as a tool for political activism. Thus, an artistic approach of PAR might be beneficial to the sharing of experiences and everyday knowledge.

<sup>34</sup> See: [www.arctica.nl](http://www.arctica.nl)

## **Map 2 – Food Related**

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<sup>1</sup> More information about this art project and other early work can be found on [www.rosannevanklaveren.nl](http://www.rosannevanklaveren.nl). See note nr. 27 of *Map 1* for descriptions of the expressive spaces for two other projects.

<sup>2</sup> Knowledge is approached as a qualitative unmaterialistic commodity. As such, it can take many forms including thoughts, concerns, habits, memories, viewpoints, experiences and stories.



<sup>3</sup> Certain foods can be served during certain social events, for example marriages, funerals, New Year's Eve. Within societies, food can function as a gift. More information about gift-giving, sometimes with a focus on food, can be found in *Map 3*.

<sup>4</sup> Future versions can, of course, include more view modes.

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<sup>5</sup> Most Arctic people who regularly make use of the Internet master one of these 'big languages'. Danish is chosen as a third 'big language' because many Greenlanders do not master English. Many Sami from Norway and Sweden found it easier to read Danish instead of English.

<sup>6</sup> Language is used on the *Food Related* platform in two ways: for information and guidance concerning the use of the platform (static language use), and within the entries made by the users of the platform (dynamic language use). All static language use can be outsourced if future budgets allow. For example all words and texts used to guide participants in exploring the content of the platform and during the process of making new entries, including the descriptions of the view modes, the food items, the locations, the step-by-step guidance during the editing and re-editing of entries, and all possible error messages, can be translated. It is more difficult to translate the language of the entries, because this content is created dynamically by participants who want to be able to change their contributions at any time. However, participants can be asked to translate their (and others') entries manually in their own language, even to correct language mistakes from the automatic translations.

### **Map 3 – Niva to Nenets**

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<sup>1</sup> My prolonged interest in circumpolar cultures had not brought me to the Russian Arctic yet, while I understood that these cultures, in comparison to the European Sami and both the Greenlandic and Canadian Inuit, sustained most of their traditions deriving from nomadism and hunting-gathering aspects. This triggered my curiosity greatly. Thus, when ideas and intentions for a road-movie were finding shape, the Nenets Autonomous Okrug became the destination to drive to.

<sup>2</sup> Camp as an aesthetic; see Susan Sontag (1964) and Marc Booth (1983).

<sup>3</sup> Some of these experiences are presented in the blue storyline of the *Niva to Nenets* movie. This storyline is called 'Niva' and has its focus on the car.



<sup>4</sup> In response to the ribbon with polar bears that I glued to the dashboard, Svetlana explained how people used to pimp their cars like that during the Soviet period. In those times, people personified

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there cars much more than today as there were only a few makes to choose from.

<sup>5</sup> Donath (2007) illustrates how driving style can be a signal: “Driving, too, is expressive. The car revving impatiently at the stop sign has its aggressive driver, quick to take offense and with a chronic need to be first. The car that flinches at oncoming traffic, even though everyone is well within their proper lane, reveals the nervous reflexes of its frayed and jumpy driver” (p. 156).

<sup>6</sup> Most of the responses that I witnessed while driving the Lada Niva on European roads were expressions of appreciation. I often saw people smiling, holding their thumbs up, or waving at me. During the few occasions I witnessed angry, irritated or disturbed faces, the belt of the car almost always made its typical noise.

<sup>7</sup> Victor Turner (1969) explained: “I prefer the Latin term ‘*communitas*’ to ‘community’, to distinguish this modality of social relationship from an ‘area of common living’ (p. 96).

<sup>8</sup> Turner introduces *liminoid* experiences, which have characteristics of liminal experiences but are optional and don’t involve a resolution of a personal crises. For example, he employed this term to industrialized societies to distinct them from non-industrialized societies (Madison 2005, p. 174). I prefer to use only the terms *liminal* and *liminality*, as I don’t want to create unnecessary confusion and/or, do not want to distinct further away from the term us-and-them.

<sup>9</sup> In his book ‘I and Thou’ (1937), Buber writes about ‘I and It’.

<sup>10</sup> For example, when I thought it was not needed to give her fuel yet, the Niva run out of gas.

<sup>11</sup> Alexander Belugin, director of the Nenets organization Yasavey, explains in one of my recordings:

*“It is getting warmer. Winter isn’t as cold as before. Maybe that is good for the people that live in town, but for reindeer herders it is*

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*bad. The cycle of nomadic live for reindeer herders is changing, as they live with the seasons. If there are changes in the climate, their lives change. Of course it is bad if we have winter in spring, or if we go from winter to autumn. Usually the herders change pastures in the beginning of April, but now they need to go in March. The natural cycle is disturbed. It is the same when they go from summer to winter pastures. They need to slaughter in winter. Now that also happens in January and February. That is all connected to climate changes. They cannot freeze the meat in November when it is too warm. The weight of reindeers declines as they lose their fat. The whole society acknowledges that there are changes."*

<sup>12</sup> It is not easy to trace back how exactly an idea for a specific art project arises. But in this case, I can guarantee that the described considerations were influential. Usually my ideas develop from specific interests or curiosities, and take a long time to find fertile ground where they can grow from inspiration, brainpower and intuition. Many premature ideas just disappear while others merge or get boosted by opportunities. This is typically what happened during the earliest stage of the *Niva to Nenets* project: suddenly all kinds of ideas and possibilities reached out to each other and upon connecting a clear image of the project emerged. Bits and scraps were coming together and all the pieces seemed to fit perfectly. Exciting when that happens!

<sup>13</sup> Also, Judith Donath, whose experiences with her 1964 Ford Falcon I referred to before, felt herself unable to sell her beloved car for a humiliating amount: "We gave the Falcon away to him in the end. Not because we could not sell it, but because the money would not be what it seemed worth to us. In its condition, it would sell, optimistically, for about \$1500 or less. This seemed like an indignity to so personal a vehicle. Without money, the transaction seemed an adoption rather than a sale" (2007, pp. 155-156).

<sup>14</sup> Yasavey Manzara is the research and information department of Yasavey (Nenets for 'Guide who knows the terrain'). Yasavey was established in 1989 in Naryan Mar. About the work of his organization, director Alexander Belugin explained in one of my recordings:

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*“We inform and consult the reindeer herders, and help them if we can, to solve their problems. We give them a voice. In 2000 we organized round tables with reindeer herding enterprises, oil companies and governmental structures. The goal was to find compromises. It was the first big event where these relationships were brought together. After these round tables we organized other big events. We started to implement social projects with the Lukoil company. (...) There are people who live nomadically, and those who live in villages and in the city. We focus on people who live a traditional way of life, because they face even more problems. It is our goal to help them, to create possibilities and conditions for their livelihood. Even though reindeer herders work in business structures, like reindeer herding enterprises, still they work for the government. They provide food for the whole indigenous population.”*

<sup>15</sup> I am grateful for the good advice that was given to me during these propositional visits. For example, the Nenets author Viktor Tolkatjev shared his valuable knowledge about roads and regions with me during a meeting that was organized by the NARFU University in Archangelsk in 2012. Before we discussed the project, I considered travelling to Nes (Hech) as the final destination of the road-trip. Viktor discouraged me to do so, because it is very difficult to organize the special permits that foreigners need to visit this small Nenets village near the Barents Sea. He convinced me to drive to Naryan Mar instead, presuming that people in Nes could have no good use of the Lada Niva. Although going to Naryan Mar added another 1000 km to the already long road-trip, including a couple of days on the Pechora river, I am still happy that I followed his advice.

<sup>16</sup> While working with cultural probes for the *Food Related* project in the Tromsø region, I came from the ‘wrong camp’. Read more about how I was turned down by some ‘ambassadors’ of the Sami in *Map 2*, pp. 15-18.

<sup>17</sup> But who am I to think to know what is good for them? Indigenous rights movements colour my view upon reality, complemented by



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some statements of the Nenets organization Yasavey. But maybe not all Nenets prefer autonomy and recognition as an indigenous people, as *Russification* and oil and gas industry brings money, infrastructure, and other aspects of modernity as well? If I think I know what is good for them, I portrait myself as a true ambassador of Western-Europe society: excelling in arrogance. However, Niebuhr (1932) encourages his readers to imagine how it is for others. We need to empathise before we can comprehend: *“The most perfect justice cannot be established if the moral imagination of the individual does not seek to comprehend the needs and interests of his fellows”* (p. 257). The key to handle arrogance and compassion probably lies in the between: in between knowing and comprehending.

<sup>18</sup> Turner had a Protestant upbringing too, but later converted to Catholicism. Exploring religions myself, I no longer believe in one superior entity urging me to do good. Often I even doubt if it would be more meaningful to overcome the good-and-bad dichotomy instead of the us-and-them dichotomy. Possibly I am in search for a counterweight to balance my Protestant upbringing and system of beliefs.

<sup>19</sup> Testimonies of missionaries ‘turning’ the Inuit are embarrassing and painful to read. For example, J. Sachot (1947) repeatedly writes how retarded and beastlike ‘his’ Eskimo’s are.

<sup>20</sup> I like to give an example of a conversation that I had with a photographer who travelled in Greenland multiple times. I asked her about her experiences with Greenlandic food and the situations in which food was shared with her, knowing about her vegetarian diet. Her response shocked me, because she so abruptly refused even the idea of accepting the offer because it was not only meat, it was seal!! Witnessing her spontaneous re-experience, I could not help but noticing some arrogance in her response. I therefor asked her if she could imagine or consider this offered food to be a gift. She could not. At least not a present she could accept, were more or less the words in which she illustrated her refusal. In my experience, she thus refused the heart of the whole Greenlandic culture. Maybe that was a bit of an

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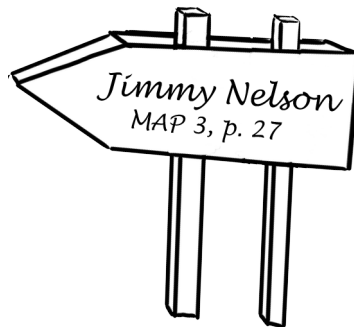
overstatement, and an example of how I as well can sometimes draw my conclusions very quickly. After that, the topic of our conversation headed towards the situation of seals in and around Greenland, and the impact that the European seal ban has upon the Greenlanders...

<sup>21</sup> And now, to admit that I am sometimes refusing food as well, and to illustrate another possible reason to do so, I like to share a memory from my first time among the Nenets. I was hosted by a very friendly and hospitable family for a couple of days, who shared two or three meals a day with me. I was invited to join the family table and without asking they placed a bowl of reindeer soup in front of me. Although I hardly ever eat meat, I often appreciate the taste of reindeer meat much more than that of cow or pork. The fact that some reindeer hair was (were?) circling on top of the greasy soup did not bother me at all, as I had seen this before. They had been cooked too and would not harm my digestion system in one or another way. It actually feels more 'real' or 'natural' to me than for example cut meat in sealed plastic. But a slightly disturbing aftertaste, that tasted stronger the second day, made me refuse the soup when it was served for a third time. My belly is easily upset and at that time I already had a bit of diarrhoea. We will never know if the soup caused this, but I could not help thinking about the amount of times it was possibly served before my arrival. I didn't like refusing and tried to do that with an apologizing smile, as my Russian language skills are just as weak as my stomach. As far as I know it was not too insulting; they only looked a bit surprised.

<sup>22</sup> The Belgium photographer Hannelore Vandenbussche turned down the drinking of fresh reindeer blood in abomination, when a Nenets family in the Yamal region offered this to her. She assisted Jimmy Nelson during the making of his much-discussed photo series 'Before They Pass Away' and wrote a book about her travel experiences with the same title. I read many insults in her stereotypic descriptions, for example: "As soon as the animal's throat was cut, women were holding plastic cups to catch the lukewarm, streaming blood to drink it. It resembled an open-air café for vampires where everyone walked around with a bloody grin. I wisely refused the invitation to join the

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drink” (Vandenbussche 2015, pp. 164-165 – my translation). What exactly made her refusal wise, I wonder?



<sup>23</sup> In 2003, Susan Sontag published an essay with the same title, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, in which she examines how war is perceived. In this writing, Sontag claims that people are drawn to images of suffering with an almost sexual interest. From this notion, helping the poor includes perversity. Within this doctoral thesis it would be too much off topic to discuss the attraction towards suffering, but I would like to recommend this essay in case of interest.

<sup>24</sup> For Renzo Martens' movie, see: <http://www.enjoypoverty.com>. Another artist that criticized an arrogant approach towards poverty within Africa by overacting is the Norwegian photographer Vibeke Tandberg. She digitally portrayed herself as a white saviour serving Africans in her series *Aftermath* (1994). See: <http://vibeke-tandberg.inamarr.com/images.htm>.

<sup>25</sup> For example, in the road-movie *Aaltra* two brothers drive to the Aaltra Company in Finland, the producer of the agricultural machine that caused their disability, to ask for compensation. In the movie *Hasta-la-Vista*, the protagonist travels to Spain to have sex for the first time.

<sup>26</sup> Driving the Lada Niva back home labels the documentary with another genre: *Voyage-and-return*. According to Christopher Booker, the *Voyage-and-return* is one of the basic storytelling plots that characterize the journey of a protagonist into another world. At the

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end, when returned to the normal world, everything is the same again but somehow changed forever.

<sup>27</sup> This is, however, basic editing knowledge from which causal meaning arises or increases. Just as the Kuleshov effect demonstrates how viewers derive more meaning from the interaction of two sequential shots than from a single shot in isolation, it illustrates how relational networks are visible and adaptable in montage.

<sup>28</sup> According to Dewey (2012/1910), people's understanding arises from a relational framework in which different bits of knowledge connect and validate one another. This insurmountably leads to implications, as "reflection involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a *consequence* — a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each in turn leans back on its predecessors. The successive portions of the reflective thought grow out of one another and support one another; they do not come and go in a medley. Each phase is a step from something to something — technically speaking, it is a term of thought. Each term leaves a deposit which is utilized in the next term. The stream or flow becomes a train, chain, or thread" (2012, p. 2).

<sup>29</sup> A network can be considered both form and process, argues Cressman (2009). "In some instances, networking precedes and shapes form and in other instances form shapes process" (p. 11). Cressman continues arguing that, if we want to evaluate both the 'network' and the 'networking', we should explore what happens in between the inputs and outputs. Examining the heterogeneous associations that constitute networks, while paying closer attention to how networks are performed instead of focusing on the inputs and outputs, new avenues or 'tracks' can create new perspectives.

<sup>30</sup> Faye Ginsburg (2002) gives an interesting explanation of her use of the word 'media', which I support wholeheartedly: "The American College Dictionary defines it as 'an intervening substance, through which a force acts or an effect is produced; an agency, means or instrument.' It is related to 'mediate': 'to act between parties to effect

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an understanding, compromise, reconciliation.” About both indigenous media and ethnographic film, she adds: “They are all intended to communicate something about that social or collective identity we call ‘culture,’ in order to mediate (one hopes) across gaps of space, time, knowledge, and prejudice” (p. 216).

<sup>31</sup> The possibility of media technologies to facilitate knowledge sharing for cultural regeneration was discussed at the 17th Inuit Studies Conference in Val-d’Or (Canada) in 2010, that I attended. Zebedee Nungak, Director of the Inuktitut Language Department of Avataq Cultural Institute, promoted the use of new media for language programs that incite the use of Inuktitut. During a plenary roundtable session, an Inuk elder in the audience asked for the development of new media products, for example a videogame about hunting, in order to transfer knowledge and to reconnect the youth of his community to their cultural identity.

<sup>32</sup> Ludmilla Boulugina was often motivated to explain about the performances and her culture in front of my camera. For example, on her own initiative she explained the meaning of two plays that were just rehearsed and recorded:

- *“This performance is called ‘The Healing Shaman’. It is about a wife and family that lost their husband and father for three days. Something happened to this man on his way home and they couldn’t find him. Then he managed to reach home, but he was almost dying. They called for the shaman to heal him. The shaman asked help from Num and the spirits of nature to heal this man. We show the process of healing in the performance and we sing crying songs. The second play, with the white bird, is based on a story by Pushkin. For the first time money is introduced to the Nenets community, and they don’t know what to do with it. A girl from a rich family tries to deceive an old couple. She buys a magic carpet from them. She tells them they can live from this money for six months, but it was only little money and they didn’t know how to handle money. They even tried it they could eat it. If they understand that they are fooled, the old man asks help from a*

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*magical bird. Together they give the girl a lesson of life: that it is not nice to deceive. You have to live honestly."*

## **Map 4 - Probology**

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<sup>1</sup> Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) introduced a collection of verbal probes to be used as an intervention technique to improve, or sharpen up, the interviewee's response. For example, explanatory probes are questions such as 'What did you mean by that?' and 'What makes you say that?', while focused probes typically start with 'What sort of...?' and leading probes are questions like 'So you would say that you were really satisfied?'. One of the most effective techniques for reluctant or slowly answering respondents would be the silent probe, for which one simply pauses to let the respondent break the silence (p. 131).

While reviewing recordings of conversations that I had with the participants of the *Niva to Nenets* project, who were sometimes my interviewees too, it became crystal clear to me that the silent probe is unfortunately not present among my natural skills. Although there were of course many useful moments of silence while we were driving the car, I shamefully discovered that I have an almost uncontrollable urge to interrupt conversation partners. Thus, this is something I need to work on.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, one could say that I am a probing artist.

<sup>3</sup> For more information about this project, conducted in between 1997-1999, see: <http://hookerandkitchen.com/presence/#> and <http://www.presenceweb.i3net.org>

<sup>4</sup> The act of (re)naming probes instead of following the term *cultural probes*, as introduced by Gaver et al., illustrates distance from Gaver's

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example. For example, Crabtree et al. (2003) wrote: “Our probes kits, whilst consisting of many of the same artefacts, perform a different function to Gaver’s Cultural Probes” (p. 4). Sometimes, *design probes* is used as a more overall term (for example, by Mattelmäki 2006). Within my research I prefer to use the more common term *cultural probes*, as my practice focuses on the cultural, with a stronger link to Gaver’s artistic approach than to design purposes. However, the two probe kits that were developed during this artistic research, were given the names ‘Food Related probes’ and ‘Getting-to-know-you probes’. This is basically done to distinguish them from each other.

<sup>5</sup> I had been on Greenland four times before, but never to this part. Ittoqqortoormiit is more isolated, more ‘on its own’ than other communities in East-Greenland.

<sup>6</sup> The texts written in these booklets are in the Danish language. For most Greenlandic children, however, Danish is not their first language. This is usually East-Greenlandic (Tunumiit oraasiat). Many people in East-Greenland have the official West-Greenlandic language as their second language, followed by Danish as their third. English, if they master some words in this language, only comes fourth. Unfortunately, I was not able to provide translations of these booklets in East-Greenlandic. I wrote them in Danish instead, which made the booklets suitable to be used during Danish language class.

<sup>7</sup> It actually lies within the purpose of cultural probes, as initiated by Gaver et al. (1999 and 2004), that they are used in the absence of the artist, over time. Being there, or not, influences the interaction with the booklets. However, discovering more or less similar drawings within the booklets made me conclude that the influence of the teacher might have been stronger than mine, in case I was present.

<sup>8</sup> It has been difficult in the Tromsø region to find entrance within the local Sami community, and in Copenhagen to reach local Greenlanders to participate in the Picnic-Quiz. In Stockholm, all my attempts to invite local Sami stranded. Although it can be frustrating when finding entrance within Arctic communities is hard, I like to underline some



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positive aspects that derives from it: it motivates to give (more) attention to the purpose and meaning of the collaboration for those who (hopefully) want to participate, it challenges creativity, and it highlights the us-and-them dichotomy until it is tangible.

<sup>9</sup> One of the children, whose name I keep to myself, left almost all pages empty, marked never to eat seal, reindeer, pizza, fish, whale, vegetables nor Chinese, and put green stickers indicating bad taste on all animals in the collage. One of these green stickers was put on my portrait picture, and a big 'NEJ' (no) was written on the comments-pages. This, however, gave me just as deep feelings of sympathy as the heart that was drawn in another booklet, or when I was addressed with a Greenlandic variation of my name: 'Russanni'.

<sup>10</sup> Among the emphatic responses that the returned outcomes had on me, I especially appreciate the children's drawings and the fact that they used the yellow and green stickers to indicate appreciation or dislike on other pages too. For example Gudrun (11 years old) used two stickers in her drawing of an Arctic scenery to indicate that she likes the taste of narwhal and of some other unidentified sea mammal (*Illustration 3*). I interpret Gudrun's expressions as follows: When big seals and other sea mammals are caught, they are often transported outside the vessel. But as I did not interview the children about the meaning of their responses, I can never be certain about my interpretations.

<sup>11</sup> Although the cultural probes method is not aiming for analytical outcomes or seeking scientific validity (Lee, 2013), the returned booklets did contain information about the local food culture that I find notable. It is clearly visible how in the diet of these children traditional Greenlandic food 'from the land' is mixed with store-bought food. John D.J. (10 years), for example, claims to eat seal and pizza every day. His favorite food is hotdog, but he likes eating seal, narwhal, muskox, ptarmigan and polar bear too. From all ingredients and dishes written or drawn throughout all nine booklets, spaghetti is mentioned the most: two times it was indicated as favorite meal, one time as something to eat more often, and one time as something to eat less.

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Emilie Madsen (11 years old) even named spaghetti to be a traditional Arctic food, typical for this region. The recipe she wrote for making it, which is displayed as *Illustration 4*, is endearingly simple: “Ingredients: red sauce. Preparation: ten minutes.” In one of her drawings, she added potatoes to it.

<sup>12</sup> I am grateful to the Finnish Society of Bioart and the Kilpisjärvi Biological Station of the University of Helsinki for inviting me as artist in residence in their Ars Bioarctica Residency Program. This working period and possibility to do fieldwork was not only valuable for putting the cultural probes method in practice, but deepened my knowledge and understanding of this part of the Arctic too. Furthermore, it enabled me to participate in a weeklong Field\_Notes workshop together with an inspiring group of 29 bio-art professionals from within art and science. The beautiful publication *Field\_Notes – From Landscape to Laboratory* (Beloff, Berger and Haapoja 2013) originated from the experiences of this workshop, including my article ‘Probing for Fine Madness: The Importance of Fieldwork for Border Crossing Frames of Mind’ (pp. 214-223).

See: <http://bioartsociety.fi/ars-bioarctica-residency>, and [http://bioartsociety.fi/field\\_notes](http://bioartsociety.fi/field_notes), <http://bioartsociety.fi/books>

<sup>13</sup> During the seven days scheduled for working with the probe-kit, the notebook guided the order of the probes (one each day), inquired about daily food intake, and asked additional questions. In *Map 4*, the *Food Related* probes are described in an order that is more logical for the sharing of experiences. However, the order of suggested use within the notebook is the following:

- Day 1 – Probe 1 – Label Yourself
- Day 1 – Probe 2 – Experience Your Food
- Day 2 – Probe 3 – Play Your Taste
- Day 3 – Probe 4 – Claim Your Food
- Day 4 – Probe 5 – Predict Your Future
- Day 5 – Probe 6 – Express Your Feedback
- Day 6 – Probe 7 – Design Your Communication
- Day 7 – Probe 8 – Frame Your Outcome

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Day 7 – Probe 9 – Write Your Comments

Day 7 – Probe 10 – Enjoy Yourself

The additional questions inquired about the participants' favourite food, food anecdotes, food expressions, food habits, food poems, diet differences, food relations, and about the use of the *Food Related* platform.

<sup>14</sup> The notable connection of this probe to the earlier booklet made for the children of Ittoqqortoormiit, as well as the clear influence of staying at the Ars Bioarctica Residency, made this 'Predict-your-future' probe the most interesting of the set to describe in depth. Within the structure for using this probe-kit, as described in the prominent notebook, the 'Predict-your-future' probe is scheduled for use on the fourth day.

<sup>15</sup> These images show the work of James King, with the caption: *"Designer James King researches what in vitro meat can look like on our plate. His examples feed the debate on the desirable and undesirable qualities of future biotechnologies. If we speculate today about the food of tomorrow, we might have a say in it!"* For more information about the work of James King, see: <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/dressing-the-meat-of-tomorrow>

<sup>16</sup> The 'Claim Your Food' probe (Probe 4) is similar in design to the earlier described 'Predict Your Future' probe (Probe 5). It comes with a small booklet as well, in which the following illustrated text is written: *"In August 2007 a robot planted a Russian flag in the seabed underneath the North Pole to claim this area for future oil and gas drillings. In June 2008 artist Xavier Cortada planted a flag at the North Pole to reclaim it for nature. Food is also claimed with flags: Swedish meatballs, Dutch cheese, Greenlandic mattak... Flag-putting is an international understandable way to declare properties and identity. If you do it persistently, you can even enforce rights through it! Which food do you claim? What kind of rights or identity do you hope to enforce? How does your flag look like? Claim your food! You can draw, write, print, copy-paste, ..., or ..., but remember: a real claim always leaves a*

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*picture as evidence!*" The booklet was presented in a transparent envelope of the same size, together with three white cocktail flags. For more information about the work of Xavier Cortada, see:

<http://cortada.com>

<sup>17</sup> The little box of the 'Experience Your Food' probe (Probe 2) is of the same material as the bigger box that contains all probes, including the notebook. On the inner side of the lid, the following text is written: "*Experience your food. What does this food mean to you? What do you feel, think, or taste while eating it? You can draw, write, photograph, ..., ..., your experience.*" The box itself was filled with a transparent bag containing blueberries that I picked in the surroundings of the research centre. At first, some of the boxes were filled with local mushrooms. But because the possibility that a false determination might include poisonous species, I eventually exchanged them all for berries.

I once tried-out this probe task myself. But instead of blueberries I ate chocolate sprinkles from the same brand as I used to eat as a child. This brought back an image of myself sitting at my parents' dining table during so many breakfasts before I headed for school. I spread the sprinkles on top of a slice of bread covered with margarine. As I was usually alone in the room during this time of the day, I developed the habit of filling my mouth full with sprinkles too, straight from the package as if I was drinking from a bottle. This sensation of having my mouth completely filled with small pieces of chocolate, leaving no room for chewing until it started to melt, was passionate and liberating. Experiencing this mouth-full of chocolate sprinkles again, gave me a similar outburst of joy, and underlying feelings of loneliness and being misunderstood. These feelings, which were inextricably connected to that period in my life, were hidden for so many years that I almost forgot them. The power of this food exercise to unveil memories and emotions convinced me of the potential of the methodology.

<sup>18</sup> These 'Play Your Taste' probes (Probe 3) are aesthetically the most attractive. The set of 24 cards, packed in a transparent plastic cage,

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held together by a small transparent ballpoint, which was originally sold containing a small notebook. Only four cards present illustrated recipes; the other twenty give space for expression. The logo and internet address of the *Food Related* project is printed on the back of each card. The following guidance is written within the kits' notebook: *"With this probe you can create your own set of playing cards. Some cards are made as an example, but you can make cards in your own style and design as well."* The four examples indicate that they either are part of the Chukchi series, the seal series, or the caribou series – to motivate people to add to these series, or to start new series, and to make quartets. These sets of playing cards were without doubt the most time-consuming and expensive probes to make of the whole probe-kit. However, not a single card was written on or worked with otherwise. Probably, they were too neatly made or too beautiful to stay 'open' enough for contribution.

<sup>19</sup> This is the first probe of the kit, consisting of a transparent conference badge holding an empty label. It is guided by the following text in the notebook: *"How do you want to be called? Can the artist use your real name if she refers to the outcomes of your probes, or do you want to be named differently? You can make yourself a nice name tag, or write it in this booklet."*

<sup>20</sup> The 'Express Your Feedback' probe (Probe 6) is directly linked to the *Food Related* prototype and asks for feedback. It exists of nine cards in a transparent envelope. Some of these cards are prints of the current view-modes of the online platform, some are sketches of possible other view-modes, and some are left empty to sketch or describe one's own ideas for possible view-modes. In the notebook, the participants are asked to visit the platform's prototype. On the envelope holding the cards, the following text is written: *"What should I change, add or remove in the design of the online platform? Can you imagine another kind of view-mode besides these ones? You can sketch, draw, write, print, paste, ..., ..., your ideas upon these cards."*

<sup>21</sup> The 'Design Your Communication' probe, (Probe 7) probes for responses on the *Food Related* prototype too. I wrote a letter in which

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I shared some thought about communication in general and about communication on the *Food Related* platform. This letter was put in an orange envelope and attached to a tube of glass that contains paper. The following text was added: "Without doubt the most difficult probe of all... Please read the letter and think about possible ways of adding communication to the online platform, such as chat functions or a forum. You can write, draw, copy-paste, ..., or ..., your ideas on the paper in the tube or in this booklet."

<sup>22</sup> The final three probes are designed for rounding up the whole process of working with the probes-kit and are all scheduled for the seventh and final day. With the 'Frame Your Outcome' probe (Probe 8) I asked the participants to literally frame their most valuable idea, thought, picture or other outcome from the whole probe-kit. This question is framed in an easy to open wooden frame, in front of an empty card. I designed this probe to present a possibility for the participants to highlight what they think is most important.

<sup>23</sup> A postcard is put in a regular envelope for the 'Write Your Comments' probe (Probe 9). On this envelope, and in the notebook, the following text is written: "*If you have anything to say to the artist, about these probes, about the online platform or about the whole FOOD RELATED project, please write her a post card. Your meaning, advice, critical thoughts or other comments are highly appreciated.*"

<sup>24</sup> The 'Enjoy Yourself' probe (Probe 10), as the final probe of the *Food Related* probes-kit, is a small gift to express my appreciation. A small wooden box, closed by a bright blue or orange ribbon with a bow, contains candies and *Food Related* buttons as small presents. On the inner side of the lid, the following text is written: "*Enjoy Yourself! Thank you for taking part in this artistic research!*"

<sup>25</sup> I am grateful to Jet Pascua from Small Projects for his hospitality and his assistance, and to Rossella Ragazzi for her advice to contact Jet. Without their support, this workshop would most probably not have taken place, including the access to the participants who worked with the probe kits. See: <http://smallprojects.no>

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<sup>26</sup> I picked these berries the day before, on the tundra next to the residency in Kilpisjärvi.

<sup>27</sup> Although these experiences are perhaps formulated a bit negative, they gave me interesting and important insights. As such, I consider them valuable for the project – which is positive.

<sup>28</sup> A focus on seasonal aspects of food was expressed in an answer to a question in the notebook, inquiring if one feels food related to the other arctic people:

*“Yes. The food are closely related to the nature, and this is common for the arctic people. The food are also depended of the season. In the summertime, the food content fresh berries, fish (for the season). In the autumn we eat reindeer meat, and in the wintertime mixed by fish & meat.”*

<sup>29</sup> I worked as an artist-in-residence at Danish Art Workshops. See: <https://svfk.dk/en/>.

<sup>30</sup> In Dutch, the rapid-growth broiler chickens that are unethically farmed in batteries, are called ‘plofkip’ as they are made to grow unusually fast to speed up meat production. For my personal experiences with chocolate sprinkles, the other traditional Dutch food, see note 17 (*Map 4*).

<sup>31</sup> A typical Dutch, Scandinavian and Baltic treat is salmiak or salty liquorice candy. If this food item is unknown to you, you will most probably find it disgusting.

<sup>32</sup> Later on, while waiting for the ferry on the road-trip during the *Niva to Nenets* project, I asked Anders and Anna Sunna how they experienced the fact that I specifically asked them to participate because they are Sami. It was not a problem for them; they were happy instead to have the possibility to get the voice of their people heard. Thus, it is not always problematic. Nevertheless, I consider it tricky to approach people to participate in a research setting by means of their ethnicity. This has, for example, been the case in scientific racism.

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Some Sami, especially in Sweden, still feel offended by earlier studies of anthropology and craniometry that tried to support the belief in racial superiority. See, for example, the Lapponensis project by Michiel Brouwer. I didn't have the chance to ask this specific Sami woman in Tromsø if these kinds of research played part in her 'becoming sick', but I can imagine that repressing times in history still have their influence today.

<sup>33</sup> The reason for not willing to participate might be found in the colonial past, or in the present unbalanced power relation between West-Europeans and indigenous peoples. My rather drastic solution to put the project on hold was, of course, not an easy step to take. In *Map 2 - Ant in Practice*, it is described in depth how and why this decision was made.

<sup>34</sup> For camp as an aesthetic, see Susan Sontag (1964) and Marc Booth (1983).

<sup>35</sup> I felt relieved, when I received positive responses for both the probe-booklets and my introduction of the Niva to Nenets project. After my experiences with the cultural probes in the Tromsø region, I was more cautious for defensiveness than ever before. Not only for the option to encounter defensive responses, but even more for the possibility to present an offensiveness project!

<sup>36</sup> This probe is similar to the 'Label-Yourself' probe within the *Food Related* probe kit. This time, however, it came with a set of labels to choose from – including blank labels.

<sup>37</sup> Approximately one metre of the purchased Arctic ribbon was not used for the blanket. I later found perfect use for it to decorate the inside of the Lada Niva: it was glued on the dashboard. Similar to the responses to the ribbon on the blanket, all participating co-drivers reacted enthusiastically upon this decoration. I assume this was not only because it looked great, but also because the polar bear is a strong cultural marker.



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<sup>38</sup> This was an important conversation for the project, as I wanted to ask her to introduce me to Yasavey, the Nenets organization in Naryan Mar. When she turned out not to be in Tromsø where we first agreed to meet, she invited me to meet her in her stepmother's house 700 km further, where she and her family wanted to stay a bit longer. Altogether, I drove 4000 km north to meet her (and later, the same distance back) in the company of Govert de Groot from Arctic Peoples Alert and his dog Nana.

<sup>39</sup> See: [www.rosannevanklaveren.nl](http://www.rosannevanklaveren.nl)

<sup>40</sup> See: <http://www.defka.nl/historie.html>

<sup>41</sup> In my earlier work, I made props to enrich the story space as well. In case of the *Braintec* project, I made brochures promoting the fictional Braintec company and exposed a doctors' coat with a nametag naming Prof. Hamilton, to create a waiting room. For *De Grote Treinreis* (The Big Train journey), I made a luggage rack containing a variety of suitcases. And for *Vogelvlucht*, I created a two by four meter artistic representation of the design for a local peat landscape that I wished to discuss during this project.

<sup>42</sup> <http://thepeoplespeak.org.uk>

<sup>43</sup> I tried to probe for various responses through my behaviour and gestures too, as far as I was able to control my own acting. For example, the fact that I wanted to give away my Lada to an indigenous people to support them, was deliberately presented questionable. I stressed the fact that the car is polluting, and tried to allow some silence after this statement, in order to provoke responses.

<sup>44</sup> This question was asked at almost all Picnic-Quizzes. The responses given are transcribed from the Picnic-Quizzes at Z33 in Hasselt, at Stroom in The Hague, and at Gallery Augusta in Helsinki. Responses to a quiz-question about gift-giving can be found in *Map 3, pp. 24-29*.

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<sup>45</sup> At the most critical moment, the car indeed needed major repairs and could hardly drive at all. In order to get the necessary paperwork to declare the car officially broken, I tried to give a local police officer some money. But instead, after refusing my bribery, he brought me to an isolated industrial terrain to meet a man who could fix the car. Altogether, it became almost impossible to leave the car in Russia.

<sup>46</sup> According to Louridas, art takes an intermediate position in between science and bricolage.

<sup>47</sup> Louridas (1999) elaborates on the construction of structure with the following words: *“It is a hermeneutic process, a process of iterative understanding. The designer proceeds by interpreting the effects his actions have on the situation. He tries to understand the effect of his materials and of his tools, to define their place in a structure. He wants to create a structure out of his means and the results of his actions. He tinkers with the materials, takes stock of the results of his tinkering, and then tinkers again. He takes stock by seeing the situation in specific ways. He subsumes the situation in normative positions that allow him to see it in a special light and under special norms, values, and expectancies, and interpret it and judge it accordingly. In effect, he translates the situation; he perceives the situation as something else. The design is at a metaphorical level, since it is a model, and the designer uses metaphors on it in order to understand it. He modifies it and then tries to understand it again. The activity is a kind of metaphorical bricolage”* (p. 530).

<sup>48</sup> If you would ask a child to draw a pot and a car, these drawings probably both would represent the Lada pot and the Lada Niva better than more modern designs. This simplicity in the design of both objects attracts me, not only for aesthetic reasons, but for a certain feeling of ‘pureness’ as well. Somewhere hidden in my view upon materialistic things, I probably feel that this is how things should look like: basic, no-nonsens representations of an idea.

<sup>49</sup> Whether we call these components of the probes ‘signs’ (De Saussure, Barthes), ‘events’ (Louridas), ‘elements’ (Lévi-Strauss), or

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interchangeably 'actor', 'agent' and 'actant' (Callon, Latour and Law), is perhaps not so important. When these terms differ slightly in meaning, differences are, at least to me, insignificant. Important is, they all have agency and thus they influence us. Following their trails through ANT, I inquire how they operate, and how it is possible for artists or other makers to work with this kind of agency in order to create openness for decolonisation processes.

<sup>50</sup> For Levi-Strauss this is the essence of language and communication. ANT theorists, however, handle a broader view that includes, for example, the agency of objects.

<sup>51</sup> For example, Freire (1970/1995) recognized that human beings exist in a cultural context: *"People as beings 'in a situation', find themselves rooted in temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark. They will tend to reflect on their own 'situationality' to the extent that they are challenged by it to act upon it. Human beings are because they are in a situation. And they will be more the more they not only critically reflect upon their existence but critically act upon it"* (p. 90).

<sup>52</sup> When this happens, ANT rubs me the wrong way. My body responses include itches and stomach turns a bit, and after a while, I develop a headache. Maybe this reflects the limitations of my cognitive skills, but for sure I reach a limit.

## Map 5 - Discussion

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<sup>1</sup> Stephan Harding continues saying: *“It’s poetry that does it. It’s a poetic encounter.”* Further in the taster video he gives an example from his observing experiences in the Rushbeds Wood, when he poetically describes encountering the little muntjac deer:

*“I had many experiences of this kind of encounter with the muntjac deer that I studied for my doctorate. And some of the moments I most remember would be when I was just waiting. For many minutes – or even an hour or more – nothing would happen. And then, if I was lucky, a muntjac would appear, and just stand, even for just a few seconds. If I was lucky, it would look in my direction. Then time stood still. Time stopped. And there was this infinite moment of meeting between myself and the muntjac. There was a sense of the being of the muntjac as a revelation. As if some kind of syropy smoke was moving from the muntjac to me, infusing my whole being with the muntjac-ness. So I could immediately understand the wholeness of the muntjac and how they relate to the entire wood. I could have an intuitive perception in that instant about who the muntjac were, as an animal with their own ecological niche in the forest. And it went further than that. I could also get a sense of the ecology of the whole forest. It suddenly came into focus, through the being of the muntjac. The whole came into my perception. And then, if I was very lucky, that wholeness would spread out and I’d get a sense of the ecology of the entire earth. That didn’t happen very often, but that was possible – it was possible for it to expand. So in other words, I sank into myself.”*

This taster video can be viewed online at

<http://www.flemingpolicycentre.org.uk/seed-beneath-snow>.

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<sup>2</sup> Fleming (2016) states that encounter is about the fundamental experience of not being alone. He says:

*“It is free of the curse of understanding, which opens up the path to control. (...) To control is to be alone: there is nothing there which calls for engagement and a response. There is no need, if alone, for logic. The starting point for encounter, then, is the hallo reaction, the acknowledgement that there is something there which is quick – which has the gift of life, self, soul and the ability to surprise” (p. 128).*