

Arja Lehtimäki **Environmental Art**

Education	Architecture, University of Oulu 2004-2009 MA Environmental Art, Helsinki School of Art and Design 2003-2008 Diploma in Town and Country Planning, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, 1998-1999 BSc Town and Country Planning, Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, 1995-1998
Awards	The Finnish Environmental Art Foundation, The Environmental Art Prize for year 2005, Kalle Päätaalo Monument
Membership	Finnish Artists' Association MUU Finnish Association of Architects, SAFA The Royal Town Planning Institute, RTPI
Nationality	Finnish
Date of Birth	17 January 1975
E-mail	mail@arjalehtimaki.com www.arjalehtimaki.com
Telephone	+358 (0)50 49 49 491

Arja Lehtimäki works as an artist and architect with a special interest in landscape and landart. Her works are mainly place and space specific installations and sculptures. Her background as an urban designer can be seen in her approach to space as a medium and her intuitive understanding of the multilayered nature of places which forms an essential base for her work.

Her most important works to date include a Monument for Kalle Päätaalo (awarded 2005), the Inter IV installation for the Finnish Embassy in London and Tango Finlandes, a multimedia street installation in Buenos Aires. Currently she is working as an environmental artist on a new public open space, Helsinki.



2008—ongoing

Hyväntoivonpuisto, Jätkäsaari, Helsinki

Working as part of a consultant team led by VSU to create a new 5 Ha public park for the Jätkäsaari mixed use urban extension which is being built in the old industrial harbour of Helsinki. The park forms an important link with the existing Ruoholahti mixed use area connecting it with the sea at the south-eastern edge of Jätkäsaari. The park has to deal with a multitude of technical and functional requirements as well as challenging geological and climatic conditions.

My role as has been to provide design solutions to the interfaces of the park and streetscape which is a particular design challenge due to several underground facilities which are accessed at these points. As the park is located approximately 5-7m higher than the street level accessibility, legibility and safety have become the main design issues.



2008

Rainbow

A sculpture designed for a private garden in Oulu, Finland. The “rainbow” is 6m long and 2.3m high and built from stainless steel in the form of an I-beam. It terminates in a pool of water which is built from local stone. The sculpture is lit with a light which slowly changes from red, orange, yellow, green, blue and to purple, all the colours of a rainbow. In the words of a French composer, Oliver Messiaen (1908 -1992), the rainbow symbolises peace, wisdom and all bright and musical vibrations. In this case the sculpture also symbolises the finding of a place of happiness and love in one’s life.



2006

Tango Finlandes

Tango Finlandes is a site specific environmental art project which took place in Buenos Aires during November 2007. Finnish tango dancing was filmed during the Seinäjoki Tango Festival (2007) and projected as a mural onto a wall in central Buenos Aires. Finnish tango music was played on a car stereo next to the projection. The aim of the project was to explore tango as a phenomenon through which it was possible to examine the character of the environment and the different societies in which it had evolved in. What does tango reveal about Finland and Argentina? What is the character of Finnish tango and how can it be communicated through art? How is it possible to capture the spirit of Finnish tango and take it back to its origins? What reactions will this raise in Buenos Aires?

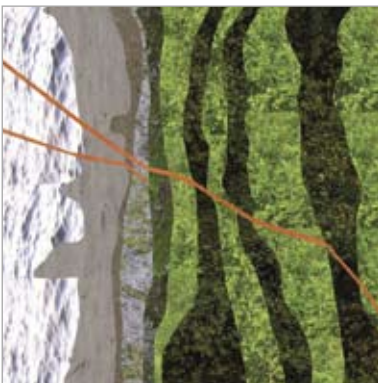


2006-2008

The Nature Trail & Bird watching tower, Aittalahti, Finland

An overgrown sea bay by a steel manufacturing plant in the northern parts of Finland has become popular with a variety of migratory and native birds. This also attracts a number of bird watchers to the area who were keen to have a bird watching tower built to overlook the bay. All the materials were donated by the steel manufacturing plant, Ruukki.

The design of the bird watching tower was driven by aesthetics, safety and accessibility. This resulted to an unusual form which imitates that of a snail shell. The tower can be gently climbed to the top which is significantly different from the usual design for bird watching towers which require the climbing of steep steps or a ladder making it difficult for the elderly or if carrying heavy equipment. The material used was Cor-ten steel, which fits well into the environment. The tower is an interesting addition to the unusual bay environment where industry and nature coexist in harmony.



2006

Norway Tsunami Memorial – ‘The Path of Remembrance’

A competition entry for a Memorial for the victims of the tsunami disaster in December 2005. The proposal was based on the idea of the sea itself being the most important element of the memorial and walking as a tool for meditation and remembrance.

The Memorial Site begins in the woods on the top of the hill. A path which is lined with a 3m high cor-ten steel wall meanders through the woods and gradually descends to the sea shore. At the entrance to the beach another wall forms a gateway to the waters edge. The two walls continue into the water framing the view of the sea and creating a peaceful environment for remembrance – a ‘chapel’ by the sea. The wall creates shelter and gives direction. The wall also creates a barrier between the visitor and the landscape behind symbolising how death separates us from our loved ones. The walk along the path from the forest to the sea is aimed to calm the mind before reaching the final point of the memorial, the sea shore.



2005

A Monument For Kalle Päätalo, Taivalkoski

[Competition win, 2004. Completion July, 2005.](#)

[Awarded by the Finnish Environmental Art Foundation, 2006.](#)

Kalle Päätalo (1919 – 2000), was a much loved Finnish author whose books describe life in a remote part of north-eastern Finland, Koillismaa during his lifetime. Having refused in his will the making of a figurative monument of himself, the Päätalo Society approached the Department of Environmental Arts (TAIK), to organise a competition for the design of a monument in Taivalkoski.

The winning proposal, Kirja (book) combines both symbolical and more abstract levels as well as addressing the particular site chosen for the monument at the heart of Taivalkoski town centre. The monument consists of two parts: a 3m high book made out of 35mm thick cor-ten steel, set at one end of the central square (which is triangular in shape), and 13 “pages” forming an abstract landscape at the other edge of the square. Figures taken

from historical photographs of people in the area are cut into the steel pages to symbolise the widespread popularity of the writer whose influence reaches across all parts of Finland.



Inter IV, Untitled, The Embassy of Finland, London

An installation commissioned by the Embassy of Finland in London to complete a series of contemporary interventions by young Finnish artists in the the Embassy building. The installation questioned the nature and role of this unique space, in particular its definition as part of Finnish soil in a foreign territory. The concept was explored by measuring the shape and size of the Embassy courtyard and recreating the space in a number of locations in Finland. In this way the space was momentarily in connection with its true homeland.

To communicate the framed spaces at the Finnish Embassy in London, slide viewers were placed in the courtyard showing the images of the space framed in the Finnish landscape. The angle and location of the slides were in correspondence with their position in the courtyard making it possible to compare the real space and its recreation in Finland. The work highlighted the intangibility of the concept of this London space being part of Finnish soil.

2004 Stone Abacus

2004 Negative Forest

2004 Penfriend, Barösund

2004 Ultimate Space

2004 Begging for Change

2003 Fermentation, Kirkkonummi

2003 Autosound, Helsinki

2003 The Kaamos Festival, Suomussalmi

References

Markku Hakuri
Artist and Professor
University of Art and Design
Hämeentie 135 C
00560 Helsinki
tel. +358 (0)50 383 2399
markku.hakuri@uiah.fi

Taru Elfving
Writer and Curator of Contemporary Art
Goldsmiths College, University of London
138 Manor Park Road
London, NW10 4JP
UK
tel. +44 (0)774 779 8554
taruelfving@hotmail.com